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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 5 May 2008**

**Lundi 5 mai 2008**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 5 May 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 5 mai 2008

*The House met at 0900.  
Prayers.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

PROVINCIAL ANIMAL  
WELFARE ACT, 2008

LOI ONTARIENNE DE 2008  
SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE DES ANIMAUX

Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We're moving into a new time frame here. I want to indicate to you that when I first arrived here a long time ago, they allowed members to bring coffee into the legislative chamber. Now we're going to be here at 9 o'clock in the morning, and I normally have a coffee at my desk at 9 o'clock in the morning. Mr. Speaker, I ask your indulgence to allow the morning session to enjoy a cup of coffee while they're listening to debate here in our morning sessions.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Of course it's up to members of this House to decide on unanimous consent matters, and I also will obviously respect whatever ruling you make with respect to decorum etc., but if in fact the House agrees, not only do I think that the dean of the Legislature deserves a coffee, but I'll be happy to pour it for him. I'm assuming it's a double-double for Mr. Sterling.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. I'll take the points of order under consideration.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Now that we've solved the coffee dilemma and the double-double issue, we will move into debate. I'm going to be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant, the member from Brant, Dave Levac, who will have carriage of this through committee. I want to thank him for his hard work with this bill.

This is a very, very timely time to have second reading debate. This is historic. We are now meeting at 9 o'clock in the morning for the first time ever and we're debating bills for the first time ever. We're doing something that

we haven't done for over 80 years: We're revising one of the acts.

It is also Emergency Preparedness Week. Later on today, and tomorrow, and for the course of the week, I'll be making announcements. We should never, ever forget our animals in Emergency Preparedness Week. This is also another historic week because it's Be Kind to Animals Week.

Last month, I introduced Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. Today, I am again pleased to speak to this legislation on second reading. What better way to mark the week than through thoughtful deliberations on an important piece of legislation that aims to better protect animals; proposed legislation that would, if passed, make Ontario's animal protection laws the strongest in Canada; legislation that represents the first significant revisions to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act since 1919?

Before I get into the details of our proposed legislation, I want to thank the member from Willowdale, David Zimmer, a strong advocate for animal protection, who last December received the World Society for the Protection of Animals special award for leadership in animal welfare for his work to regulate roadside zoos. It is to his credit, along with the hard work of many stakeholders, that this legislation was introduced.

I am also pleased to acknowledge the honourable member from Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, who in 2001 led the fight to close down puppy mills in Ontario. Thank you, Michael, for your great work. I would also like to thank my colleague from York-Simcoe, Julia Munro, and Leeds-Grenville member Bob Runciman for their commitment to animal welfare in Ontario.

The care, love and protection of animals represents all that is good about our society. This is all about protecting our animals. The Ontario SPCA's management staff and volunteers are devoted to the well-being of all animals. They make exceptional efforts to provide animals housed in OSPCA shelters with the highest standards of care. We thank the OSPCA for the remarkable job they do.

The McGuinty government is also committed to a strong animal welfare system in Ontario. Our government recently invested \$5 million to improve and modernize Ontario's SPCA facilities and shelters across the province. This represents the largest single investment in the OSPCA by any government. We should all be very, very proud of that. It also builds on other recent initiatives, including more than quadrupling animal funding for the OSPCA to \$500,000 a year, the first increase

since 2000, and investing \$100,000 to train OSPCA inspectors and agents to carry out zoo inspections.

Last month, I visited the OSPCA's headquarters in Newmarket, along with Mike Colle and David Zimmer, to speak about this proposed legislation. While I was there, I met a dog named Crash, who as a puppy was deliberately thrown from a speeding pickup truck. I see our pages, who are grade 7 and 8 students from across the province, looking in dismay that someone would do that. They're right; we're all dismayed when an animal is mistreated. Despite the heroic efforts of the OSPCA and the Parry Sound Animal Hospital, Crash's leg had to be amputated. Good news, though: Today, Crash is a healthy and happy dog, living with the OSPCA inspector who adopted him.

#### 0910

Unfortunately, these terrible occurrences don't always have a happy ending. There are too many incidents of dogs and cats being abused, birds being trained for cock-fights and animals going unfed and held in deplorable conditions. It is also wrong when exotic animals are confined in roadside zoos where enclosures are too small or not properly secured. Ontario's law on animal protection must be updated and toughened.

If passed, our Provincial Animal Welfare Act, or the PAW act, will be the first top-to-bottom modernization of the OSPCA act in more than 80 years. Let's put that into some historical context for you. I know the pages will be very, very interested in this, because I was shocked when I first read this. In 1919, the First World War had just ended. At that time, the welfare of both animals and children were the responsibility of the humane society. While child welfare laws have been modernized, until now, animal welfare legislation in Ontario has remained largely unchanged. We are looking to change that. If passed, the changes we are proposing would give Ontario the strongest protection laws in Canada. Of that, this entire House should be very, very proud.

The new Provincial Animal Welfare Act would give the OSPCA the authority to inspect premises where animals are kept for entertainment, exhibition, boarding, sale or hire. This would include zoos, circuses and pet shops. It would give the OSPCA the authority to inspect the premises between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. year-round, to enable inspections to occur in the off-season. They would also be able to inspect the premises at any time they are open to the public. Under our proposed amendments, the OSPCA would also be able to enter almost any non-residential location where they have reasonable grounds to believe an animal is in immediate distress. The proposed act would better protect animals by establishing new provincial offences to target inhumane treatment. These new offences would include causing or permitting distress to an animal; obstructing an OSPCA inspector or agent; failing to comply with standards of care; causing harm to a law enforcement animal; and training or allowing animals to fight other animals. These offences would make Ontario a leader in animal welfare within Canada.

Furthermore, if passed, this legislation would give judges the flexibility to impose the stiffer penalties that

these actions deserve. Our current legislation provides a penalty for failure to comply with standards of care for dogs and cats for breeding and sale. Judges will have the jurisdiction to impose a maximum fine of up to \$60,000 with up to two years in jail and a potential lifetime ban on owning cats and dogs. Through our proposed amendments, penalties would be established to improve the welfare of all animals, not just cats and dogs.

All too often, veterinarians see the consequences of animal abuse and neglect. Up until now, veterinarians across Ontario have voluntarily reported these suspected cases. At the request of the veterinary profession, the proposed act would make it mandatory for veterinarians to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. This comes from the veterinarian profession. It would also offer them protection from personal liability for doing so. Ontario would be the only jurisdiction in Canada with this provision. Furthermore, this legislation would respect accepted standards of practice for activities like hunting, fishing and agriculture. Exemptions would be made in consultation with these communities.

Melissa Tkachyk from the World Society for the Protection of Animals called this a "positive new direction." Kate MacDonald, chief executive officer of the OSPCA, said, "We are pleased that the government has recognized the need to modernize and toughen animal welfare laws and create stiffer penalties for those convicted."

I want to thank these and other concerned organizations. I worked with people from Sudbury—Cathy Coe, as an example—from Toronto, Thunder Bay and all over Ontario. They've worked hard to help develop this proposed legislation.

But I look forward to the process continuing. I look forward to this proceeding through second reading. I look forward to this going to committee. If there are ways to even strengthen it further, to expand on what we all want in Ontario, we'll do that; we'll listen carefully to what the presenters say at committee. I look forward to that.

In closing, these changes would go a long way toward protecting animals and punishing those who threaten their welfare. These changes would take Ontario from worst to first in animal protection. Thank you. I turn the floor over to the member from Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I want to thank the minister for this opportunity and also repeat what he just said: that this bill will be going to committee.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak about Bill 50, a very important piece of proposed legislation to better protect against animal mistreatment and abuse.

While most people enjoy and respect all animals and they do treat their pets as part of the family—with love, care, respect and consideration—unfortunately, it is not uncommon to hear of the acts of uncaring individuals who exploit or harm defenceless animals—and research tells us that the next step is people. Animal abuse has no place in Ontario. That's why our government is proposing to toughen its laws to protect animals.

In August 2007, the McGuinty government announced that it would embark on a review of the very act that

we're proposing today. If passed, the proposed Provincial Animal Welfare Act would provide better protection for animals throughout Ontario, including zoos. I thank the member from Willowdale, David Zimmer, my colleague and friend, for bringing this to the attention of us.

I'd like to briefly speak to the new offences that we're proposing. Ontario is currently the only jurisdiction in Canada without a provincial offence for causing distress to an animal. The only options that the OSPCA has when they find an animal in distress are to remove the animal, make an order that the owner change the conditions the animal is living in—not likely—or impose a Criminal Code charge of animal cruelty. Our proposed changes would improve animal welfare by giving the OSPCA a new option, charging a person with a new provincial offence. This would be a less resource-intensive option that we hope would help the SPCA to lay more charges against those who cause distress to animals and give greater deterrence to avoid future suffering of these purely lovable creatures.

There are currently no penalties for obstructing the OSPCA inspector or agent. Our proposed legislation would establish standards of care of animals. Right now, specific standards of care exist only for keeping cats or dogs for breeding or for sale. Establishing standards of care for all animals would help the OSPCA to ensure that all animals, including those in zoos, are appropriately treated.

To be clear, we're not trying to close roadside zoos. In fact, one in my own riding is an example of how animals are cared for in a roadside zoo. We just want to make sure that everyone in Ontario treats animals well, with love and respect.

This legislation would create a new offence for causing harm to a law enforcement animal. Police dogs and horses can be injured or killed while assisting police in their work. However, they currently don't receive any additional protection. This proposed legislation would make Ontario the only province—and, I hope, not the last—with extra protection for its law enforcement animals. This legislation would also create an offence for training animals to fight other animals or for owning or possessing equipment used in animal fights.

#### **0920**

The Criminal Code makes it an offence to engage, aid or assist in fighting or baiting of animals or birds. However, in order to lay a criminal charge, people committing the offence must be caught in the act. That requires raiding dog fights as they are happening—a very dangerous situation. Dog fights usually happen at night and can involve large crowds, making raids risky and difficult. However, if our legislation is passed, people could be charged based on the possession of easily identifiable equipment. It would be safer, require less police officer support and not endanger lives. Most importantly, this approach would allow for changes to be pre-emptive and potentially prevent an animal from suffering injury or being killed in the course of such a fight. Only New Brunswick and Manitoba currently have this provision, and Ontario's will be the most thorough.

Let's take a look at how the proposed changes would affect a few recent incidents. On May 11, 2007, the Windsor/Essex County Humane Society received an anonymous call saying that a dog was in distress at a Windsor apartment building. The OSPCA investigators found a six-month-old German Shepherd-Rottweiler mix whimpering on an apartment balcony, with his ears cut off. The puppy was bleeding, shaking his head and pawing at his ears. The owner was not at home, and the OSPCA seized the dog so it could receive immediate care. The owner later surrendered the dog to the OSPCA. As the law stands, had the owner not surrendered the dog to the OSPCA, it may have been returned to the owner. Under the current law, the OSPCA could only prosecute the owner under the Criminal Code. As a result, investigators were required to determine who had cropped the puppy's ears and whether the harm had been done wilfully, as required under the Criminal Code. Under this new proposed legislation, the OSPCA could have charged the owner with the proposed offence of causing or permitting distress to an animal. Rather than having to prove that the harm was wilful, the OSPCA would only need to determine the owner of the animal and that the mutilation did occur.

The proposed provincial penalties include potential fines of up to \$60,000, up to two years in jail and the possibility of a lifetime ownership ban. If the owner refused to surrender the puppy to the OSPCA, the society would also have been able to apply to retain possession of the animal once charges were laid against the owner.

In another case, an Australian tourist raised concerns that a kangaroo named Tyson was being kept in a very small cage at the Lickety-Split Ranch and Zoo in London. Locals told the media that the kangaroo suffered through an eight-month Canadian winter of snowstorms and sub-zero temperatures with only a metal shed to protect it against the cold. Under the current law, the OSPCA was powerless to act as the information was not current enough to get a search warrant. Existing legislation only allows the OSPCA to enter without a warrant if they can observe an animal in immediate distress, but in this case, they could not see the animal. Our proposed legislation would allow the OSPCA to inspect the zoo and take action as appropriate.

Let's look at one more example. Every year, the OSPCA deals with complaints about animals being locked in cars. Right now, the OSPCA can only intervene if they can actually observe the animals in distress. If a cat were locked in the trunk of a car or if a dog were locked behind heavily-tinted windows, the OSPCA would be powerless to help them without a search warrant. If passed, our proposed legislation would mean that the OSPCA would only need reasonable grounds to believe that the animal was in distress in order to intervene.

Those are just a few examples of how, if passed, this legislation would help the OSPCA to protect our beloved animals.

We've already heard today that the OSPCA supports this legislation. We've heard that the World Society for

the Protection of Animals thinks the government is headed in a positive, new and supportable direction. Here's what the veterinarians' organizations have said. The president of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, Dr. Irene Moore, says, "Ontario veterinarians applaud the government for recognizing the need to protect our beloved pets." Susan Carlyle, registrar of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario, says, "The College of Veterinarians of Ontario appreciates the government taking steps to improve animal welfare in Ontario, and is pleased that we were consulted and our input valued."

Support like this demonstrates that this government has worked with animal experts across Ontario to develop some of the toughest animal safety standards in the country. However, it's important to note that this legislation would have no impact on people who treat their animals with love, respect and care. The bottom line is this: If you treat your animals well, with love and respect, you will have nothing to fear from this legislation. Animals, however, have absolutely everything to gain. Thank you.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to hear the minister acknowledge the work of many members having contributed to this bill coming forward. From our side, from the Progressive Conservative Party, I'm very pleased to indicate that the member from Leeds-Grenville has done a significant amount of work on this, as has the member from York-Simcoe. I think the protection of animals is obviously important to all of us in this place. We've all heard stories of unspeakable cruelty to animals that shouldn't be tolerated in our society, because, as the preamble to Bill 50 states, "The people of Ontario ... believe that how we treat animals in Ontario helps define our humanity, morality and compassion as a society." I would certainly agree with that.

There are some provisions in this bill that are new, that are meant to toughen up the act by allowing—in fact, requiring—veterinarians to report any instances of cruelty to animals, any animals that have been neglected or abused, and also authorizes SPCA inspectors and agents to enter premises without a warrant in any places used for animal exhibit, entertainment, boarding hire, or sale to determine if animals are in distress.

The only thing we have heard about this bill that causes a little bit of concern is, though it's indicated it's not meant to apply to native wildlife and fish or to generally accepted agricultural practices, I would urge the government to allocate significant time for public hearings on this matter so that we can hear from all parties who will be affected or who believe they may be affected by this legislation to make sure that we get a full perspective and understanding of exactly how this legislation is going to be applying. I've certainly heard from a number of my constituents, as I know many members have, who are concerned that this be fulsomely discussed.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Certainly, I rise to support any step forward. We in the New Democratic Party support animal rights and any step forward, and this is a step forward we would support.

However, there are problems with this bill. I would support the member from Whitby-Oshawa when she says this needs fulsome debate and it needs fulsome committee time—in particular, section 6. I've received a number of e-mails, as I'm sure other members of this House have, about the inadequacies of section 6. There's a letter that has gone from the president of the Toronto Humane Society to Mr. Bartolucci on exactly that. He says, "We write to ask you to remove section 6 from Bill 50. Section 6 provides that community-built shelters that either don't want to be affiliates of the Ontario SPCA, or shelters that the Ontario SPCA itself does not want as affiliates, will be stripped automatically of their names by this Legislature." That means that a venerable institution of over 100 years like the Toronto Humane Society would not be able to use the word "humane" anymore, as well as 235 other charities that look after and protect our animals. I don't understand why this section is even in this bill. What is the purpose of it? It needs to be stricken from the bill, and I'd like the committee to look at that.

Some other concerns: There's nothing in the bill for lost animals experimented on in laboratories. There's nothing for animals and birds in the wild. There's nothing for millions and millions of farm animals and birds—and this is not to deter farmers, but we do remember the instance where something like 20 horses were starved to death. This bill would not cover them. Nothing for any other animals that cabinet may decide to exclude in the future. So clearly, this bill needs some tightening up, and clearly, section 6 needs to be omitted from the bill.

We would like to see fulsome consultation with all of those stakeholders, whose concerns are equally valid to OSPCA's, and certainly to have this government take another look at the fine-tuning of this bill.

**0930**

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I certainly would like to commend the minister for taking the most decisive step in animal protection in over 90 years. And that is really shameful, that in this province of Ontario for 90 years this outdated act has not been made stronger to protect those who can't protect themselves.

I had a little bit of experience with this myself as to why this hasn't been done. I collected over 200,000 signatures in 2001, trying to close down puppy mills—200,000 signatures—and brought the legislation forward in this House. It was defeated by the majority government at the time. It's just amazing how inept we are as human beings who are supposed to be in government in terms of trying to protect animals.

That's why it's critically important to not underestimate the forces that are opposed to animal welfare protection. They will come up out of the woodwork and have all kinds of excuses as to why this bill isn't quite right. But those who do care about animal protection

welcome this incredible piece of legislation, which gives power—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Again, members of the NDP are already criticizing the bill, as you can see.

This bill gives the power of inspection. That's all it does. It allows inspection powers, which they don't have, to enter premises to make sure animals are not being abused. That's not there right now. It also ensures that these inspectors can enter without warrant when there is abuse reported. This legislation also ensures that veterinarians have to report abuse. So that is why this legislation is critically important. It's a milestone piece of legislation that deserves full consideration.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, in his opening comments, made a comparison between the child welfare laws and the animal welfare laws in our province.

As the PC critic for community and social services, I can't let this comment go by without reminding the House that this is the same government that refused to enact the amendment brought forward by my Progressive Conservative colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills that would have ensured that individuals who are abused as children and ultimately removed from their abusers and adopted, could not be revictimized. If the Liberals had been concerned with the victims' rights, they would have accepted our PC amendment to block abusers from learning information about their victims.

As the PC critic for community and social services, I've heard from workers who deal every day with victims of domestic violence. Organizations like Family Transition Place have shown that if an individual is inclined to abuse their animal, they are more likely to abuse their spouse or child. Therefore, any legislation that will ensure animal abuse is curtailed and bring fines in line with the level of abuse I'm pleased to support.

I hope that at committee all members will listen and learn from our stakeholders on how we can improve Bill 50, because, clearly, there are some opportunities for amendments and improvements to the existing legislation that will ultimately serve us well. It does us no benefit if we pass bills that six months later we have to bring back to this House and say, "We forgot this little section. We'll try it again." Let's get it right the first time with this one, and we hope that at committee you'll listen and learn from the stakeholders who have some good points that they want to bring forward with Bill 50.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Brant has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** First, let me thank those who participated with the two-minute responses: the member for Whitby–Oshawa, the member for Parkdale–High Park, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, and the member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Let's correct the record. If the member had been listening carefully, she would have recognized that what the minister was talking about was that when the humane

societies were created, they took care of both animals and children. That's what he was saying. So in order to get onto a soapbox to talk about a flawed bill, the member didn't quite hear correctly or actually just wanted to use it as an example. But then she carried on about mistakes in the House about certain bills. I don't want to remind her, but since she needs a little bit of a lesson in history, there were seven different bills for a tax bill by the Tories that needed to be corrected.

We don't want to get into this. If you want to get into this, what we're going to do is have a good, solid debate about a bill that has been long overdue, in terms of getting corrected and changed. If you want to start from the premise of talking about children, we're going to say that the humane society's responsibility was for children at the very beginning, at the onset of the legislation.

Let's be clear: This is about trying to get the best possible bill that's going to help us protect our animals. I look forward to the debate. I look forward to hearing the opposition, to hearing their suggestions and recommendations. I also look forward to hearing from all of the stakeholders who want to give input into the piece of legislation. I suspect—and I want to say this gently—that almost everybody who's going to be presenting is going to talk, first and foremost, about the need for us to review this bill, to improve this bill and to protect our animals, because it is a window to our souls. Many great people who have spoken in the past have said that how we treat the animals is how we treat ourselves. I look forward to the healthy debate, and I appreciate the opportunity to present to the House.

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today and speak on the leadoff on second reading debate of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The short form of this is the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008.

You know, as we led up to this particular bill, we had a lot of lobbying that took place by the World Society for the Protection of Animals. I can tell you that when they met us at our offices or when we had phone calls or appointments—even the media advisory leading up to the announcement of Bill 50—I always felt this bill was oriented towards roadside zoos. The announcement came, and there's no question that the word "zoo" is not even mentioned in the bill or in the explanatory note.

That's the first thing I want to know about, because I felt that all the hype in the media—and that's what was on CP24, the different channels, on the TV stations and in the print media, as well as the radio media—was about roadside zoos. I want to talk a little bit about—and there's no question. I hope there's nobody in this provincial Legislature who would want to see any animal, anywhere, mistreated. I did think that Bill 50 would be far more oriented towards kangaroos, leopards and wild-life brought in from other countries which were actually in captivity in small, roadside zoos.

I thought we'd see things in the bill, or even in the announcement, like the height of fencing. When you have, say, a tiger in captivity, you want to make sure you've got the right fence height because of what happened in San Francisco this past winter. You're making sure the animals have proper water, proper feed; making sure that the size of the compound is large enough—they weren't squashed into some little cage—making sure they have shading in the summer, winter shelter and heat; food; and of course the one thing we want to make sure of with all our animals is that we have some veterinary assistance for these zoos.

The bill was hailed as a bill to regulate roadside zoos, but I can tell you that, although the government is very proud of it today, I think we have a few problems with this bill, and I'm going to read out some of the problems with the bill in a few minutes.

**0940**

I want to tell you three little stories, though, to begin with, because they're all stories that have just taken place recently. The one involves—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Is there anything about the reindeer at the Toronto Zoo? Get to the reindeer.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** There's nothing about the reindeer at the Toronto Zoo.

My oldest granddaughter rides a horse, and I can tell you, it's amazing how animals have an impact on children. When the minister referred to the pages here today—you know, I never would have thought my granddaughter would have been a horseback-riding type of a child, but you know what? She's falling in love with that sport. Every Saturday morning at 9 o'clock—the same time that we started here this morning, by the way—she's out riding her horse at this stable and loves every moment of it.

The minister also mentioned something about law enforcement animals. One thing I want to bring up today is that we have a German shepherd police dog up in the OPP in the Orillia area. His name is Luger, and he's retiring on May 13. I mean, I'm not trying to drag this thing out, but I think it's very important. He's a canine drug dog, and I've seen him at a number of OSPCA events in the past. This dog in particular has solved over 300 cases, where he has actually tracked down the criminal, whether it was through drugs, theft or whatever it may be—over 300 cases. You can imagine the value a dog like that to the Ontario Provincial Police.

Even yesterday, when I was at the police memorial service here at Queen's Park, I can tell you that a number of the police services from across Ontario—I can't recall how many exactly—but a number of them had their police dogs at the police memorial day. As well, there were at least 25 or 30 officers on horses as well.

Of course, the sad story that happened this past weekend was the Kentucky Derby race. I don't know how many people actually saw that this weekend, but the favourite horse won; the horse's name was Big Brown. The only filly in the race placed second, five lengths behind Big Brown and quite a bit ahead of the other

contenders in the race, but she broke both her legs at the finish line. It was a pretty sad day in sport to actually see that happen on the TV right in front of your eyes. They had to euthanize her right on the spot. Those were just three things I wanted to add to the debate when we're talking a little bit about animals in general, and three completely different cases.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the OSPCA. I have two branches in my riding: in Midland and Orillia. I attend most of their fundraising events that I can get to. We're building a new branch in Midland, a beautiful new facility, and I'm actually meeting tomorrow with a representative of the OSPCA. We have a member on the board of directors of the OSPCA, Jean Belfour from Orillia, who keeps me in tune. At the meeting tomorrow with Mrs. Belfour, I want to raise a number of issues that have come forward to my office that I'd like to discuss with both the representatives tomorrow and Mrs. Belfour before we get to committee.

On committee, and I think a number of people have brought this up today, there's one thing that's very important that we do: This bill affects rural Ontario, so this can't just be a Queen's Park piece of legislation. We have to travel this bill, and I'm hoping that we're going to see northern, central, eastern and western Ontario, as well as Queen's Park. It would be a shame to have a bill like this go through—especially a bill that the government brags they haven't changed in 90 years. Surely, after 90 years, it would be worth going up to Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, possibly out to Peterborough, Goderich, or some of these communities, and making sure that we can actually debate the bill and listen to the public.

When we did the media event, I had a number of concerns right after that. A few hunters and farmers called—they hadn't heard anything from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture at that point—and I even had a call from one of the humane societies. The bill was promoted and hailed so much as a roadside zoo bill that I actually said to those people, "I don't think there are any problems with this bill. I think it's directed only at roadside zoos, and there should be no problem with it whatsoever." I tried to take away their fears. But then I asked the question in the House—I believe this happened on April 15. I have a number of things I want to read into the record today. The question I asked the minister was this:

"My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, recently you introduced Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, which you hailed as an act to regulate roadside zoos. We're starting to get a few mixed messages on Bill 50.

"Minister, can you explain to the House what impact, if any, this bill will have on those citizens participating in hunting and angling and what impact, if any, Bill 50 will have on farmers and farm animals?"

The honourable minister replied: "I think we were very clear at the press conference when we introduced the legislation that other acts would obviously not be tampered with. We have to ensure that farm animals are regulated by OMAFRA.

"We will ensure that what we're dealing with is the care of animals. We will state what our mandate is. We will ensure that we have the toughest laws in Canada. We will ensure that finally, with the bringing of age of the animal welfare act, we will be able to illustrate and promote legislation that is the best in Canada."

In my supplementary I replied: "Minister, I can't find any local federation of agriculture that is even aware of the contents of this bill. They only heard about it on the day that you made the announcement. As recently as last evening, at an Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters reception here at Queen's Park, I was informed that OFAH has some very real concerns about this bill and has had very little input."

"My question to the minister is: Will you commit to this House today that during the drafting of regulations relating to Bill 50, you will include representatives from hunting, fishing and agricultural organizations and use their expertise in drafting the regulations for this bill?"

His response was this—and this is what I think had a lot of alarm bells go off across some of our stakeholders: "That's a legitimate question," he replied. "It's a question that deserves a legitimate answer"—and I expected a legitimate answer, whatever that means. "Certainly, we had great input from all different stakeholders in Ontario with regard to that. That's why we got back the following endorsements.

"From the World Society for the Protection of Animals"—the people who were lobbying for this bill—"For years, WSPA has witnessed and fought against the suffering of countless animals in roadside zoos.

"We look forward to working with the government in this positive new direction."

The other example he used was from the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' chief executive officer, Kate MacDonald, the girl who got \$5 million two weeks earlier: "We are pleased that the government has recognized the need to modernize and toughen animal welfare laws and create stiffer penalties for those convicted."

"We were very inclusive in our consultation. We will continue that as we work through this legislation."

What happened with that particular question in the House is that the minister didn't respond to the question: Could he have hunters and fishermen, or maybe members of a humane society or people from the agricultural community, actually sit and help draft regulations as, say, the legal representatives or whatever? I didn't get an answer to the question. That's when I had a lot of feedback—and the feedback continued to last night, when I got about a 50-page fax from one organization. So if we think the bill is perfect and just needs some tiny amendments, we have some big problems.

For example, here's what the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has put out. Now, I've heard a lot from the local members, like the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture, for example. Dave Riddell called me immediately and I've been trying to work with him. I know a lot of the other members in the House from rural

Ontario have had that as well. What I got on Sunday was this: "Mr. Dunlop, further to my voice message left on Sunday, below you will see the OFA has issued an advisory to its constituents." Now, this is from the Ontario federation's board of directors executive staff, county federations, commodity organizations:

"Bill 50 Alert," sent Friday, May 2. "On April 3, the Ontario government introduced Bill 50, amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

The OFA and its partners have been following the development and progress of the amendments. While we do not condone cruelty towards any animal, be they live-stock, pets or wildlife, we do believe that the sum of the proposed amendments requires study and clarification, particularly in relation to their impact and/or application to agriculture.

#### 0950

"It is our understanding that second reading debate on Bill 50 will begin Monday, May 5.

"We urge farmers to speak with their MPP and request that Bill 50 be sent to a legislative committee for public hearings following second reading.

"Furthermore, we believe that these public hearings should be held across Ontario to allow farmers, anglers and hunters the opportunity to be heard on Bill 50."

So they're back to what I was saying. The agriculture organizations—and that's from the OFA—are expecting this provincial Legislature to hold these public hearings not only here at Queen's Park, which some people think is the centre of the universe, but outside, in rural Ontario, where there will be many, many impacts of this bill, so we'll have heard of the impacts.

I wanted to say also that I had a lot of feedback from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Right now, they're putting it through their legal department. I'm sure they'll have a number of concerns with the bill, but I'll just read this in:

"The following is a quick summary of the points we raised on the phone earlier today." I was talking to a representative from the OFAH. "I have also attached a copy of the Manitoba act... The OFA and the OFAC were briefed earlier today by senior government officials. They kept referring to those of us who have concerns about the act as 'alarmists.'" So if you're against the act, you're an alarmist—from the ministry staff.

"There are some good things about the act; for instance, we don't have a problem about the roadside zoos and exotic animals, but the following sums up some of our preliminary concerns."

(1) The act "should adopt the Manitoba approach and Manitoba legislation which has been in place for 12 years. The Manitoba act contains a much clearer definition of 'distress' and the exemptions/exceptions are contained in the act itself, not in its regulations, which are much easier to change to suit. The Manitoba act embodies a much clearer and better approach to the issue than the existing OSPCA act or what is being proposed. (You should know that those briefing OFA suggested that

legislation was much easier to change than regulations, and therefore, by putting the exceptions in the regulations, they are much safer and harder to change”—that’s questionable.

“(2) The chief inspector sets the standards for hiring and qualifications for inspectors, but the act contains nothing that speaks to what the chief inspector’s qualifications should be.”

(3) We “should push to have a qualified veterinarian as chief inspector if the OSPCA is to maintain the enforcement role.” That one is an interesting concept.

“(4) The conflict of interest between enforcement responsibilities and fundraising as a non-profit—they use some of the most sensational cases they charge and prosecute as fodder for fundraising.

“(5) Accountability: The OSPCA is not accountable to anyone. They receive public money and are being” given “increased enforcement powers, including warrantless searches, but are accountable to no government body.” That’s something we’ll have to make sure is in the act, that there is accountability there.

“(6) The ministry has suggested that section 11(5) pertaining to obstruction would include vexatious complaints as an example of what would qualify as obstruction under this section, and therefore, the bill protects anglers, hunters and farmers from vexatious complaints. What they fail to note is that the OSPCA accepts anonymous complaints, so are they going to determine what’s vexatious or who may be behind it?”

“(7) The act refers to fish and animals in the wild. What does this mean for fish in provincial and volunteer hatcheries? Are they exempt?”

“(8) The definition of distress is being changed to ‘immediate distress,’ much more troubling in terms of what this could be interpreted to mean. This is particularly troubling given that OSPCA inspectors will be able to engage in warrantless searches on the basis of ‘immediate distress,’ whatever that means—and in whose definition?”

“These are just a few of the opening concerns we have, and we’ll be in a better position to provide more as the process unfolds and we have a strategy in place. We strongly agree that the bill should be subject to a traveling road show, but we will apply to appear before the committee in Toronto. It is clear that the Premier has made a promise to the OSPCA and is attempting to fulfill this in haste, and we appreciate your assistance in slowing down the process to allow for thoughtful debate.”

That comes from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Of course, as you know, there are over 80,000 members of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Most of us in rural Ontario have a number of conservation clubs or hunting and angling clubs in our ridings.

I have some more on the OFAH after, but I want to go to the third group that has contacted me, and that was just this weekend—I’m sorry; first of all, it was groups like environmental wildlife centres. They have some concerns as well. I got one call from the Wye Marsh Wildlife

Centre up in Midland. They have some serious concerns because they have in captivity snakes, turtles and animals you would keep inside. They were wondering just how they would be impacted. I can’t even remember all the animals that are there. I see them every time I go by, but I can’t remember what they are now; as well, a number of birds—falcons and hawks etc. So that was the third one.

I wanted to get over to the Toronto Humane Society for a minute because there are a couple of things I wanted to read into the record on that. The summary—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The Tim Trow letter.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yes, we’ve got lots of Tim Trow letters.

In the summary of what’s wrong with Bill 50: It “centralizes what up to now has been community choice.

“Bill 50 turns the current voluntary membership of community humane societies and shelters in the OSPCA into something effectively mandatory because if a shelter doesn’t want to join or if, as a member, it is thrown out, its corporate name will be stripped from it by operation of law. This would lead to fundraising damage and difficulty for the public to identify and find services.

“These shelters were built by communities, not government or the OSPCA. Why should the government effectively expropriate the use of their assets and silence their independent voices? Already, and the bill has yet to become law, the OSPCA calls itself ‘one voice for animal welfare in Ontario,’ notwithstanding that 235 independent animal protection charities are registered for Ontario with the Canada Revenue Agency.

“Will the ‘one voice’ be friendly to the government? Freedom from municipal taxation—OSPCA ... ongoing funding” of \$1.2 million, a grant of \$2 million and now \$5 million. “How can this not co-opt the animal welfare movement, even if it is not the intention?”

“Minister Wynne has been telling people that they have made a governing body. If so, it is riddled with conflict that the government’s own Grant Thornton study warned against,” and we can see that below.

There is no reform. “The OSPCA act still gives a monopoly and excludes police.

“Why should an animal shelter be forced by the government to mount and pay for a police force and be involved in law enforcement? They are first and foremost caregivers.

“Why doesn’t Bill 50 change the prohibition against police helping animals in distress in the OSPCA act, subsection 11(3), to allow communities to have local municipal police help animals in distress rather than to continue to give the OSPCA a monopoly?”

“The minister has already allowed the OSPCA to keep bankers’ hours, so the police have to stand by when they are off the job. (The OSPCA letter to police chiefs is cleverly deceptive, leaving the impression that the police can help animals in distress when they can’t. Sure, the police can enforce the Criminal Code, but the powers under the act won’t be used if the OSPCA doesn’t use them, and the police can’t, under subsection 11(3)).

“No reform: OSPCA remains unaccountable, yet it is a police force.

“No accountability to Queen’s Park’s institutions of transparency and accountability: OSPCA is not a scheduled agency and is not amenable to the Auditor General, the freedom of information commissioner, the Ombudsman or the Management Board. It is a private and not a public police force, not amenable under the Police Act, unlike normal police forces with police services board, to give public or objective input—all in-house OSPCA.

“Bill 50, section 22(2)(a), will have the chief inspector covered by ministerial regulations for the first time for some things, but it falls short of a wall between the inspectorate and the politics of the OSPCA board, who still hire and supervise him, and won’t provide a forum for the public to access. The minister shouldn’t be the chief animal cop anyhow. It’s silly and unprofessional.

“Operationally unaccountable: See turning away lost animals”—and this is all part of the Grant Thornton report. They “recently closed down Dryden, Kenora and Parry Sound branches, closed the Scarborough branch and substituted a postbox in a strip mall. All this involves less police, not to speak of less help for animals.

#### 1000

“Who polices the OSPCA” anyway? “Nobody. There is nobody but themselves to write orders to protect animals in distress in their own shelters or to check what they do to animals. They put a private detective on the Toronto Humane Society to spy on us surreptitiously. Their board members themselves, including Devin Strouband, whom the minister invited to sit in the gallery when he introduced Bill 50, personally raided our shelter unannounced, grilled us like animals and grabbed at our confidential medical records.

“No fair internal accountability: As a corporation, section 19 of the Ontario SPCA act lets the board of directors off the hook as if it were a government body and not a private charity where the board should be accountable for its actions and affairs. The board is also effectively immune from lawsuit, with nothing to prevent it from using taxpayer dollars or charitable dollars built up over the years to fend off people aggrieved.

“There is also a board of 12. Ten are elected by the 31 affiliated humane societies and two are also elected by the 31 affiliated humane societies to be representatives of branches which have no vote, no matter how tiny the affiliate or how large the branch. This means that Barrie, Brantford, Hanover, Goderich, Chatham, Brockville, Napanee, Midland, Bracebridge, Orangeville, Orillia, Woodstock, Stratford, Petawawa, Scarborough, North York, Cornwall, Sudbury, New Liskeard and York region get no vote and have Ottawa, Hamilton etc. vote for them as if they were children.

“Many branches are large and would be viable as independent affiliates. There is no public accounting as to how much money spent in Newmarket is stripped from them. The minister’s own consultant, Grant Thornton, paid for with \$100,000 in taxpayers’ dollars, said this was unfair, and the minister let the OSPCA rewrite the report maybe even with his ADM”—I’m not sure what

that means. “Branches have to accept policing and animal care dictated by Newmarket.

“Bill 50 increases the conflicts of interest in OSPCA governance and at its board by bestowing such power to penalize other humane societies not represented on the board by being able to trigger the stripping of their names and damage their fundraising capabilities.

“OSPCA gets effective control of private charity assets in 31 cities in Ontario. They have already drafted new bylaws they intend to run through their AGM on May 10, 2008”—which, of course, is coming up on Saturday, I guess it is, or Friday—“to include for the first time interference in policy, shelter operations, and charitable donations.

“There is no public accountability for taxpayers’ money or requirement that they spend it on animals rather than salting it away in investments.

“Fifteen years ago, the OSPCA owned 50 acres on Yonge Street in Aurora. They made millions when they sold it. Where has it gone and why do they cry poor all the time? The government hired Grant Thornton, who told them to stop pouring taxpayers’ money into the OSPCA until it was more accountable. What new accountabilities did the government get before pouring in the latest \$5 million?

“One thing Bill 50 is not just is a ‘modernizing’ of language, as the minister told Peter Worthington. It is a huge change brought about without public consultation. In our case, it was a phony consultation. The Toronto Humane Society met with the minister a week before he introduced the bill and he didn’t even hint at this.

“The bill also doesn’t acknowledge in exploratory notes or in the bill itself that the bill covers up the likely unconstitutionality of section 10 of the OSPCA act that may colour what it does. (It is unconstitutional because it prohibits individuals from associating to help animals, making it illegal for a few ladies, for example, to feed hungry birds etc. Freedom of association is a fundamental right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.)

“It gets cabinet off the hook from having to annul the OSPCA bylaws if they are not proper under subsection 7(3) of this act. We asked the minister to look into this and assure us they were legal and not ultra vires, and he refused.

“Bill 50 also solves the fights, some legal and with lawyers, in favour of the OSPCA that the OSPCA is having with small humane societies that aren’t even members of the OSPCA in Marathon, Manitowadge, Burlington, Mississauga, Picton and Collingwood that the OSPCA is trying to force to drop the ‘humane society.’

In summary on this part: The minister can’t say he is unaware of things at the OSPCA because he has a civil servant, Mr. Mike Zimmerman, ‘embedded’ at the OSPCA. He is part of ... their board meetings and even audits inspector training.”

So those are some of the comments that came from one organization, the Toronto Humane Society. As you

can see, they're quite concerned about where we're actually going with this.

Now, that gets me over to—how much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Ten minutes.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Am I down to 10 minutes?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** No, no; you've got 31 minutes.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I know the government put out this announcement on April 1 around the funding of the OSPCA, and it reads: "The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will use a one-time capital grant of \$5 million from the Ontario government to upgrade its facilities and computer systems. The society will also improve its services in northern communities. The provincial grant is part of Ontario's plan to strengthen the province's animal welfare system. Last August, the government increased funding for the OSPCA to \$500,000 per year, an increase of more than 400%. The province provided the funds to support the training of inspectors and agents. The government also provided \$100,000 to help the OSPCA work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to put in place an interim zoo inspection plan."

My question now, and I hope some of the members of the government can help me with this in the summary or when we get to committee hearings, but I'm really concerned about how much other humane societies received across the province. Is all the money, the \$5 million—I'm not aware of any other organization getting any money from the Ontario government. I was curious if we could get that clarified.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What about the cricket club?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** No, I'm talking about the humane societies and the other branches. Certainly, there is a lot of fundraising that takes place in all of these organizations, and I want to make sure that we'll actually find out the true answers to that.

As well, starting on Saturday, a very interesting article came out from Peter Worthington in the Toronto Sun. He's written a number of articles over the last few years. He loves animals and pets etc. He wrote an article, and I felt that it was such a good article, we should read it into the record, because it really does sum up a lot of the things that I expect we will hear at the committee hearing.

"Fighting Like Cats and Dogs: Animal Welfare Groups at Odds over Who May Use 'Humane Society.'"

This is on a number of websites now, but I think it's important.

"At the first reading on April 3 of Bill 50—to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act—there was wide approval for updating the 90-year-old legislation.

"Sentences for cruelty to or abuse of animals were stiffened, standards imposed on so-called 'roadside zoos' where none existed before. To the uninitiated, or unwary, the future of animals looked encouraging.

"Hugh Coghill, chief inspector with the Ontario SPCA, emotionally called it 'a great day for the animals.'

"Maybe. Then again, maybe not.

"Largely unnoticed in Bill 50 is the revision of section 10 in the old act that says no society, association or group 'established after the 30th day of May, 1955,' shall function as an animal welfare or cruelty prevention organization 'unless it is incorporated and becomes affiliated' with what then was the Ontario Humane Society and is now renamed the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA).

"Thus, animal welfare bodies in business prior to 1955 seemed to escape domination by the OSPCA, which has been rent asunder in recent years by controversy, weak finances, mass resignations, internal feuds, etc.

"Section 10 in the new act is revised to say only groups affiliated with the OSPCA shall 'use the name "humane society" ... or "spca" or the equivalent of any of those names ...'

"Giving the OSPCA control over the name 'humane society' (which it has dropped and no longer uses) has caused alarm among some, who believe it gives the OSPCA undue power to threaten and intimidate.

"The Toronto Humane Society (THS) has feuded over the years with the OSPCA. Although it has been in existence for 121 years and is a beloved Toronto institution, the THS feels vulnerable with this amended clause.

"It means that if we break our affiliation with the OSPCA, or they kick us out for any reason, by this new law we could lose our name—a name that has meant goodwill and trust for generations, and is essential to our fundraising,' says Tim Trow, president of the THS.

"Donations from the public and gifts are our only source of funds. We get no grants, no handouts from government.'

#### 1010

"Last week, Trow wrote to Rick Bartolucci, Ontario's Minister of Community Safety, urging the removal of the inflammatory section from Bill 50. He called it 'an insurmountable conflict of interest because the Ontario SPCA will become both regulator and fundraising competitor to its 32 affiliates.'

"He said Bill 50 will, 'upon enactment, strip the names and identities of other charities amongst the 235 Ontario animal protection charities registered with the Canadian Revenue Agency.'

"The Toronto Humane Society depends on the OSPCA for inspectors in animal abuse cases. Other than the police, they are the only ones licensed to carry out investigations and lay charges. There's rarely disagreement when abuses are found. But Trow accuses the OSPCA leadership of hiring private detectives to check up on the Toronto Humane Society, including surreptitious interviews of staff.

"The OSPCA has a poor record with saving animals, and always needs money, and would love to get its hands on the Toronto Humane Society's fundraising abilities,' says Trow.

“Put bluntly, our name is our greatest asset. If we had to change our name after 121 years, it would be devastating.

“Last year we had an enviable record for saving animals—75% of our dogs and cats were adopted; our euthanasia rate was 6%,” which is very low. “The OSPCA won’t tell how many it adopts and how many it kills.’ (The euthanasia rate at the Toronto Animal Services—the pound, in other words—is roughly 50%, a far cry from the THS’s, which is 6%.”

“Those who think the OSPCA would never move against the Toronto Humane Society might consider what’s happening in Burlington. In 1974, Animal Aid was formed after the Burlington Humane Society (affiliated with what is now the OSPCA) quit in 1970 over a dispute with the city’s animal shelter program to sell animals for research.

“Animal Aid took over the role, and the name, of ‘humane society’ and ever since has functioned as such. In 1999, the Hamilton SPCA decided to include Burlington, to form a joint SPCA, even though it has no shelter in Burlington. Local people will have to depend on the present Burlington Humane Society.

“The Hamilton-Burlington SPCA has threatened to sue the Burlington Humane Society, but until the new OSPCA act, there was nothing to prevent Burlington using the ‘humane society’ name.

“Jolene Regan, president of the all-volunteer BHS, says the membership approved, and ‘Burlington Humane Society’ became their legal name, filed with Industry Canada and incorporated in 2006.

“‘We have good working relations with the city and with the city’s animal control shelter,’ says Regan. ‘Hamilton’s interest in Burlington is because we’re a relatively affluent community for fundraising.’

“Like Burlington, the Mississauga Humane Society is volunteer-based and unaffiliated with the OSPCA, which has a reputation of being dogmatic and dysfunctional, a view shared by the Toronto Humane Society leadership.

“Regan is concerned the Hamilton SPCA has a ‘zero-kill’ policy—it will not put down any animal. This means it will not accept most sick or injured animals but directs them to the city’s animal control services, which shares the same building with the Hamilton SPCA.

“It’s cruel to keep some animals alive, says Regan. ‘You try to help them all, but some can’t be saved.’

“In other words, the Hamilton SPCA accepts healthy animals for adoption, while sick or unwanted animals go to animal control for execution.

“Like the Toronto Humane Society, Regan worries that the wording on the new SPCA act gives the OSPCA a weapon to prevent the use of the name ‘humane society.’

“A spokesperson for Bartolucci says the controversial wording in Bill 50 is mere ‘modernizing of the language and not intended to change the existing situation.’ The intent is to have better control over cruelty and abuse of animals, and not to prevent people caring for animals.

“He didn’t think banning organizations from using the word ‘humane society’ unless they were affiliated with the OSPCA posed a danger to, say, the Mississauga and Burlington humane societies, which are independent (as are the Marathon, Collingwood and Picton humane societies), or Toronto, which is affiliated but which the OSPCA envies and resents.

“If the ministry believes this, it doesn’t understand the issue.

“To avoid a snakepit of future controversy, before the next reading of Bill 50, the words ‘humane society’ should be removed from the sentence that says the OSPCA has sole disposition on who can use that name.

“It’s ludicrous, when one thinks about it. Both the OSPCA and Hamilton have abandoned the ‘humane society’ identification for themselves, but want to prevent any except those affiliated with them from using it.

“Bartolucci is to be commended for updating the act, but he should familiarize himself with the OSPCA’s turmoiled history, and that in the past it has proved unreliable in dealing judiciously with power.”

That’s what I read from Mr. Peter Worthington, who wrote that article in the Toronto Sun, I believe on Saturday.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You’ve still got 21 minutes. You may have to read it again.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** No, I’ve got lots to read here. I hope it’s not too painful, Peter. Quite frankly, I’m really looking forward to the NDP’s leadoff time of one hour as well.

Also on a website, I believe from the Toronto Humane Society:

“Urgent—Bill 50 Flawed—Urgent.

“Let’s work together in asking the provincial government to rethink and withdraw section 6 of Bill 50.” I think this was mentioned a little bit earlier.

“Section 6 of Bill 50 will result in community shelters that either don’t want to be affiliated with the Ontario SPCA, or shelters that the Ontario SPCA itself doesn’t want as affiliates, being stripped automatically of their names by the Legislature.

“It could happen to the Toronto Humane Society or other any other humane society across the province, without a hearing procedure or appeal to the courts provided for in the bill.

“Losing your name is losing your identity. Fear of being stripped of names used in communities for generations will stifle debate and discussion.

“The Ontario SPCA favours one voice for animal welfare in Ontario, but we know that our strength as a movement is in its many voices. We ask the Ontario SPCA to rethink its support for Bill 50, which could result in hurting other humane societies.

“Ontario’s animal welfare movement does not belong to the government or to the Ontario SPCA. It belongs to the communities that built shelters without government or OSPCA money, organizations which have earned the right to call themselves ‘humane societies’ and the right to speak out on their own on the issues of the day.”

They want everyone to contact their MPPs on this particular issue. It's on the Toronto Humane Society's website.

Mr. Speaker, you know that recently there has been a petition floating around the House, and I want to put that on the record as well. I know these will all come back a little later on when we get to committee, but I want to make sure that this is read into the record, and we can add some more a little later on. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Provincial Animal Welfare Act calls for the Ontario SPCA, a private charity, whose objective is to facilitate and provide for the prevention of cruelty to animals and their protection and relief therefrom; and

"Whereas every inspector and agent hired and trained by this private charity has and may exercise any of the powers of a police officer; and

"Whereas this private charity does not answer to the Ombudsman or the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Ontario SPCA is not subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and no external mechanism of accountability exists; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government refused to investigate the desperate plea of 29 resigned directors demanding that the Ontario SPCA be stripped of police powers"—in May 2006—"and

"Whereas the McGuinty government proposes sweeping reforms to the Provincial Animal Welfare Act granting further extraordinary powers to the Ontario SPCA, including the power of warrantless entry;

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

"(1) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to investigate allegations of abuse of police powers and charter violations by the Ontario SPCA investigators; and

"(2) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to explore the need for an external mechanism of accountability for the Ontario SPCA; and

"(3) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to ensure that proposed changes to the Provincial Animal Welfare Act do not violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

That is a petition that's been floating around the province, and it has had a great impact on this particular bill.

There has been a lot of correspondence between the minister's office and the Toronto Humane Society. I believe Ms. DiNovo had mentioned it a little bit earlier, but I wanted to read that letter in as well.

**1020**

"The Honourable Rick Bartolucci"—

This was on April 29 of this year.

"Dear Minister Bartolucci:

"Re: An open letter to Ontarians concerning Bill 50, Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008.

"We write to ask you to remove section 6 from Bill 50. Section 6 provides that community-built shelters that

either don't want to be affiliates of the Ontario SPCA, or shelters that the Ontario SPCA itself does not want as affiliates, will be stripped automatically of their names by the Legislature.

"Historically in Ontario, the many voices of the province's animal welfare movement have been its strength. If the result of Bill 50 is but one voice, Bill 50 will have stifled debate and diversity and will have weakened what has been built up in communities over generations.

"Bill 50's role for the Ontario SPCA appears to be one of insurmountable conflict of interest because the Ontario SPCA will become both regulator and fundraising competitor to its 32 affiliates.

"In addition, Ontario's animal welfare movement is wider than the Ontario SPCA or its affiliates. Bill 50 will instantly, upon enactment, strip the names and identities of other charities among the 235 Ontario animal protection charities registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

"Bill 50 provides for no decision-making process and no appeal to the courts. It provides no explanation as to why it is necessary for the Legislature to take away the identities of any charities.

"Sanctions against holding out or infringing a corporate name already exist in Ontario law. In the case of the Toronto Humane Society, there can be no confusion because there is no similarity between 'The Toronto Humane Society' and the 'Ontario SPCA.'

"The Toronto Humane Society is a well-known Ontario landmark, a hospital and a shelter, caring for both wild and domestic animals. We employ 150 caregivers, and, at any time, 500 volunteers provide recuperative or palliative care as foster parents, feed orphan kittens in the nursery, groom cats, or walk dogs.

"We serve province-wide, one-third of our clients coming to us from beyond our Toronto area.

"The Toronto Humane Society has grown and prospered since 1887 because of the generous support of financial contributors and members. We do not receive, and never have received, government funding or funding from the Ontario SPCA.

"Our name is how we have been identified for 121 years. It has been entrusted to us by successive provincial governments and it represents the goodwill and trust of generations.

"Our name is how we speak to supporters and donors, and it is how they identify us in their wills or in other giving. It is how volunteers and animal caregivers find us and it is how clients access our services—rescuing animals, reuniting lost animals, saving injured wildlife, providing veterinary care, extending shelter and providing homes.

"Take away our name and identity and you jeopardize our ability to provide essential animal care to citizens when they are desperate and in need.

"Please remove section 6 from Bill 50.

"Thank you."

That's signed by Tim Trow, the president of the Toronto Humane Society.

I think you'll see a lot of that letter circulating over the next few weeks as we get into committee etc. and actually start to debate it. I know that organizations like the Toronto Humane Society have a great deal of respect across our country. In fact, I believe all of the animal shelters have a great deal of respect across our country and our province. I hope we can listen to some of these concerns.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the exemptions. This goes back to section 8 of the bill, section 11.2 of the act. The exceptions are subsections on the "exception" to this bill:

"(a) native wildlife and fish in the wild in prescribed circumstances or conditions;

"(b) activities carried on in accordance with reasonable and generally accepted practices of agricultural animal care, management or husbandry; or

"(c) a prescribed class of animals or animals living in prescribed circumstances or conditions, or prescribed activities."

When you see something that vague in the exceptions, that is why you'll see a lot of organizations like the Toronto Humane Society, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the OFA—you can see why they have a lot of worry with this. That's why I asked the question to the minister about why they would not be part of the committee that actually helped to draft the regulations. I just can't see the loss for the government on that. I think it would be something that would show a lot of care and a lot of interest from the general community as they move forward with that.

As the minister said earlier, and I think the parliamentary assistant said as well, it has been 90 years since we've had a bill like this, or since we've done major work on this particular legislation. If it has been 90 years, this may require summer travel. I'm not too sure how the other parties feel about that. But if we're not able to do appropriate travel with this bill between now and the end of June, I would hope that they would agree to travel with the bill. I'm thinking of communities like Sudbury, the Soo, Thunder Bay, North Bay, some of those communities up there; eastern Ontario, Peterborough or Cornwall, something like that; perhaps Barrie or Orillia in that area, Newmarket; western Ontario, Goderich or Strathroy, some of those communities.

There are a lot of opportunities to move this bill around. I believe many amendments will be coming. I told the parliamentary assistant at the—this parliamentary assistant here. Are there two parliamentary assistants to the Ministry of Community Safety? Okay, there are. I told him on the Christopher's Law bill that I felt we would have a lot of amendments to this bill. We went along, we basically agreed, with everything in the Christopher's Law amendments. It was a bill that was easily passed.

I think we'll be more serious about this one. I think we're going to need to take the time to get this bill right. After 90 years, if major amendments are required, I think we have to listen all of the stakeholders and work as best

we can on that. We should try to get it right. As the OFAH has said, they believe the federal legislation and the Manitoba legislation really get it right. I think it took 11 years to get the federal legislation the way they actually wanted it. I think it would be really very positive if we could move in that direction.

I wanted to also, while I have the floor—this is one bill I don't think we can blame on the federal government. It's not their fault, anyway. Is it?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Oh, it's the federal government's fault. I'm so used to everything that comes down to being the federal government's fault. Blame it on Jim Flaherty. This is one we can't say is Mr. Flaherty's or Mr. Hunter's fault.

The minister is bringing this bill forward, and we're going to do the best we can to try to support this. We want the proper amendments. We want to make sure that all these stakeholders are listened to, as I've pointed out, and I've got a lot more I could read into the record.

We want to make sure we go ahead with this and do it in a very positive manner. No one in this House wants to see the distress of any animals, whether they're in captivity or in the wild. But the minister continues to fight with the federal government.

I go back to the policing situation, where the federal government—it's not their responsibility, but out of a good message to Canadians, they made a campaign promise, and they have delivered on that promise to provide 2,500 new police officers to this country.

Each time the minister speaks anywhere, or if he answers a question in the House, he condemns the federal government for coming up with \$156 million to help policing. I don't know how you can complain about another level of government giving you money that they're not required to give you. The money that's required for law and order is the duty and responsibility of the province of Ontario in this case.

I've got to tell you, I had a number of police officers yesterday ask me how the \$156 million is being spent and when we will begin to see some of the 1,000 police officers required for Ontario: 500 for the OPP and 500 for non-municipal contract policing to other police services. I think there had to be 4,000 or 5,000 police officers at Queen's Park yesterday. Over the barbecue we had after, and prior to it, many of the police officers from different associations and the OPP etc. mentioned to me that they were all concerned about when that money would be spent.

**1030**

If the province would put money in this year and use part of the fifth of the money coming from the federal government, it could put 200 police officers on the streets of Ontario by the end of the budget year 2008-09. If they did that each year, they would use up the \$156 million, and at the end of five years we would have 1,000 additional police officers on the streets of our province.

I think we in this House should support the federal government and the work it has done to bring forward

this program. It would certainly help our police services across Ontario if we quit battering away, every time we get a chance, at the federal government and started supporting them in what I believe is a very positive initiative. It's not something you can finger-point on anymore; it's something that we have to take advantage of.

In conclusion—I'm just about out of time here—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** No, no. You've got five minutes.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It's hard to carry on very long in this—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm getting stronger and stronger in my riding, to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I know they want me to use my full time.

I've never had a lot of pets in my life. We've had a couple of dogs and a cat, but most of my family members have cats and dogs. We have a new golden retriever named Happy in my daughter's family, and he's beautiful.

Nobody wants to see any animal under any kind of punishment or cruelty or distress. I think, as we work our way through this legislation, we'll want to make sure that the people are listened to. When we get out there, when we get on our road show and we visit all these different communities—and I really hope we will do that—we'll listen to animal shelters, the roadside zoo people. I didn't get a chance to talk to you a little bit earlier about the roadside zoo just south of my riding. It's actually in Speaker Wilson's riding. It's the Elmvale Jungle Zoo. They have had customers there for decades, as far as I know. I have never heard a complaint about the place. There may be, for all I know, but it's certainly not a business that has been under the microscope by any one particular group of people, whether it be the OSPCA or the police, or even farm organizations. I may get some e-mails on it now; maybe there have been some problems. But it looks like they have large fields, high fences, and I would have to say that the animals are well looked after at the Elmvale Jungle Zoo.

In a perfect world, all of our zoos, all of our animals that are kept in captivity, would have state-of-the-art locations. I hope that in the end the government and the people drafting the regulations for Bill 50 will work very closely with the roadside zoos, not to try to get out there and put them out of business but to give them some time, maybe even some incentives to spend money properly, to spend money in a manner that they can accommodate the animals held in those zoos and make them good tourist attractions and profitable little businesses as well, at the same time making sure that all animals held in captivity in the large zoos or small zoos are looked after in a humane manner.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to thank you for the opportunity to say a few words today to Bill 50. It has been a long, painful morning to get through this first hour, but we do our job here to try to get all the points on the record. I can just tell you that although Bill 50 is basically supported by people in this House, there are a lot of amendments to come. We need to make sure that

we get this bill right and we don't fool around, pass it quickly and then find out, like some of the other legislation we've had here, that we're back amending it six months from now. We want to make sure that we get it right the first time, and that means listening to the public, the humane societies, the farmers, the hunters, the fishermen, anybody that has anything to do with protecting our animals and our wildlife—making sure we send a positive message that, after 90 years, we will get this bill right, and that we will get it right in the final passing of third reading.

I want to put on the record that I really hope—and I have put it on the record earlier in this speech—that we can travel with this bill and not just get to one of these subcommittee meetings and say, "We'll have one location in Newmarket and the rest of the meetings at Queen's Park." This bill needs to be travelled. It does affect rural Ontario. It does affect small businesses. It will send a message to rural Ontario that we actually care about them here if we can travel with this bill.

Listen to the farm organizations. I know that the people at the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture would love to make a deputation, as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I'm sure all the members of this House who are from communities with federations of agriculture will want to have their representatives there as well, pointing out their different concerns and how this bill may in fact help or hinder those animals that are kept on farms, or the fish, birds and wildlife that people hunt through the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

With that, I appreciate this opportunity. I look forward to further debate and the comments on my fabulous speech that I made here this morning.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I listened with interest to my friend from Simcoe North. He raised, in an exhaustive way, I believe, all the problems with this particular bill. Again, what we have here is Liberal spin, government spin. Certainly, it's an inch forward for animals, but in particular with section 6, it's a ruling on behalf of the OSPCA. It makes one wonder whether there are Liberal members on the board of the OSPCA, because it certainly rules in favour of them.

Also, I'd like to introduce to the House Tim Trow, president of the Toronto Humane Society, whom we have here, and members of the Toronto Humane Society in the House today. We're honoured to have their presence. You've heard his letter to Mr. Bartolucci read out here. We, on their behalf, but also on behalf of many members of our constituencies, are demanding that section 6 be reworked, that it in fact be deleted from this bill. It's not necessary. It has nothing to do with the protection of animals; in fact, it goes against the protection of animals.

Mr. Trow, president of the Toronto Humane Society, wrote on their website:

"Dear friend of the animals:

"Now is the time for humanitarians across Ontario to stand together.

“Each of us should email our own MPPs urging removal of section 6 from Bill 50. We owe it to the animals who cannot speak for themselves and who will need us to speak out for them in the future as we have done in the past.”

I also want to thank my sister from Dufferin–Caledon who corrected me on my last two-minute hit: Apparently it was 50 horses that were abused on a farm. Again, this bill does nothing for them. These were not owned by a farmer, by the way. Farmers tend to look after their animals better; they depend on them. These were owned by a lawyer. I suggest that perhaps if there were more farmers in the House and less lawyers, we might get more action here.

Nothing for lost animals experimented on in laboratories; nothing for any other animals that cabinet—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Just listening to the member speak, a few things came to mind. This legislation has not been strengthened in 90 years. He talked about haste. Well, it's been 90 years that we've been waiting for animal protection in this province.

He didn't speak about the fact that there are people who are operating all kinds of breeding businesses without any regulation and without any restrictions. You need a licence to own a dog in Toronto, for instance, but you don't need a licence to breed thousands of animals. No licence is required.

No inspection: You could be breeding cats or dogs, and no inspection is allowed to see if the conditions are clean.

People are also engaged in animals for profit. They are training dogs and fowl to fight. Dogfighting and cockfighting take place in this province and no one does anything about it. It's allowed right now to train these animals to kill each other. This bill for the first time stops that.

**1040**

It allows inspection of these mills that are operating all across this province. It also ensures that the roadside zoos that are popping up everywhere are allowed to be inspected. The members opposite don't talk about that. This is long overdue protection for animals. They talk about federations and they talk about lawyers. They talk about all these interest groups. They don't talk about the fact that there are animals that are unable to defend themselves and we, as a government, for the first time in 90 years, are trying to do something—and they squabble about lawyers and federations. What about the animals that can't speak for themselves?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 50 and I compliment the member for Simcoe North on his comments. Some of the areas that are of concern are these roadside zoos that we're hearing about. I don't believe any member in this House is opposed to making sure that animals have proper care and concern over them. But where are the roadside zoos? Having worked somewhat on this file in the past, I can

see a movement toward an area that I think all members should be concerned about: Where is this standard going to for roadside zoos or zoos in general?

My understanding is that currently, in the province of Ontario, there are only two places that would be acceptable. Those would be the Toronto Zoo and, potentially, the African Lion Safari, with some modern changes to it. They may be the only acceptable locations in the province to meet that standard.

The difficulty there is that we don't know the locations of these so-called roadside zoos. Effectively, the member for Peterborough should have concern about what will take place at that particular location, and also the impact on the Bowmanville Zoo, the oldest private zoo in North America, which Mr. O'Toole, the member for Durham, constantly mentions. As well, it creates a standard of care that causes some concern, by which these locations provide a great service in our communities. Quite frankly, there are a number of us who have some concern for the rearing of the animals in those areas, and that needs to be addressed.

Also, what would take place with the impact of adoptions of animals in a number of facilities or service providers out there? Will this create a record and a filing of locations that are now going to be receptive for inspections to ensure—as was the case in California. An individual all of a sudden had the animal removed because one of the movie stars, a famous individual, could no longer comply or was not supposed to comply with caring for an animal under the guise of what was taking place in that jurisdiction. I believe there's a lot of concern and we have to make sure it goes through the committee process.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I want to take a moment to thank the member opposite for some of the on-the-record comments that others have made and for the fact that he's been able to articulate all of those concerns that are being raised. I made the commitment earlier in my speech, and I'll make it again, that we are definitely going to committee. We're going to consider all of the concerns that are being raised. As a tradition in this place, when we do go to committee, the subcommittee will make those decisions and the House leaders will have the discussions about how that's going to happen, and I respect that.

What I would also suggest to you is that, as was said before, these improvements are not inching forward. These improvements are going to be quite dramatic in terms of the protection of animals in our province. Respecting the hard work of all of those organizations over the years is what this bill will attempt to do. Nobody has a monopoly on how to care for an animal, and I respect that. I want to make sure it's clear that these organizations' comments and the input that they give will be done in a respectful way.

The second point that I want to make is the respect I have for my colleagues on all sides of the House who have previously introduced private members' bills that speak to the very essence of what this bill is trying to get to, and that is the way we treat our animals.

In terms of our relationship with the animals in the world, we need to improve. With this type of legislation that's being put before us, it's a step forward in terms of our recognition that we must get better at how animals are treated, regardless of where they are. The member also knows about the exemptions that are being offered in the legislation to ensure that other pieces of legislation from other ministries and other levels of government will take care of some—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member from Simcoe North for the response.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the members from Parkdale–High Park, Eglinton–Lawrence, Oshawa and Brant for their comments.

In summary, I think what we really wanted to get on the record today is, first of all, to comment to the House that we want extensive committee hearings on this bill. It's a bill that hasn't had major work done on it in over 90 years. We really do want to make sure we get it right. I plead with the members of the government to make sure that we listen to agricultural organizations, that we listen to hunting, fishing and angling organizations and to some of our humane societies, and use their expertise as we proceed in helping the government draft their regulations. I know that there will be many amendments that'll take place here in this House with this bill. I hope the government will listen to those amendments, and in fact, they've probably come up with a number of amendments already that they may want to see.

All of us support the protection of animals. We don't want any animals being mistreated cruelly and distress to these animals. So it's incumbent on all of us to get this bill right the first time, not to fool around with it for 10 or 15 years but to make sure that we get it right the first time and make sure the amendments will protect our animals and our shelter organizations many, many decades into the future.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I move unanimous consent for all members to wear a green ribbon, which are in the galleries, to support Children's Mental Health Week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is there agreement for wearing the green ribbons? Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I now call for introduction of members—of visitors, pardon me. Well, introduction of members: Welcome. It's nice to see everybody one here bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

It's especially nice to see our good friend the Minister of Government Services back. Welcome back, Ted.

I remind the members that under the new standing orders you are supposed to have these in my hands one hour in advance.

On behalf of the member from Mississauga-Erindale, I would like welcome students from Christ the King Catholic school in Mississauga who are visiting the Legislature today.

On behalf of the members from Ajax–Pickering, Pickering–Scarborough East and Scarborough–Agin-court, I would like to welcome the champion foursome from a charity golf tournament in the “average age over 80 years” category to the east members' gallery today: Don Sutton from Whitby, Fred Mason from Oshawa, Michael Bridgman from Pickering and Ted Arnts from Pickering.

On behalf of page Sheilagh Brenegan, the following guests are visiting this morning in the west members' gallery: her mom, Louise Hart, her grandmother Mavis Hart, her grandfather Duncan Hart, and her father, Allan Brenegan.

On behalf of page Jack Aloise, the following guests are visiting this morning in the west members' gallery: his father, Gerry Aloise, his mother, Patti Aloise, his brother Michael and his sister Nicole.

Welcome to all the guests and the other guests who are visiting Queen's Park today.

1050

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** It's great to see some children in the gallery here for the first early question period. I know they're from the 905; I don't think other parts of the province will have the same opportunity.

The question is to the Premier on Ontario's last-place economy. Your answer in the House last week when we raised the issue of increasing number of manufacturing job losses: You said—it's in Hansard—there's more to come. That was your prediction—no solution, no hope, no leadership, just what appears to be complete surrender while this great province just spirals to last place in Confederation.

In light of the fact that this is Emergency Preparedness Week, can you tell us and the people of Ontario where your emergency plan for Ontario's economy is, or are you just going to sit on the sidelines and complain to others?

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Good morning to you, Speaker. It's a wonderful opportunity to receive this question from my colleague opposite. Of course, he chooses to frame our perspective on this in a certain way, and I understand that's where he's coming from.

I think we should keep a few facts in mind. For one thing, in January, February and March of this year, we

are ahead 57,300 jobs. That's a net job gain in Ontario of 57,300 more jobs, and 97% of those were created in the private sector. In the last four and a half years, we are ahead 455,000 net new jobs, and 80% of those are full-time positions.

It is true that we have been losing manufacturing jobs, but I just don't want Ontarians to lose sight of the big picture. We are, overall, ahead, and we are still moving ahead.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I've suggested in the past that the Premier's in what appears to be a permanent state of denial about the situation in the economy in this province, and we're not alone in that—although we in the Progressive Conservative Party have consistently said that there is a way to stimulate our economy and provide hope to Ontario's families and businesses. We've talked about the immediate elimination of the capital tax, reducing government regulation, lowering corporate tax rates across the board. The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, chaired by Roger Martin, funded by your government, has said virtually the same thing. This is high-paid advice, paid for with hard-earned taxpayers' dollars. You are ignoring it, essentially, and I think Ontarians deserve to know why.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Conservative Party continues to put forward its simplistic, anachronistic, one-point plan. They maintain that all that ails us can be remedied through a dramatic reduction in taxes. They would have us take \$5 billion by way of taxes out of the mix. What they don't like to say is what the consequences are that would flow from that dramatic, reckless cutting of taxes. They don't like to talk about hospital closures. They don't like to talk about reductions to the funds we put into our schools. They don't like to talk about the reductions in supports for our most vulnerable. They don't like to talk about the reductions in the supports we put in recently that invest in the skills and education of workers who've been losing their jobs. They don't like to talk about any of those things. They don't like to reference the fact that we just cut, retroactively, \$190 million by way of capital taxes, to put that money directly into the hands of our manufacturers and resource-based sectors to give them support right now. They don't like to talk about any of those things.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** All those people the Premier just referenced are hurt the most when Ontario's economy goes down the tubes. That's the reality.

It's not just our advice and Roger Martin's you're ignoring. Your former finance minister in 2004 said, "People pay attention to the level of taxation in Ontario to make investment decisions as to whether they're going to invest in the province ... create jobs and more economic prosperity."

You've ignored our advice. You've ignored the advice of Roger Martin, your own adviser-consultant. You've ignored Mr. Sorbara and who knows how many others. We have to wonder who the Premier is taking advice from. We talk about a possible recession, we know we're entering have-not status in this province, but you get up

on your feet time after time—you are something of a serial denier. Maybe you're a secret member of the Flat Earth Society. I don't know. But we have a right to know and the people of this province have a right to know what your plan is to deal with the deteriorating situation in Ontario—

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to restate the fundamentals of our five-point plan for the benefit of the leader of the Conservative Party. First of all, we are cutting business taxes. We've eliminated capital taxes for manufacturers in the resource sector retroactive to January 2007. That means \$190 million in immediate rebates. We're investing heavily in infrastructure—\$60 billion over the course of 10 years. We are repairing, expanding and renovating schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, courthouses, housing and the like, like never before. That's creating jobs in the short term, and it's enhancing our productivity in the long term. We are investing heavily in innovation, doing much more so we can move more quickly to commercialize our ideas and turn those into jobs. We continue to partner with business. Again, this is something the Conservative Party opposes. We are partnering with business so we can create more jobs here. Finally, and most importantly, we are continuing to invest in the skills and education of our people, something they don't believe that we should be doing—

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

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** If you look at the Roger Martin reports over the last number of years, if you listen to the advice of C.D. Howe, if you listen to the advice of many other economists across this country, you'll realize that many of the decisions you've taken over the past four and a half years have been bad for the economy and have placed us in the position we're currently in. If Ontario's economy were growing 1% or even half a percent more than it is now, we wouldn't be in last place. The unemployed workers in Oshawa and Leamington wouldn't be wondering today if they're going to be able to pay their mortgages or feed their kids.

When will the Premier start to take some degree of responsibility for the contribution his decisions have had in terms of Ontario's dead-last position?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We will continue to work well and hard with the people of Ontario to lay continuing shape to our five-point plan, which is in keeping with their values, their aspirations and their history.

Speaking of history, I think it's worth our while to take a little look back at what we were left with. They had a 60-cent dollar, oil at \$30 a barrel, and a US economy that was firing on all eight cylinders. They left us with a \$5.6-billion deficit, dramatically under-resourced public services, and an unemployment rate—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** They don't like to hear this because it's painful, but they left us with an unemployment rate of 7%. The unemployment rate today in Ontario is 6.4%. It's important for them to understand the damage that they caused this economy, and, no, we will not go back to those days and those kinds of cuts.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I suspect, Premier, the folks of Ontario will be very happy to go back to the days of one million new jobs created in this province, over 700,000 people taken off the welfare rolls.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Real jobs.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Real jobs; that's right, not complete reliance on the public sector.

We're looking down the road here as well. The Premier talks about a plan, but we have around 200,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the province since July 2004. His response to that last week was, "More to come. There's more to come." Instead of saying something to the tune of, "We're going to be fighting this. We're going to be bringing in emergency measures to deal with this situation," he says that there's more to come.

The C.D. Howe Institute indicates that Ontario will remain the highest-taxed province even in 2011. Clearly you are not addressing the situation facing us, the fact that we are not being—

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the opportunity to remind Ontarians that we are doing a great deal within the fiscal constraints that are the lay of the land today. We're proud of our five-point plan that both cuts taxes and makes strategic investments.

But there's another issue, and that is, what we are doing with the additional wealth that we're sending to the federal government. I still have not heard my honourable colleague speak to this issue. I think sending \$20 billion to the federal government for distribution in the rest of the country at a time when we are challenged here in Ontario is inappropriate. I think we should be keeping some of that money so that we could engage in the kinds of discussions he, as well as the NDP, would have us have as to what kinds of additional investments we might make and whether or not we should make additional tax cuts. We can't engage in those kinds of discussions because we're not hanging on to that \$20 billion. I think Ontarians would like to know, where does the official opposition stand when it comes to that \$20 billion?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I recall when the former Progressive Conservative government brought in a resolution to express concern about the disparity, and the leader sitting across from me voted against it, along with his colleagues. He plays the blame game continuously instead of dealing with the situation.

Look at the statistics in terms of the ability of this province to compete, attract investment, retain investment, bring new jobs into this province. We're dead last in economic performance and we're down at the bottom in terms of competitive ability, taxation rates.

We can go on and on with respect to the advice he's ignoring from experts like Roger Martin, yet he gets up time and time again and blames the federal government, blames external sources, and never takes any degree of responsibility for the situation we're facing in this province.

**1100**

Once again I ask the Premier, will he get up here on his feet today and accept some degree of responsibility and take a look at his own policies? Are you saying that nothing you've done over the past—

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's obvious that Ontarians cannot rely on the Conservative Party to lift them up and to champion a stronger economy. We're going to hear nothing but negativity for weeks, months and possibly years to come.

Just to remind the members opposite about the foundation on which we are privileged to continue to build, Ontario is the number one wealth generator for Canada. We have created over one third of all new Canadian jobs since 2003. We've got nearly 40% of Canada's head offices here. We are the number one place for Canadian venture capital. We're the number one place for foreign venture capital. We're the biggest in financial services, the biggest in information communication technology, the biggest in business services, the biggest in the chemical sector, the biggest in the mining sector, the biggest in the auto sector, the biggest in manufacturing, the biggest in arts and entertainment, the biggest in private investment R&D. We have the most new business start-ups. We have the greatest investments in skills and education. We've got the highest rate of education in—

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

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Premier: Florence Coxon was an 87-year-old senior who unfortunately spent the last years of her life restrained in a wheelchair at a Toronto nursing home. A few days ago, Mrs. Coxon was apparently strangled by the strap used to restrain her in her wheelchair. Mrs. Coxon's family says that the staff at the nursing home were overworked, always on the run and simply didn't have enough time to provide the hands-on care that people like Mrs. Coxon require.

This is not a new issue. Your government announced, with much chest-thumping, in the recent budget, five more minutes of care. Premier, the question is this: Do you think five more minutes of hands-on care is sufficient for our seniors who are residents in nursing homes and long-term-care homes?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm going to have the Minister of Health speak to this in some detail momentarily, but let me just first of all, on behalf of all members, express my sympathies to the family of Mrs. Coxon and say that this is a terrible event. I know there's an in-

vestigation underway and I think it would be appropriate for all of us to await the outcome of that investigation.

What I can say is that we remain very much committed to quality of care being delivered to our parents and grandparents in Ontario's long-term-care homes. In fact, since we took office, we've increased investments there by 52%. That's more than \$1 billion. This year alone, we are putting in \$59 billion for 1,200 new nurses.

Again, my sympathies to the family, but I say to Ontarians that I think it's important that we allow for the investigation to unfold, and that we will continue to support long-term-care homes.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors has looked at the numbers that your government boasts about. They've crunched the numbers and they say that all that seniors like Mrs. Coxon would get is an additional five minutes of hands-on care. They say that what is required is 60 minutes of additional care each day.

According to Saturday's Toronto Star, it was clear to the Coxon family that front-line workers raced through every shift just to meet the basic needs of residents. My question is this: How many more families have to go through what the Coxon family is going through before this government listens to associations like non-profit homes, which say our seniors aren't getting the quality of care they need and that they need an additional 60 minutes of hands-on care?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** As the Premier has done, I'd like to add my words of condolence. Any time a family member is lost, it's obviously a very difficult circumstance.

There are two different investigations that are ongoing, one by the police and one by the compliance officials from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, who were on-site at the time, shortly after the occurrence.

I would say to the honourable member, I think we all agree, I'm sure, that adding staff in long-term-care homes is crucial. That's why there are more than 6,000 additional staff since we came to government; and at present, 1,200 RPN positions which are being implemented; and through our budget initiatives, almost 900 additional personal support workers will add to the ranks of those serving people in long-term-care homes in the province.

I can tell the honourable member that, while I agree the necessity of putting more care in the homes is foremost with respect to long-term care, we should all acknowledge a much higher standard of care in the long-term-care home environment than under either of these two governments.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Every year, the McGuinty government makes these announcements, but every year, the situation either stays the same or gets worse. Here's what the son Bill Coxon had to say about his mother's situation: "That was the problem. It was just the fact that they couldn't give her individual attention. I think that bothered me more, having my mother in a nursing home, where she was losing her memory, and she was just left

on her own. (Staff) knew her, and they talked to her, but there were just too many other residents there," to look after.

Experts, workers, families, everyone agrees that our seniors aren't getting the quality of care they need. They all say we need three and a half hours of hands-on care per day. The McGuinty government, despite all your promises, hasn't done that. I want to ask again: Do you really think just five minutes more care is enough to look after our seniors in nursing homes and homes for the aged?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to acknowledge, of course, that family members are going to respond in an appropriate circumstance, wishing for the highest degree of care possible. In the last budget of that member's opportunity to be in a government, that increase was 0.1%. Our government's investment in enhanced care and long-term care, this year alone, is close to an additional \$300 million.

The honourable member likes to talk about "five minutes," but he knows very well that the pattern is annual increases in the ratios of care, moving towards 3.25 hours of purchased care over the term of our government's mandate. We started at a number of 2.4. We're at 2.9 hours of purchased care per day. This has been a very, very substantial investment, an enhanced resource, in the form of thousands and thousands of additional people providing millions of hours of additional care in our long-term-care homes.

We agree there is more to be done. That's why our budget accounted for increased staffing.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Premier: What's needed is an hour of additional care. What you're providing is only five minutes. I think that fails by any measure.

#### WINDSOR BORDER CROSSING

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to ask the Premier about the city of Windsor, which produced a viable border-solution plan called GreenLink. It would have been good for the Ontario economy, for the residents of Windsor, for the environment, the air the people in Windsor breathe. Why is the McGuinty government ignoring Windsor's plan and instead going ahead with a plan that is clearly inferior?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question. I was very proud of the announcement that was made just last week. It demonstrates some of the great things we can do when we work hand in hand with the federal government. There's a strong consensus that—there's as much trade that goes back between Ontario and the US as the US does with Japan. That's how important that trade route is for us.

Together we've decided to invest, I think it's \$1.6 billion, in a new access road leading to the new crossing. This is a result of a lengthy process involving six levels of government, three on each side of the border. There

was extensive consultation with the local community. We think that we have landed on the best possible alternative. We very much look forward to making this investment and creating those great jobs in Windsor, where they need them right now.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier says the McGuinty government consulted and listened. This is the headline in the Windsor Star: "City Slams DRIC Plan," which is the McGuinty plan.

The GreenLink plan, which is that advocated by people in Windsor and by Windsor city council, would have done much more for the natural environment, would have created more construction jobs, but most importantly, it's what the people of Windsor and the mayor and council of Windsor wanted to see. They advocated for this.

Why is the McGuinty government failing to meet what people asked for in the consultation, what Windsor city council asked for in the consultation? Why are you trying to give them an inferior plan which is going to be bad for the air that people breathe and bad for the people of Windsor on the whole?

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**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're really proud of the process and its result. This is the most expensive roadbed ever built in Canada. Beyond that, as part and parcel of it, we're going to create at least 240 acres of parkland, more than 20 kilometres of recreational trails. It says that the Windsor-Essex Parkway will be the most significant single highway investment made in Ontario history with an estimated price of \$1.6 billion, unprecedented in its community enhancement features for any highway anywhere in Ontario, designed using Ontario's high safety standards and practices that have made this province's roads among the safest in North America.

We're proud of the co-operation that has resulted in this magnificent plan. We're proud of the fact that we're joined by the federal government in this and we look forward to moving ahead at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I've got a quote from a Windsor Star editorial: "The DRIC Plan," which is the McGuinty plan, "A Disappointing Lack of Vision," because it doesn't meet what people in Windsor and what the city of Windsor believe is necessary. This is infrastructure that has to last for the next 30 or 40 years and, frankly, they say you're failing Windsor's needs.

Furthermore, since the federal government is committed to paying 50% of this, why not do the right thing? Why not do what the people of Windsor asked for in the consultations over and over again, what the mayor and council of Windsor asked for in the consultations over and over again? Why at this time, when Windsor really needs a shot in the arm, is the McGuinty government trying to sell the people of Windsor on an inferior plan?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're talking here about a six-lane freeway with 11 tunnels and service roads. It allows long-distance international traffic to travel unimpeded by traffic signals to a new inspection plaza and river crossing, while improving community linkages and

providing extensive new trails, green space and other recreational opportunities. Trucks will be hidden from the view of homeowners, noise levels will be reduced and overall air quality conditions will improve for Windsor-Essex residents.

Here's what Jim Lyons, executive director of the Heavy Construction Association of Windsor, had to say: "We're hungry for work. Today is a monumental day. We're going to be at full employment. There's going to be substantial construction. We're going to be a very busy sector."

Windsorites deserve the opportunity to get back to work. Let's get on with this plan. Let's build this access road. Let's clean up the air. Let's improve the flow of traffic. Let's strengthen the Ontario economy.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Speaking of cars, my question is for the Premier. Last week, in front of the cameras, you promised a new auto plant for Ontario: "We will add a new auto assembly plant here in Ontario and we will create more jobs and all kinds of spin-off jobs." In particular, the Premier named the Italian auto giant Fiat SPA. Surely the Premier would not make such an announcement without some details secured. That would be highly irresponsible. Premier, will there be a new Fiat plant in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that the opposition party wants us to grow this economy, to land a new auto plant, to express our determination and our resolve in so doing, but what we'd like to have is their support for our auto sector strategy. They opposed our \$1.15-billion Next Generation of Jobs Fund; they opposed the half-billion dollars that landed \$8 billion in new investment. When I visit Italy and when I visit with the Fiat people, I hope to be able to say, "I have the support of the opposition party. I'm here to speak on their behalf as well. They fully support this public investment that we will make in terms of doing everything we can to land this new investment here in Ontario."

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I'll take that as "I don't have a clue."

This was obviously another classic example of Liberal grandstanding in front of the cameras, and another broken promise from the Premier. In fact, these kinds of fake news stories and photo ops compromise our bargaining position at the table with foreign investors. Premier, will you admit that this announcement has no substance and that you made it only to save face in light of the Oshawa job losses?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The member opposite calls our \$1.15 billion Next Generation of Job Funds and our auto sector strategy—he references that as corporate welfare. We see that differently, and I'll tell him that if he was to phone any of my colleagues across the country, or to phone any US governor's office, and ask them if they had any kinds of supports available, any initiatives that they're prepared to put on the table, anything at all

that they're prepared to do to compete with public dollars to land new private sector investment, they're all going to give you the same answer: It's "Yes."

We're in the game or we're not in the game. Ontario chooses to be in the game. So far, we've landed \$8 billion in new investment, with at least 8,000 direct jobs. What I'd like to be able to say as we try to hustle business around the world is that we have the support of the official opposition.

#### POVERTY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. This government's consultations on poverty are to begin today, but they are hardly public. Minister Matthews is in Peterborough today to meet behind closed doors with the mayor's task force on poverty. It is by invitation only. All those who have asked to attend have been disallowed, including members of this very House. Why won't this government allow all Ontarians to participate in real public dialogue with the minister on this very important issue?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to talk about the poverty reduction strategy. You're absolutely right: The next phase of consultations begins today. I will be in Peterborough. Mayor Ayotte of Peterborough established a poverty reduction committee there two and a half years ago. They have been working very hard, looking at constructive solutions on how we can together address what is an unacceptable level of poverty in this province. I'm very much looking forward to it; I welcome the opportunity.

That committee, for the information of the member opposite, does include several members of the community, people who are very well-connected to the issues of people living in poverty. In addition, when I'm in Peterborough this evening, I will be having dinner with kids in a—

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Dozens of poverty activists in the Peterborough area have asked to attend, and they have all been denied. Members of this House have asked to attend, and they have been denied as well. We are deeply concerned that a website that the minister has set up and consultations which she's talking about in the future will not ensure participation by people affected by poverty. In fact, less than 20% of low-income Ontarians have access to the Internet.

Moreover, unless MPPs are allowed into these meetings or are given some funds to hold their own meetings, they're not going to happen. There is no money allocated in her budget for these consultations. My question: What resources and supports will be provided to members of this House so that they can ensure that low-income people can and will participate in the consultations—consultations that you so far have denied to them?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Everyone is welcome to submit their ideas through the website, ontario.ca/

growingstronger. Everyone in the province has an MPP that they are free to visit. Many MPPs will be having their own consultation process, and they will be accompanied by members.

#### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This week, the city of Brampton is hosting its Annual Emergency Preparedness Expo with numerous partners like the Peel Regional Police, the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and our fire department. The aim of Emergency Preparedness Week is to raise awareness of individual preparedness. Can you tell me what our government is doing from a provincial perspective to keep Ontarians safe during an emergency?

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**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to thank the member for Brampton–Springdale for the question. I also want to congratulate Brampton and the member on being so proactive with regard to emergency preparedness. This week is Emergency Preparedness Week, and that's why in 2006 our government introduced the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, which gives us the legal framework in the event of a crisis.

Just last week, I had the pleasure to announce the Supply Chain Alliance. This is a partnership with 40 public and private sector partners who will, with Emergency Management Ontario, come together in the event of an emergency to ensure that there is the availability of food, water and other essentials should an event occur somewhere in Ontario.

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm pleased to hear that we have a comprehensive emergency response program that will ensure the resilience of our province should there be a crisis. It's clear that everybody has a role to play in emergency planning and preparedness. Minister, is there anything that all of our constituents can do to individually prepare for an emergency?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** That's a really important question. A few numbers might put this into context. Only 12% of Ontarians have an emergency kit and only 11% of Ontarians have an emergency plan. And so today, let me ask some rhetorical questions that I believe to be very important questions that each family should answer. Do you have enough perishable food and drinking water for the first 72 hours of an emergency? Have you packed the medication necessary? Have you put some cash away in case electronic machines are down? Do you have batteries in the event of an emergency? Have you cared for your animal, your pet? Have you made some type of arrangements if you have a special needs individual you care for? It is very, very important that we prepare for the first 72 hours in any emergency.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Lofthouse Brass, a

Burk's Falls company in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, employing 130 workers for the manufacture of brass and aluminium fittings and parts, is under bankruptcy protection. The company is currently up for sale and has a number of interested purchasers. Please note that the company has plenty of business for its Burk's Falls plant, but because of other issues, it's up for sale. There are a number of interested purchasers who are looking at the company. Some want to maintain the operations; others are just planning to liquidate the assets of the company.

I have a simple question for you. What will the Ontario government do to assist purchasers who will maintain the operations and these very important 130 jobs in Burk's Falls?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you for the question from the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka. I'm not familiar with the circumstances. This is obviously information I didn't have earlier, so I appreciate the opportunity, and perhaps we can get an opportunity to speak about this situation later on in the House. I'll do my best to work with you and see what we can do in terms of helping the company.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the minister for that response. I cannot emphasize how important these jobs are in Burk's Falls and the east Parry Sound area. This is an area that does not have a lot of industry—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm surprised to hear the government members heckling this very important question. This is an area that does not have a lot of industry. The company's wages and benefits total some \$8.5 million annually, which is very significant to the Burk's Falls area.

Minister, would you agree to meet with representatives of Lofthouse Brass to assist in maintaining these important jobs in the Burk's Falls area?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I thank the member. We're certainly very conscious of the significance of any job losses. We're very proud of, for example, what the northern Ontario heritage fund has been able to do in terms of job creation and job retention in northern Ontario, but indeed I look forward to speaking with the member after question period. Perhaps we can set up a convenient time to have a further discussion about this.

#### ENBRIDGE GAS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The question is for the Minister of Energy. In February, the Ontario Energy Board responded to a Supreme Court ruling on exorbitant late fees at Enbridge by forcing gas consumers to cover Enbridge's court costs. The Premier stated that he was "very concerned" and that the OEB's decision was "counter-intuitive." Minister, why have three months passed with no word on when cabinet will overturn the OEB decision?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'm aware of the situation, obviously. There are some legal issues here that I must be

slightly careful of. My understanding is that one of the individuals who raised this issue initially is now appealing that decision to cabinet. Consequently, I think the member can appreciate that I, on behalf of cabinet, must be quite cautious about what I say.

Again, I repeat, my understanding is that this issue is now being appealed to cabinet. Cabinet, by the way our legislation works, will be reviewing that decision. Consequently, I think the member can understand, I'm not at liberty to comment on the case now. Suffice it to say, it will be before cabinet as an appeal.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Understanding everything that the minister has said, when will he bring forward a decision to protect consumers from gouging? When?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I think the public understands that this is a legal process. The individual has appealed this decision to cabinet. Cabinet has a legal responsibility to review that decision. It is legally inappropriate for me to comment on the case. It is now before cabinet. So I think in terms of the public interest and our legal responsibility, I can't comment on the case. Suffice it to say, it will be before cabinet for a decision. When that decision will be made will be based, obviously, on the necessary process that cabinet will go through.

I have no choice. I'm doing what the legislation dictates that I do, and that decision will, as I say, end up being before cabinet for a review and a decision. There is no other choice for cabinet other than to review it, to follow the necessary legal process. We will do that so we don't jeopardize this case.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, you and I both know that the quality of health care is very important to my constituents in Ottawa Centre and all Ontarians. I was very pleased to see that you visited my city last Thursday and Friday, where you visited Hôpital Montfort and the Ottawa Hospital. Would the minister tell this House the details of his announcements in Ottawa?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre, who's been so vigorous in supporting investments in the Ottawa community. I had a great chance on Thursday and Friday to make two that are particularly noteworthy.

At the Civic site of the Ottawa Hospital, we were able to bring to life a new mobile radiation unit. This is providing enhanced capacity in the Ottawa community to support 400 patients a year with timely access to radiation that they require, at the very same time as we are building new regional cancer centre capacity at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

Secondly, at the Montfort Hospital, we've continued with our trend of investments. In contrast to the prior government, which wanted to close the Montfort, we're nearly doubling its size and adding a second MRI to their services. This completes a tripling of access to MRI in the Ottawa community for the residents there, who waited too long under that government.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate that update. I know that my constituents appreciate the McGuinty government's recent investments in Ottawa health care in terms of cancer care and MRI. Despite what the members opposite may say, I know that this government has invested a lot of money into health care in the Ottawa region in the last four years. I would like the minister to tell this House how our government's investments are going to improve health care for my constituents in Ottawa Centre.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The investments that our government is making in producing more doctors, as a result, is paying off for the residents of the Champlain local health integration network. Since 2003, we've seen an increase by more than 8%, as an example, of the number of family doctors that are practising. We've got more than 10,000 additional patients who have received care through the implementation of five family health teams in the Ottawa community, and none of these health care investments would be aided by the previous government's current plans to cut health care spending by \$3 billion. But on top of that, all the people in Ottawa have seen investment in their local hospitals. At the Montfort, the investment is nearly doubling its size—750,000 square feet. At CHEO, we see the development of a new state-of-the-art east wing for intensive care, neo-natal intensive care and other programs. We've completed the redevelopment of the St. Vincent and Elizabeth Bruyère sites of the Sisters of Charity. At the Ottawa Hospital, we've opened a new critical care wing, and I mentioned before that we're undergoing a massive investment at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

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#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** To the Minister of Agriculture: Through your Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payment program, can you explain why there was a recent report that a farmer received a livestock compensation cheque and a letter signed by you, Minister, explaining that it was for his livestock even though he hasn't had any livestock on his farm for 40 years?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** First of all, with respect to the question that has come from the honourable member, yes, our government announced assistance in December for cattle, hog and horticulture producers. The dollars were flowed through the information we have had from existing programs.

When we spoke with the stakeholders for cattle, hog and horticulture, they made it very clear that they wanted the money to their producers as quickly as possible. We committed to them that the fastest way to get those dollars to the producers was to use information we had in our system, so there was no requirement for application.

The member has brought to me a particular circumstance. I will say that it has surprised me. I would be very happy to meet with the member or to receive more information from the member—

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Forty years is a little long oversight. Minister, that was only one example of the many problems with this program. An article in the Ontario Farmer called "Taxpayers Paying for Mistakes" recently asked, "Why did a wealthy person in western Ontario, who last owned, fed and sold a pig in 2004, go to his mailbox and there was a cheque for \$14,000? Why would a young couple in the same area, struggling to remain in business with the terrible price of hogs, yet following the compensation model, expect to receive \$138,000"—they got \$267. The article goes on to say, "Why? Because government knows nobody cares. It is only taxpayers' money, needing to be shovelled fast for political effect, not accurately to be fair for all."

Minister, if this isn't true, can you tell me what you have done to fix this program?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, I would remind the honourable member that the program was a direct response, and we consulted with stakeholder leadership on the best way to deliver these dollars. I can read for the honourable member from the Ontario Cattlemen's Association president, who has indicated that he wants to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance. They want to recognize that the producers needed this immediate relief in this particular situation.

We have said to the producers and to all of the farmers in Ontario that when there is immediate need we are there for them. We used the existing information so that we could deliver those dollars as quickly as possible. Those cheques were in the farmers' pockets by the end of February. We have been receiving many positive comments from many farmers who were able to actually keep their farms because—

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

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. I am very concerned for the workers of Hamilton. Last week, another 100 workers were laid off from their jobs at National Steel Car, to join with the 1,000 who have already been laid off—and the future looks even worse. What about the 400 jobs at the call centre in downtown St. Catharines, jobs that will disappear when Tele-Spectrum Inc. shuts down in July? What is this government going to do to stem the tide of lost jobs in Hamilton, St. Catharines and all over this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are real challenges facing sectors of this economy in communities including Hamilton. The government's response to the member's question was contained in our budget. We are investing in skills training—\$1.5 billion. We are investing in infrastructure—an additional \$1 billion on top of our \$60-billion, 10-year plan on infrastructure, which, as the Premier indicated earlier in question period, not only

creates jobs in the short term but improves productivity in the long run. There are investments in high tech, investments in our ability to commercialize—including investments that went to McMaster University in the budget, an investment in infrastructure that went to the Hamilton region.

As long as one family or one community is struggling in this economy, we will continue to make the investments to stand with those families, with those economies, as we transition this economy—

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm glad the minister is going to train a lot of people, but I hate to inform him that we've got lots of trained people in Hamilton who are unemployed.

The National Steel Car workers are facing incredible devastation as the last major railcar manufacturer in Canada heads south. The good-paying jobs at National Steel Car are heading to the southern shoals of Barton, Alabama. St. Catharines' call centre workers are facing a bleak future. Even the Ministry of Transportation on St. Paul Street in St. Catharines will be losing revenue when its TeleSpectrum tenant no longer pays its rent.

Once again, what is this government going to do to stop this devastating exodus of good-paying jobs from Hamilton, St. Catharines and our province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In the Hamilton area alone, we eliminated the capital tax, which will assist those very manufacturers that are challenged; we've made investments in Brock University and McMaster University; we have provided \$5.7 million for new affordable housing and \$11.2 million in gas tax revenues for Hamilton. Let's talk about innovation: \$15 million for the initiative for automotive manufacturing innovation, a joint venture of McMaster University and the University of Waterloo. Sir, you voted against every one of those opportunities.

There is no doubt that there are challenges in our economy, but the people of Hamilton and St. Catharines know that they have a government in the McGuinty government that is standing behind them, making the proper investments in infrastructure, skills training and innovation that that member and his party voted against. We would urge him to get on board and help us transition the Niagara region through—

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

#### CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Attorney General. In recent years, the McGuinty government has made significant investments in our justice system, guided by an approach that is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. Could the Attorney General provide this House with an update on how we're supporting the hard work of those who keep our communities safe?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know the member for Scarborough–Rouge River has been an ardent advocate

of ensuring that we have the necessary prosecutorial and investigative resources. So in his community, for example, there is a new police station, with its officers part of the 1,000 new police officers we have on the streets and in communities across the province of Ontario. Just last December, we hired another nine crowns for the Scarborough–Rouge River and related area, part of the 220 more crowns we have operating throughout the province.

He wouldn't want to forget the "tough on the causes of crime" either, because he's been a very determined advocate of investing in communities: almost \$30 million, with my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services, invested—and it's working. We have the lowest crime rate in the country in the province of Ontario. Toronto has the second-lowest crime rate, and my colleague would say that that's having a real effect and is really felt in his community in a positive way.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Although it's always troubling whenever we hear or read of crime in our communities, it is reassuring to know that the overall incidence of crime continues to decline. But there is always room for more improvement. How is the Attorney General ensuring that these investments are achieving as much as we need them to?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I think the member raises a very important point, because over the years, as we invest in more police and more crowns and more judges and justices of the peace, we have to make sure the system is working as effectively as possible. We will be bringing forward a proposal, a plan to make the system work as effectively as we would want, framed by two very important facts: The time that it takes for a criminal case to work its way through the Ontario Court of Justice from beginning to end has almost doubled in 15 years, from 115 days to 205 days in 2007. Over that same period of time, the number of appearances that that case makes has gone from 4.3 to over nine, and of the nine, almost six are adjournments.

What we want to do is reduce the number of unproductive adjournments, make those resources work more effectively elsewhere in the system and make the cases proceed through faster to disposition.

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#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Last week, you said in this House: "I think the member knows that nobody in this House—no MPP, no member of government—is walking around with a holster and cuffs. I think the member knows that it is up to police officers to execute that duty."

Minister, I would like to quote an article from last week's Dunnville Chronicle: "Over the weekend, Six Nations Band Chief Bill Montour told Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant that the blockade was not criminal activity and said this could become something all parties did not want it to be. He gave credit to Bryant

for talking to the Solicitor General, who reportedly told the OPP to stand down.”

Minister, did you talk to the Solicitor General about having the OPP stand down?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** No.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Minister.

We know that the Dunnville Chronicle stated last week that Six Nations Chief Bill Montour “gave credit to Michael Bryant for talking to the Solicitor General, who reportedly told the OPP to stand down.”

There’s another article I would like to report. It was written last week by Jim Windle. I know Jim. He has written more articles on Six Nations than any other journalist. This article states: “He (referring to Chief Montour) then thanked Bryant for taking his advice and asking the OPP about standing down in Tyendinaga and Caledonia.” Two newspapers and two different reporters saying the same thing.

I ask you again: Did you ask the Solicitor General to interfere, or were you yourself asking the OPP about standing down in Tyendinaga and Caledonia? Given your previous statements and these two reports, are—

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

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** No again to that one as well.

Interference? The only government that has been found to interfere with police operations has been the Conservative government. It’s the approach of the Conservatives. According to testimony by Charles Harnick, the approach was: “I want the ... Indians out of the park.” That is an interfering approach. That is not a negotiating approach. That is an approach that was, in fact, condemned by Commissioner Linden, and it’s not the approach of this government.

I know that the official opposition doesn’t like to hear this. I know that the official opposition may not have liked some of the findings in this report, but we will continue to support the recommends by Sidney Linden of the Ipperwash commission.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Housing. Would the minister provide the number of new housing units built by his government since his election in 2003 that rent for \$500 or less per month—that is, affordable for those on minimum wage, OW or ODSP?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** We’re very proud of the affordable housing program that the McGuinty government signed with the previous federal Liberal government.

Let me just give you some statistics from the city of Toronto under the affordable housing program: \$139.9 million for 2,937 rental and supportive housing units, \$27.3 million for 1,300 housing allowance units, and \$11.2 million for 1,009 home ownership units—for a total of \$178.47 million.

We’re also proud of the fact that there is existing housing stock in Toronto and throughout the province that is not, quite frankly, in very good shape, and that’s why under our finance minister, we provided \$100 mil-

lion—which the NDP called “meagre”—to help fix up some of these dilapidated houses: \$36 million of that went to the City of Toronto and is going to help literally thousands of people live in a more decent housing unit.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** So the answer is zero. I should have directed the question to the minister of homelessness.

Since 2003, the province has only made 486 units available that rent below \$500 a month, and not one of them is new. Less than 4,000 units are available at rent under \$1,000 a month, and waiting lists are 170,000 households and growing. Since being elected, this government promised to build over 20,000 units of new affordable housing. When will the Minister of Housing, or homelessness, deliver on the McGuinty promise to create over 20,000 units of affordable housing? You’ve only—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the member that there are specific ministries and that there are ministries that do not exist. You’re making reference to one that doesn’t exist.

Minister of Housing?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** The last group of people that I would take a lesson from when it comes to dealing with affordable housing is the NDP. Let me tell you what the NDP did in their last year in office.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I know they’re braying over there because the truth hurts: \$52 million that they provided; under the McGuinty government, \$189 million.

Let me tell you what the executive director of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association said a little while ago: “While no one government can solve decades of issues affecting the current state and need for more affordable housing, this government is leading the way in finding solutions to improve affordable housing in Ontario. Today’s announcement will make a real difference and demonstrates that the government has been listening to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association’s concerns.”

I’d take Sharad Kerur’s word and his perspective over that honourable member’s word and perspective any day. We’re proud of our record. We’ve got to do more and we will.

#### TOURISM

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism. As the summer vacation season approaches, there are many communities across the province that look to festivals and events to bolster their economy. I know that in my riding of Huron–Bruce there are many events and festivals; just to name a few, the International Plowing Match this year, the Port Elgin Pumpkinfest, the Scottish festival, the Celtic festival, the PluckinFest. These events and festivals create seasonal employment opportunities, and they also allow more exposure for the counties in a very meaningful way.

Would the minister please tell me what the McGuinty government is doing to assist the local organizations and community-building festivals so that they can continue to grow and to enhance?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** First, I would like to acknowledge the member for Huron–Bruce for being such a wonderful champion for tourism in her community.

I really appreciate this opportunity to say what a significant contribution the festivals and events make to Ontario's tourism industry as well as to the economic prosperity of our province. That's why our government has invested \$10 million in the Celebrate Ontario 2008 initiative. This is twice the amount that we put in in 2007. The Celebrate Ontario program saw 471 festivals and events apply for that funding. We were able to provide funding to 90 events across this province.

The Celebrate Ontario initiative will bring existing festivals and events new development and programs, activities and services. This will also bring economic benefits. These enhancements will include increased employment, regional development of tourism, trade and infrastructure.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I know that the Celebrate Ontario program has provided a significant amount of funding to the Port Elgin Pumpkinfest. The Port Elgin Pumpkinfest is a weekend-long festival with over 45 family-friendly events. I can tell you the attraction of the International Plowing Match—it's certainly a world-renowned event.

While it's great that the government has made such a significant investment to keep local festivals and events alive, these enhancements will mean nothing if there are no visitors to attend them due to the impact of high gasoline prices, confusion over the US passport requirements and the high value of the Canadian dollar. Would the minister tell us how the McGuinty government plans to combat the serious challenges that are currently facing Ontario tourism?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** That's an excellent question. The McGuinty government has committed to tourism in our platform, as well as in our fall economic statement and in the speech from the throne. We know that domestic tourism is our number-one driver in tourism: 75% of all our visitors—that's 89 million visits—are domestic tourism.

**1150**

We're also seeing our overseas markets being bolstered: increased numbers of visitors from Britain, Mexico and Germany, just to name a few. That's why we invested \$30 million in that fall economic stimulus package to be able to make sure that we can address the challenges that are before us.

Yes, we have a high dollar, high gas prices and passport issues, but by working together with our partners to enhance these events and festivals and refresh Ontario's product, we're going to make sure that we have a vital and sustainable tourism industry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to advise all members that copies of the provisional standing

orders under which we are now operating can be found within your desks.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to rise to correct the record of my question to the Minister of Labour back on Thursday, May 1. I inadvertently referenced my own private member's bill as Bill 95 when in fact it's Bill 29.

#### PETITIONS

##### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** “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 am pleased to sign this petition and present it to Rafaël.

##### MARY FIX PARK

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly about the rehabilitation of Mary Fix Park.

“Whereas the province of Ontario has acquired public and private lands for the reconstruction and upgrading of the QEW/Hurontario interchange; and

“Whereas some of the acquired lands will be in excess of the requirements for the interchange; and

“Whereas the city of Mississauga has stated that these lands in excess of the interchange requirements have no developmental value; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation and highways has stated that excess lands from this project will be conveyed to the city of Mississauga for parkland; and

“Whereas the Mary Fix Park property was originally donated to the city of Mississauga exclusively for parkland to preserve natural woodland; and

“Whereas this development has caused the loss of century-old trees, natural woodland and wildlife habitat from Mary Fix Park, and has substantially increased noise and traffic to local residences; and

“Whereas the lands on the south and west side of Pinetree Way are no longer the subject of further construction;

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

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Transportation and highways, remediate the lands surrounding the south and west areas of Pinetree Way between Hurontario Street and Glenburnie Road by planting trees and constructing berms within this year, and convey all excess lands from the QEW/Hurontario interchange to the city of Mississauga upon completion of the project."

I will now give it to Sheilagh, the page.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

It's signed by many, many people from the Brock area of my riding, and I'll hand it to page Isabelle.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition signed by many people from Niagara Falls, including Cindy Massey.

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents as required in Bill 33 put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact

with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child.

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I'm pleased to sign my signature in support of this bill.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I affix my name in full support.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This petition is in conjunction with Bill 56, which the member for Eglinton-Lawrence introduced earlier. It's about unlawful firearms in vehicles. It reads as follows:

"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.”

Since I agree, I’m delighted to affix my signature to this petition.

#### 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 that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

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

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

I have affixed my signature to this petition and given it to page Dario.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** “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 gladly sign this petition.

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#### LORD’S PRAYER

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Once again we have a number of these petitions, and it’s my pleasure to read them into the record.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of parliamentary tradition since it was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Speaker has received thousands of phone calls on this issue; and

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

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

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

I affix my name in full support.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

“Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, its largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

“Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; 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;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit.”

I will affix my signature to that and pass it to Cali.

## LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I want to thank Bernice Mowat, who came into my office and asked me to read a number of these petitions on behalf of people in my riding.

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and I'm pleased to sign my signature to it.

## FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** This is a petition with respect to Bill 56.

"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, the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities."

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

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

"Whereas the Central East local health integration network ... board of directors 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 (LDRP) 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 fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

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

I will affix my signature to this and pass it to Matthew.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** This House is recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1206 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Children's mental health in Ontario is in crisis and this government is refusing to take action. Last Friday, along with my colleague the member for Newmarket–Aurora, I met with a wide range of agencies and individual professionals who deal with children's mental health in York region. We heard about the crisis that exists in children's mental health in our area and across Ontario—wait times for child psychiatric services of more than a year that are devastating to children and families. In York region alone, 39,000 are on a waiting list and only 5,000 children are being treated. Children with mild to moderate problems linger on these waiting lists until they move into crisis situations.

The government doesn't seem to understand that the ounce of prevention is worth more than the investment later. Children have to get worse before they can get help. This crisis is a McGuinty-government-created crisis. It exists because you refuse to provide enough money for children to get the help they need.

Two years ago, the ministry issued a framework document for child and youth mental health. What we want to

know is: When will you give children with mental health problems the funding that they need?

#### TAXI DRIVERS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** If members of this House have been reading the news lately, it will be no surprise why taxi drivers are raising issues about their safety, not only in Hamilton, but as far away as Melbourne, Australia. Over the past couple of months, there have been a string of attacks against Hamilton taxi drivers, including vicious beatings and weapon-related robberies. Most recently, Hamilton taxi driver and my constituent Pervez Minhas was attacked twice in two nights, once at knifepoint.

Hamilton police recognize the dangers that taxi drivers face. Last week, they held a safety forum for drivers, outlining strategies on how to avoid robberies and injuries. Hamilton city council recognizes the dangers that taxi drivers face. It has revived its taxi liaison committee and is moving forward with a dedicated planning and economic development committee forum in June.

Unfortunately, safety training sessions and forums are not enough. Now is the time for this Legislature to take charge and recognize the dangers that taxi drivers face daily. The Cab Drivers Welfare Association of Hamilton is calling on the province to legislate mandatory protective shields. We must act now and begin the process to consult with the various taxi driver associations in this province.

#### EVERGREEN HOSPICE MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to commend our government as it continues to move forward in the promotion and advancement of cultural health and social services in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. An Ontario Trillium Foundation grant is being awarded to Evergreen Hospice Markham-Stouffville in the amount of \$99,000.

Since 1989, this not-for-profit organization has provided supportive care for people experiencing the horrendous impact of life-threatening illness or death, and it continues to expand upon its services and reach out to our growing area. Over the next two years, Evergreen Hospice Markham-Stouffville will utilize this funding to continue creating awareness of its services within our community's Chinese and South Asian populations. It will use this money to help with staffing and promotion costs without sacrificing its usual quality of care.

Its services include in-home visiting and respite care for clients and their families; social visiting to seniors in nursing homes; a day program with crafts, entertainment, alternative therapies, outings and social events; and bereavement services for children, youth and adults, including support groups and individual counselling. Eight part-time staff, 175 volunteers and a 12-member board of directors make all these initiatives possible.

Congratulations to Evergreen Hospice Markham-Stouffville, and to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for recognizing its enormous contribution to our community.

#### DONALD BEANLANDS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful man, Dr. Don Beanlands, co-founder of the Ottawa Heart Institute, who is retiring at the age of 75.

Last Thursday, May 1, was proclaimed Dr. Donald S. Beanlands Day in Ottawa. On Thursday night, I attended a dinner in his honour with 900 other people. It takes a very special person to get 900 people out to a retirement dinner. I want to say that Dr. Beanlands certainly was a very special person to Ottawa.

Dr. Beanlands joined the Ottawa Heart Institute as chief of cardiology when it opened in 1979 and has spent the last 32 years saving thousands of lives. Surprisingly, he is not well known among the general public, but he is loved by his patients and all the hospital staff, the nurses and volunteers. Rarely have I met a more caring individual.

Not only do Dr. Beanlands' roughly 25,000 patients owe him a debt of gratitude almost anyone who has received cardiovascular treatment in Canada should be thankful for his efforts. Dr. Beanlands helped set the original cardiology exams in this country and helped to train cardiologists at the University of Ottawa.

In his retirement, he is reportedly considering writing a book on cardiology, something which will ensure that his contributions will continue for many years to come. And all members of the House will want to thank him and wish him well on his favourite pastime, fly-fishing. He was noted as the best fly-fisher in all of the heart institute.

#### MUSIC MONDAY

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** Earlier today, the sound of song filled the halls at Queen's Park. Since 2005, students, teachers, parents, musicians and music lovers have celebrated Music Monday on the first Monday of May. Created and championed by the Coalition for Music Education in Canada, Music Monday is a celebration of the power of music in Ontario and across Canada, giving schools and communities an opportunity to demonstrate how this power is rooted in school music programs.

On Music Monday, we celebrate the importance of music in our schools and in our lives across Ontario. Schools from coast to coast are united when, at the same point in time, all students perform the same piece of music. Music Monday is a tangible demonstration of how music programs unite us, shape young lives and contribute to the cultural vitality of Canada.

I'm so proud to come from a community that understands the importance of arts and culture and celebrates it with festivals, programming and services aimed at enriching our community. In Etobicoke–Lakeshore, students at Lanor Junior Middle School will be celebrating

Music Week by performing with Hollycrest school in Etobicoke Centre today. And earlier today, I visited the stairs of the Legislature to hear the performance by the Toronto District School Board.

I hope that all members in this House will join me in congratulating the dedicated parents, teachers and students who all came to join us here at Queen's Park today under the leadership of the Coalition for Music Education in Canada and their executive director, Ingrid Whyte.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** This week, we mark Emergency Preparedness Week, a week-long national event that takes place during the first week of May to remind us that we can reduce the risks and lessen the consequences of a disaster by being better prepared.

I regret to say that the McGuinty government has certainly not prepared Ontario for its economic crisis. We've seen in recent months the disastrous impact the McGuinty government's policies have had on businesses throughout the province.

Just last week, I spoke about Campbell Soup Co. in Listowel, where, after 48 years in business, they've been forced to close their doors and lay off 500 loyal staff. My colleague Tim Hudak recently spoke about the closure of the CanGro plant in Niagara, where 100 workers and 150 tender fruit growers have been handed their pink slips.

We've asked the Premier what his government is doing to prepare for this growing economic crisis. They tell Ontarians to prepare themselves by putting together kits for an emergency, and yet they do absolutely nothing to reduce the damage inflicted on Ontario by their own policies. People are suffering because this government has neglected to take its own advice. They've neglected to plan, they've neglected to prepare and they refuse to take responsibility.

The Liberal government offers lots of advice to deal with an unforeseen disaster, but what advice do they offer Ontarians for one that was foreseen, that is clear, that is hurting and that is here? "Steel yourselves; this too shall pass."

The Premier is fiddling while Rome is burning. Shame on him.

#### CHARLES CACCIA

**Mr. Mike Colle:** "We have lost an extraordinary Canadian who devoted himself to public service, looked far ahead, said what he thought, and then kept his good cheer during the ensuing furor," wrote Dr. John Polanyi, Nobel Prize laureate, of Charles Caccia MP, who passed away in Ottawa over the weekend. Charles Caccia served a consecutive 36 years in Ottawa as MP for Davenport.

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Born in Milan, Mr. Caccia arrived in Canada in 1955 and struggled like many immigrants, yet he was the co-founder of COSTI, an institute that is still serving im-

migrants today. In 1965, Mr. Caccia was elected as a city of Toronto alderman, where he soon became a champion for the environment and public transit. In 1968, he was elected MP for Davenport under the leadership of his life-long friend and ally, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

As MP, he began to take up the cause of the environment a long time before anyone else even talked about it. As John Coo, vice-president of Green Cross Canada, said, Mr. Caccia had "a breadth and depth of knowledge and a history of involvement in international environment issues spanning 40 years."

It was my privilege and honour to have known and worked with Mr. Charles Caccia for 40 years. He was a pioneer, he was a leader, decades ahead of his time in championing sustainable development and ensuring that the environment was an imperative in Canada. He ensured we all were held to account. Until his last days, Mr. Caccia practised what he preached. He will be sadly missed by all of us who were inspired by this truly outstanding Canadian: Charles Caccia.

#### MEMBER'S FAMILY

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** My statement today is about my family. They are visiting, for their first time, the Ontario Legislature. It's my distinct honour to introduce them: my brother, Mr. Surrinder Grewal, from Surrey, British Columbia; my nephew, Harpreet Grewal, from San Diego, California; his wife, Roopinder Grewal, from San Diego, California; and our granddaughter, Meher Grewal, from San Diego, California.

It's my distinct honour. My brother has been a father figure in my life. They were visiting here to attend a wedding. I thought I should bring them here, so that they know my workplace, how it works and what it looks like.

#### TOURISM

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Later today, the Wine Council of Ontario, along with the Greater Toronto Hotel Association and the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association, will be hosting a reception to draw attention to some of the many fine accommodations and tourist attractions to be found here in Ontario. Indeed, when it comes to things to do and places to see, there is no place like this, our beautiful province of Ontario.

Only in Ontario can you experience our fabled ice wines and other delights for the palate, to be found along the Ontario wine route. Your breath can be taken away by the awesome natural beauty to be found in the Algonquin provincial parks. The rich history of our province unfolds for those who pass through the gates of Fort Henry or stroll the avenues of Upper Canada Village. Nowhere can you hear your heart sing like you can right here in Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe: from the theatre to world-class museums, to great festivals ranging from Caribana to the Toronto International Film Festival.

We have delights for all tastes and ages. I encourage all members to come and mingle with the representatives from our tourism and accommodation industries at the reception today and to get out this summer, partake of our many provincial attractions, and discover Ontario first-hand.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I believe we have unanimous consent for a member of each party to speak for up to five minutes regarding Yom Hashoah.

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

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** As well, I'm not sure if the member is going to do it during his remarks, but I've also notified all parties that the member will be seeking unanimous consent to recite part of the prayer in Hebrew. I'll let him deal with that. Or we could deal with this now.

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

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Some of you know, because many of your members were there, that we just had a ceremony where we honoured nine Holocaust survivors. That was over at the Macdonald Block, and it's finished—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We can't hear the member because his mike is covered by the books.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Oh, sorry. The ceremony just finished, and these people and the members who participated are making their way back to the Legislature as we speak. They should be here in two or three minutes, but in the meantime, I think it would be appropriate, when certainly I'm going to refer to them, that they be here when we do it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I appreciate the point of order, and I'll take that under advisement. We'll go back to routine proceedings. Are there any statements by ministries? Deferred votes?

Is the House in agreement that we adjourn for five minutes to allow our guests to arrive? Okay. We'll recess for five minutes.

*The House recessed from 1316 to 1323.*

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** In a ceremony at Queen's Park earlier today, we recognized and honoured nine Holocaust survivors whose stories of anguish, suffering and survival of both body and spirit are a testimony to the human will to live. These Holocaust survivors, who are to be in the House today, came to Ontario, rebuilt their lives and were honoured for their wonderful contributions as citizens of Ontario. Those honoured were Tamara Erlich, Al Gelfant, Sol Kafka, Jerry Kapelus, Shifra Knobel, Mike Mayer, Johanan Steinberg, Jack Weinbaum and Cantor Severin Weingort.

Today, we recognize Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah, Holocaust Memorial Day, a day designated for Holocaust remembrance in communities around the world. This is the 15th year that the Ontario Legislature has observed Holocaust Memorial Day, and I'm proud to say that

Ontario was the first jurisdiction in the world outside of the state of Israel to officially recognize it.

I have visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem, several times. The memorial is dedicated to preserving the memory and story of each of the six million people who died in the Holocaust. As a Jew, these memories strike the heart and the soul. Every Jew is touched by the Holocaust. We lost loved ones, family members or friends; all members in the community lost someone.

The Holocaust echoes through generations. The loss is extraordinary.

At Yad Vashem, that loss is made real. It's concrete. You can touch it. In the Valley of the Communities, you stand before wall after wall, carved out of solid rock, listing the names of more than 5,000 communities that lived, breathed, had life, in which men and women loved, married, raised children, worked, laughed and worshipped. Today, in most cases, nothing remains of these Jewish communities except for their names, forever frozen in the bedrock of Yad Vashem. It was here that I found the name of the town where my father was born, Czestochowa, and the town where my mother was born, Sosnowiec.

The Holocaust reaches out of the past and touches the shoulder of every Jew, but the Children's Memorial is especially sad. It commemorates the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in Hitler's Final Solution. The memorial is carved out of an underground cavern, and memorial candles, the customary Jewish tradition to remember the dead, are reflected infinitely in a dark and sombre place. They reminded me of a million stars. And as you stand there, you can hear the names of the murdered children, their ages and countries of origin, read in the background.

Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all those who died in the Holocaust, not just Jews. We also remember those whom the Nazis targeted for their race, their religion, their politics, their disabilities, or their sexual orientation. It's important to set aside time to remember all these victims whose lives were taken by the Nazis. In remembering, we bear witness to what these men, women and children endured.

Tragically, other genocides have followed since World War II, in Cambodia, Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia. It is evident that we must continue our struggle to keep alive the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations 60 years ago in the shadow of the Holocaust. The declaration recognized the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as a foundation of freedom, justice and peace throughout the world. It called on the world to protect human rights by the rule of law.

We are indeed fortunate to live in Canada and in Ontario, but we must never take our good fortune for granted. We must guard our democratic institutions and democratic freedoms. We must appreciate, nurture and

protect them, and we must constantly remind ourselves how easy it is to lose them.

While I was in the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem, I laid a wreath and I recited a brief traditional Hebrew mourner's prayer, the Kaddish. On Yom Hashoah, Jewish communities around the world recite that prayer. Last Wednesday evening, some of our members were at Earl Bales Park, and there were hundreds of people who recited the Kaddish. On behalf of the victims, the survivors and their families I would like to recite that Hebrew prayer, which is something for which all people may pray.

*Remarks in Hebrew.*

One line in this prayer translates as, "He who creates peace in His celestial height, may He create peace for us."

We must always remember so that the world will never forget.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Halton.

I represent Thornhill, the constituency with the largest Jewish population in any of the 107 ridings of Ontario. Virtually no Jewish family in Thornhill has not recorded in its own history the effects of what Hitler called the Final Solution and what we call the Holocaust. In fact, that could be said of any Jewish family living in Ontario today.

Indeed, I myself would not be standing here in this chamber today but for that event. My father was a German-Jewish refugee who arrived in Canada after fleeing Nazi Germany and coming here by way of England, because in Canada he was free to be a Jew. In Canada, we are all free to practise our religions and to live our lives in any way we choose.

1330

Like so many of his number, my father could never speak of the life he left behind. He is gone now, as are many of that generation, but we still have some, thankfully, those like today's honorees, who are willing to share their horrific experiences so that today's generation remembers, through them, what was allowed to happen in the 1930s and 1940s. We mark Holocaust remembrance for them and for those who cannot speak, and when all of the survivors' voices are silenced, we will remember them.

My father's parents never left Germany, the country of their birth, the country to which they contributed their efforts, the country to which they swore allegiance. They remained behind, in hope, and they became but two of the six million lost in Nazi concentration camps, the grandparents I never met.

Today, in Ontario and around the world, we remember them all, and we are mindful that we are so blessed to live in a land such as this, for without the diversity and the openness we share as Canadians, many of us would not be here to remember those who came before: the six million souls who perished in the most heinous crime ever committed against humanity. And I say: Never again.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The Holocaust was the most horrific crime of the 20th century—perhaps ever—yet out of this tragedy many positive lessons can be learned.

We learn how instigators and perpetrators planned and executed the brutal murders of over six million people. It reveals the evil capacity of humankind. We must be ever watchful so that this may never be allowed to happen again.

From the Holocaust, we learn how collaborators and bystanders share the responsibility of the Holocaust: For instance, in 1939, when the ship *St. Louis* was bound for Canada with 900 Jewish refugees aboard, they were turned away. They were forced back to Germany and an inevitable fate. We could have done something; instead, Canada did nothing. We were complicit then, but as long as we remember and honour the victims of the Holocaust, we will not be complicit, silent or idle ever again.

The Holocaust also teaches us how to treat our fellow men and women. We hear often that we must be tolerant of others, but tolerance is not nearly enough. We need to move beyond tolerance and towards real and meaningful respect. To tolerate someone suggests that we will put up with them despite the fact that they are wrong or inferior. To respect someone means that we honour a different point of view, even if it is not our own. To respect someone who is different is an exercise in humility, because in doing so, we acknowledge our own capacity to err. The Holocaust teaches us that tolerance can slip into hate, but respect is the foundation for peace and progress.

Let us endeavour to become a more respectful society together. Let us take the lessons of the Holocaust to heart for ourselves, for our future and for the honour of those six million who needlessly perished at the hands of ignorance.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Today, I rise to remember and honour those who faced unimaginable horror and persecution less than a few decades ago in the Holocaust. Between 1933 and 1945, over six million Jewish men, women and children were systemically murdered. Entire communities, villages—indeed, entire generations—were exterminated in the most brutal fashion, and the state-sponsored and organized genocide also killed millions of others because of their race, their religion, their sexual orientation or the fact that they may have had a physical or mental handicap. The toll this ruthless campaign took on human dignity, human rights and society as a whole is immeasurable.

The atrocities of the Holocaust are often impossible for us to understand, yet even harder to forget, and that is why we must never forget what happened. We must not allow ourselves to forget that the early warning signs of the persecution of Jews existed in 1935, in 1936, in 1937. Much of the world did nothing to oppose that persecution. Tens of thousands of Jewish families tried to flee Nazi Germany and many countries closed their borders, Canada for the most part included.

We must not forget that humanity is capable of repeating this kind of violence and repression because, very often, those who can make a difference stay silent or feel helpless. History must serve as a reminder that we must

always be on guard so this can't happen again. As has already been said, from time to time, whether in Rwanda, Cambodia or Armenia, we have seen this kind of crime repeated. We must always be on the side of justice, ready to defend our diverse communities when they come under attack. We must always be ready to stand up and speak out today and every day against anti-Semitism, against Islamophobia, against hate and racism, against discrimination and prejudice in all its insidious forms. We must act decisively when the ugly realities of hate crimes and neo-Nazism resurface in present-day Ontario.

Today we stand with Jewish Canadians and all victims of genocide against hate-mongers and commit to taking decisive action to put a stop to racist actions, just as we finally did so many years ago.

Many of the Holocaust survivors who were freed from concentration camps came to Canada, settled here in Ontario, and have become important members of society who have made incredible contributions to our community. Today, we say we will never forget the horrors that human beings are capable of. More so, we will also never, ever forget the resilience, the hope, the strength, the courage and the sheer capacity of human beings together to triumph over some of the greatest cruelty our world has ever seen.

In Ontario, we have an immense capacity and responsibility to work together, to work diligently and with sincerity to create a province and a country where all cultures, all religions, and the rights of all people are respected and honoured. Fulfilling this vision is a duty that requires the involvement of us all.

On this day, we commit ourselves to creating a better and safer world so that we never see the horrors repeated again.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would like to, on behalf of all members, take this opportunity to welcome our guests here in the east members' gallery and in the Speaker's gallery.

I'd ask all members and all of our guests who are here today to please rise as we observe a moment of silence in recognition of the Holocaust.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

1340

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO FRENCH-LANGUAGE  
EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS  
AUTHORITY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR L'OFFICE DES  
TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS ÉDUCATIVES  
DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Bryant, on behalf of Ms. Wynne, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to enact the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act, 2008 and make complementary amendments to the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act / Projet de loi 55, Loi édictant la Loi de 2008 sur l'Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires à la Loi sur l'Office de la télécommunication éducative de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Bryant has moved second reading of Bill 55. Mr. Bryant.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'm going to be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant, the member for London-Fanshawe, and I'm also going to be sharing my time with the minister responsible. I will do that right now, although I did want to have the opportunity to say during debate that we are particularly proud in the great riding of St. Paul's to find TVO and TFO in the great riding of St. Paul's. I now will happily ask the minister responsible to join the debate.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I will be sharing my time with the member from London-Fanshawe today.

This is an exciting time in French-language education. The Aménagement linguistique policy launched by the Ministry of Education four years ago has started to bear fruit, and the success of French-language students has never been higher.

Monsieur le Président, alors que nous célébrons le 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la gestion scolaire francophone, le moment est venu de nous pencher à la fois sur le passé et l'avenir.

La communauté francophone de l'Ontario est un exemple vraiment parfait d'une communauté forte, prospère et engagée qui est fière de son histoire et qui est tournée vers l'avenir. Nous avons fait d'énormes progrès depuis l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français en 1986 et, en fait, depuis le début de la grande aventure francophone en Ontario. Les pages de l'histoire franco-ontarienne, qui a débuté il y a 400 ans, continuent d'être écrites chaque jour.

The future has never been brighter for Ontario's French-language students, particularly today as we give second reading to proposed legislation that would make TFO an independent entity.

TFO is more than an educational resource; it is one of the focal points of Franco-Ontarian culture. TFO disseminates Franco-Ontarian culture to every corner of the province and beyond. TFO is not only a broadcaster but also a developer of content. This is important because TFO's programming is one of the few places where Franco-Ontarians can see their culture reflected. In this way, TFO acts as a unifying force, a virtual town square where Franco-Ontarians come together.

L'identité culturelle n'est pas un concept statique. Elle naît tôt dans la vie et elle est renforcée ou affaiblie au fil des ans. L'identité culturelle est renforcée lorsque les membres d'un groupe culturel ont des interactions positives à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur de leur communauté. Elle est renforcée lorsque les messages vé-

hiculés sur l'identité et la richesse de la culture sont positifs, et lorsque la culture est décrite dans les écoles et les médias de masse sous un jour positif.

Ceci est particulièrement important pour les communautés minoritaires, car pour elles, la validation culturelle est vitale.

Lorsque les émissions de TFO brossent un tableau réaliste de la culture franco-ontarienne et lorsque les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens se reconnaissent en elle, il en découle un renforcement de leur identité et du dynamisme culturel de leur communauté. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons besoin que TFO soit un organisme fort et autonome.

Afin d'offrir aux franco-ontariennes et franco-ontariens un soutien éducatif et de valider leur identité, TFO contribue à faire de l'Ontario une province plus forte en renforçant la communauté d'expression française. Plus qu'un moyen d'information, TFO a donné à la francophonie ontarienne une voix et une identité, une voix grâce à laquelle nous communiquons avec les autres communautés francophones de l'Ontario, une voix par laquelle nous exprimons notre identité spécifique et nous nous faisons connaître aux francophones du monde entier.

Cette identité est la synthèse de ce que la francophonie ontarienne a de mieux à offrir, une identité propre dont la diversité régionale et culturelle est reflétée dans les émissions et les reportages audacieux de TFO. Plus que notre langue, c'est notre culture franco-ontarienne que TFO véhicule et valorise.

C'est aussi notre jeunesse, avec une programmation et des sites Web qui lui sont dédiés. Pour la communauté franco-ontarienne et encore plus pour ses jeunes, TFO est une fenêtre ouverte sur le monde, un espace de passage et un lieu de reconnaissance. Je voudrais mentionner une émission de TFO, *FranCoeur*, qui est mise en production par les productions Robert Charbonneau et qui raconte la vie des cultivateurs franco-ontariens de l'est de l'Ontario. C'est une émission qui a été très regardée non seulement par les Franco-Ontariens et par les Ontariens, mais qui a été diffusée au Québec et au Nouveau-Brunswick. C'est par elle que la langue et la culture prennent toute leur pertinence.

C'est d'autant plus crucial que les francophones sont dans notre province en situation minoritaire et que « vivre en français » demande souvent des efforts et du courage. Pour assurer le renouvellement et l'épanouissement de nos communautés, il est essentiel de trouver des façons de motiver, d'inspirer et de valoriser nos jeunes francophones afin qu'eux aussi soient fiers de s'identifier comme Franco-Ontariens. Ceci est important, car la communauté francophone est une des communautés dynamiques qui font de l'Ontario une province remarquable. La capacité bilingue de la province et ses ressources en langue française contribuent à assurer la vitalité culturelle et économique de la province de maintes façons.

La communauté francophone a contribué au développement de tous les secteurs de l'économie. Les francophones sont propriétaires d'environ 12 000 entre-

prises ou sociétés. Les auteurs et dramaturges franco-ontariens sont reconnus dans tout le Canada. Et la communauté francophone fait sentir sa présence dans la vie culturelle de l'Ontario grâce, entre autres, à des festivals, galeries d'art, centres culturels, troupes de théâtre et médias.

Ontario wouldn't be the same without a vibrant French-language education sector. This is why we've invested significantly in French-language schools, investments that include funding for 100 new French-language secondary school teachers this school year alone and \$220 million in new funding to build and acquire a new French-language school. We invested \$20 million in York University's Glendon College, where a new centre of excellence for francophone and bilingual post-secondary education will be created, and we expanded access to post-secondary education for French-language students in northeastern Ontario by supporting the construction of a new Collège Boréal campus in Timmins.

In addition, we have broken down artificial barriers between the French-language schools, colleges, universities and training institutions. In fact, earlier this month, a meeting took place between the director of French-language boards, the presidents of French-language colleges, the heads of bilingual universities, the CEO of TFO, and senior officials from both ministries. This is the first time leaders representing all these different areas of French-language education have come together to discuss new ways of doing things.

We will continue to invest in resources to support French-language boards, students and teachers. We will work with our partners to ensure that we are supporting the curriculum and new initiatives with the right resources. We know this is a particular challenge for French-Language education.

### 1350

Notre gouvernement continuera d'améliorer l'accès aux écoles de langue française et de mettre l'accent sur les régions insuffisamment desservies. Nous accentuerons nos efforts pour augmenter le nombre de diplômés bilingues des écoles secondaires de langue anglaise.

Nous renforcerons les programmes de français langue seconde et nous continuerons à faire appel à l'engagement des communautés et des parents pour mieux faire connaître l'éducation en français.

À ce propos, nous avons réservé 1 \$ million pour mieux sensibiliser le public à l'existence de l'éducation en français en Ontario. Et nous ferons tout en notre pouvoir pour rendre les écoles françaises aussi attrayantes et accessibles que possible pour les personnes ayant le droit de faire éduquer leurs enfants en français.

Nous avons travaillé d'arrache-pied pour transformer nos écoles en lieu de rassemblement pour la communauté. Ceci est particulièrement cruciale pour les écoles françaises car la communauté francophone est de plus en plus diverse.

Les écoles françaises ont un rôle important à jouer au plan de l'accueil, du soutien de l'unification des franco-ontariennes et ontariens dans toute leur diversité.

Nous continuerons sur notre lancée pour aider les écoles secondaires françaises à offrir le même éventail de cours spéciaux que les écoles secondaires anglaises. Nous continuerons aussi à renforcer les liens avec les collèges français, les fournisseurs de services à la petite enfance et les universités bilingues, et avec les centres d'alphabétisation des adultes en langue française et les fournisseurs de services d'Emploi Ontario.

La population franco-ontarienne est fière de la programmation offerte par TFO. Comme je l'ai dit, pour la communauté franco-ontarienne, TFO est plus qu'un moyen de transmission de l'information; le réseau médiatique donne aussi une voix et une identité à la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, une voix qui exprime notre identité spécifique aux yeux des résidents et résidentes de l'Ontario et de la population francophone du monde entier notre propre identité dans toute sa diversité régionale et culturelle, notre propre identité reflétée dans des programmes culturels créatifs, des émissions d'affaires publiques et cela va sans dire, des programmes éducatifs.

TFO doit continuer à concevoir des programmes et un contenu multimédia exceptionnels en français qui reflètent non seulement l'identité francophone, mais aussi l'identité franco-ontarienne.

Nous devons continuer à favoriser l'accès à la langue et à la culture françaises aux quatre coins de l'Ontario, dans des collectivités qui sont majoritairement francophone et dans des collectivités où les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens sont isolés du reste de la francophonie ontarienne.

Et nous devons continuer à offrir des ressources qui tiennent compte des besoins particuliers des élèves francophones. Les jeunes qui fréquentent aujourd'hui nos écoles sont les médecins et les infirmières et infirmiers auxquels nous confierons demain notre santé. Ils contribueront à la vie culturelle par la littérature et les arts. Nous compterons sur eux pour garder notre province verte et belle, et notre économie forte et prospère.

Pour nous, l'éducation en français doit permettre d'assurer l'épanouissement de la langue et de la culture française en Ontario. Elle doit éduquer et entourer les élèves franco-ontariens, qui sont la main-d'œuvre de demain, pour en faire des adultes assoiffés de connaissance, animés d'un esprit critique.

Ce projet de loi, s'il est adopté, fera de TFO un organisme autonome, un organisme qui sera mieux en mesure d'aider les élèves. Samedi dernier je participais au 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la fondation de l'école secondaire publique De La Salle à Ottawa. Cette école forme—c'est une concentration arts. Elle forme des artistes que nous admirons à tous les jours, des artistes qui performant non seulement au Canada mais à travers le pays, des artistes qui sont sur Broadway, des artistes qui font parti du Cirque du Soleil. Alors, je voudrais féliciter M. Jean-Claude Bergeron, qui a été le premier directeur de cette concentration arts à l'école De La Salle, et je veux féliciter tous les professeurs qui, de près ou de loin, ont contribué à la formation de ces élèves. La plupart de ces

élèves ne sont pas seulement en concentration arts, mais ils font aussi partie du groupe en douance. Alors, c'est un joyau dans l'éducation francophone en Ontario.

En fin de compte, ce sont la culture et l'économie de l'Ontario, et la province dans son ensemble, qui seront les grands gagnants. Je vous remercie.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I rise in the House today for the second reading of legislation that would support Ontario's French-language students, teachers and parents.

L'éducation et la culture françaises sont un des volets majeurs de la vision globale de notre gouvernement. Elles sont une des caractéristiques qui définissent l'Ontario et en font un modèle pour le monde entier.

Alors que nous célébrons le 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la création des conseils scolaires francophones, il est important que nous continuions à soutenir l'éducation en français. Nous sommes fiers des réalisations des élèves d'expression française. Ils ont beaucoup travaillé pour assurer leur réussite scolaire. Leurs parents se sont attachés à les soutenir. Et il en a été de même des éducatrices et éducateurs et du personnel de soutien dans les écoles françaises.

En tant que gouvernement, nous avons fait un effort concerté pour veiller à ce que les élèves de langue française disposent des ressources voulues en salle de classe et chez eux. Nous devons encore—cela va sans dire—relever des défis, tant aujourd'hui que demain. Cependant, si les progrès accomplis au cours des 10 dernières années en sont une indication, j'estime que les élèves francophones de l'Ontario ont un avenir encore plus radieux devant eux. Et je pense que tant que nous leur permettons d'avoir accès à des opportunités et à des ressources adaptées à leurs besoins, ils les saisiront et relèveront les défis.

French-language students need to be immersed in their culture outside of the classroom as well as inside. That's what makes TFO such a great asset to our French-language students and teachers, because it enriches the classroom experience and their lives. Students, parents and teachers all benefit from the educational resources that TFO makes available. TFO offers educational TV programming that is available to teachers for use in the classroom, and TFO broadcasts programming that makes it possible for francophone Ontarians to continue to learn and be entertained in their own language when they're at home.

TFO allows francophone Ontarians to see themselves and their culture reflected in the programs that TFO develops right here in Ontario. But TFO's support of French-language education does not stop there. I am amazed at the comprehensive offering of websites TFO produces to support students outside the classroom. When French-language students need tips on how to complete a difficult homework assignment, they go to SOS Devoirs to get homework help. When students want to have fun while building their vocabulary, they go to the Alphablitz website. They play games at the Café des MATHadores to practise their math skills. Chimie.com shows how chemistry is at work behind the scenes in our

everyday lives. I won't describe all of these websites as there are close to 100 of them produced by TFO, but I do want to say that I am impressed with how the TFO websites turned learning into fun and the fact that there is a website addressing just about every topic in the curriculum for every age group. Also, while I'm impressed by the quantity of websites available, it is the quality of TFO's learning resources that impressed me most.

#### 1400

The use of information technology to bolster learning is well recognized, but experts warn that too often technology is seen as a panacea, a quick fix to magically solve all our problems. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Online learning resources are only as sound as the pedagogy that underpins them. Research shows that regardless of the medium used to convey instruction, it must be based on a sound approach that takes into account how students think, how they process information and how they learn. Otherwise, it does not work, but TFO does work, and this is because of the rigour behind the approaches adopted by the people who created the TFO learning websites.

TFO employs experts and educators to help design its websites and its shows. That's why TFO's learning websites are not only popular with teachers, students and their parents here in Ontario; they are also visited frequently by French-language students from across the globe. TFO must be recognized for what it is: a success story.

Je peux affirmer que TFO soutient de façon efficace la politique d'aménagement linguistique du ministère de l'Éducation, et ce de maintes façons. C'est un des fondements de l'éducation en français dans l'Ontario moderne.

Grâce à TFO, le personnel enseignant dispose d'un choix d'environ 3 600 émissions de télévision, favorisant l'apprentissage en salle de classe. La plupart des enseignantes et enseignants se prévalent pleinement de ces ressources. Je crois comprendre que de nombreux enseignants et enseignantes des écoles francophones font très souvent appel aux ressources de TFO en salle de classe.

It's clear to me that TFO is an essential component of French-language education. But it's not just me who feels this way; 83% of Ontario francophones say that it is essential for all francophones in Ontario to have access to TFO.

I am not surprised that TFO is the favourite channel of Ontario's two- to 12-year-old francophones, far ahead of rivals like Radio-Canada and Télétoon. When an educational channel like TFO manages to be more popular with kids than cartoons, clearly they are doing something right.

The feedback we get about TFO from French-language stakeholders is overwhelmingly positive. In 2007-08, TFO received 2,500 phone calls and 1,200 e-mails from viewers. Most of these calls and e-mails were from viewers who wanted to thank TFO. In fact, TFO estimates that 90% of the feedback they get from the community is positive.

En parlant d'aspects positifs, l'éducation en langue française a de nombreux succès à célébrer de nos jours. Nous avons investi dans TFO et dans d'autres ressources pour aider nos élèves. Nous récoltons maintenant les fruits de ces investissements. Au cours des quatre dernières années le nombre d'élèves francophones de la province qui ont vu leur effort couronné de succès a augmenté.

We have closed the gap between English-language and French-language students for most of the key indicators we use that track student success. For example, 68% of French-language grade 6 students met the provincial standards in reading in 2006-07, a 10% increase from 2002-03. Some 83% of French-language students passed the grade 10 literacy test in 2006-07, a 4% point increase from 2002-03.

Ces résultats prouvent que nous pouvons transformer l'éducation en français en investissant dans les bons mécanismes de soutien, des mécanismes comme TFO car, comme je l'ai déclaré auparavant, TFO est bien plus qu'un outil d'apprentissage.

TFO plays a big role in spreading francophone Ontarian culture and providing positive reinforcement of francophone Ontarian identity and value, in all their diversity. This is why I urge my fellow members to support this legislation. TFO has been operating independently from TVO through an order in council for some time now, and with great success. This legislation would make TFO's self-governing status permanent and allow it to continue on its very successful path. This is the last step needed to complete the process of making TFO an independent entity. It is important that we do this, because we need TFO to continue to provide resources that meet the unique educational and cultural needs of Ontario francophone populations.

I think it's a very important initiative. Many people in this House spoke before, last time and hopefully this time, to create an independent TFO, to allow the large French community across the province of Ontario to enjoy and to restore their culture. As I mentioned, it is a very important continuation for the people who study French to go from the classroom to their home and turn on the TV so that they can watch a movie or a program and so that they can educate themselves and also get help if they need some help in math or chemistry or with whatever they need.

I think it's our duty to create some kind of mechanism, as I mentioned, for the many people who enjoy these programs on TV. I think it's about time. I feel the sense of this House that there is a positive support toward creating the independent entity at TFO, because it will serve our needs in the province of Ontario.

Very often when I go with a committee across the province to listen to many different people and stakeholders, they always tell us that they need their products, their information in French and that they need to get the message in French. Due to our support for the bilingual status in the province of Ontario, or to permit or to give the people access to information in this province, I think

that TFO will play a positive role to give us this tool and this mechanism to send our message to the francophone Ontarians. I think it's part of our duty as a province and as a government that committed for many years to support the francophone community across the province of Ontario.

This is especially true when it comes to health, because most of the time people cannot communicate in the English language. Sometimes they cannot get the message from the government in different areas. That's why they want the message to be conveyed to them in their own language. I think it's important to continue working together with the francophone community across the province of Ontario. Minister Meilleur, who is with us today and who is in charge of francophone affairs, is playing a pivotal role to spread this message among our caucus and also this House as a messenger for the francophones across the province, making sure all the people are being served in a professional manner, in a professional way.

**1410**

Today we are speaking about TFO. As you know, TFO, as a medium, becomes very important in our daily life. We can send whatever information we need, we can talk about many different issues, we can send educational materials, we can send health educational materials—all these important messages can be conveyed on that medium.

I think it's about time. TFO has been working almost independently for some time, and now we are working on the last step—this legislation—to permit TFO to be totally independent and able to continue serving the people of Ontario.

It's not just about TV or shows; it's also about websites and about programs. Educational programs can help students whenever they want. They can turn on the TV and watch the educational channel, and they can learn. From time to time, I go to the TFO website. I have found it very educational. I have learned many different things that I didn't know before. Also, the tools they use make it very simple and easy. Everyone who wants to learn the French language can turn on the TV or the website and learn more about it. I think it's very important, in this day, since technology has advanced and become creative, that we enjoy watching and, at the same time, learn. So it's about technology; it's about time; it's about the modern era.

I'm here today, all afternoon, and I will be paying attention to all my friends, all my colleagues on the different sides of the House. Hopefully they're going to stand and support this initiative and also put closure to this file, because it's a very important file. It's very important, as I mentioned, because we, as a government, are committed to give the francophone community across the province the tools they need to be integrated and to maintain the traditions of their culture. They have found out, and believe strongly, that TFO is one of the tools, one of the elements.

As you know, we have a lot of English channels made in Ontario, but we don't have many French channels.

TFO is made in Ontario—all a product of Ontario—and I think francophone Ontarians deserve all the respect and all the support. By passage of this bill, we can help them restore their culture and traditions.

I think it's a very important bill, and, as I mentioned, I hope that all of us will join the government, the minister responsible for francophone affairs and the Minister of Education in supporting this bill, because it's important to us to maintain the culture and also to create the tools for people to learn and be educated.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to have a moment to make a few comments with respect to the remarks by the minister and the member from London—Fanshawe.

Bill 55 has a very complicated name and a very long title—An Act to enact the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act, 2008 and make complementary amendments to the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act—but the purpose is ultimately very clear: to finally completely separate and make independent TFO as the French-language educational corporation to operate alongside TVOntario. It has done excellent work over the years, and this is the final act that is going to completely separate it and make it truly independent.

I certainly support, and our party supports, the premise of the bill. I think it is long overdue, because we do have some 90,000 French-speaking students in Ontario, and I understand that more than half of the teachers in the French-language system already use the excellent programs and services that are being offered by TFO. So we certainly do support the premise.

We do have a few concerns that we hope will be answered during the course of this debate, one of which is with respect to the accountability mechanism and the funding mechanism. We hope that will be made clearer over time. It's also our hope that although TFO is going to be headquartered in Toronto, as I understand it, some consideration will be given to needs in some parts of the province that have a larger francophone population, such as the Niagara region, the Sudbury region, the Cornwall area and some of the other areas, to make sure that the benefit that is going to be arising from this act can be maximized for the benefit of all French-speaking people in the province of Ontario.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je vais avoir une occasion plus tard avec ma collègue de Nickel Belt, M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas, pour parler de ce projet de loi. Certainement, les néo-démocrates vont accepter ce projet de loi pour être capables—comment dire?—d'assister et de s'assurer que le projet de loi va passer d'une manière assez vite. On pense qu'il est temps de faire cela. Je ne veux que dire à mon collègue de London—Fanshawe que je sais qu'il ne voulait pas dire, dans l'esprit qu'il l'a dit, que j'avais besoin—comment il l'a dit en anglais—«to help me restore my culture.» J'aimerais seulement dire que je n'ai jamais perdu ma culture. Je suis francophone et j'en

suis fier. Cela fait plus de 500 ans que mes ancêtres sont ici au Canada. Premièrement, ils sont arrivés au Québec, et au début des années 1900 ils sont venus à Timmins pour travailler dans les champs de bois, les camps de bois, comment disait mon grand-père Ovide, qui est venu travailler dans la région de Timmins.

Donc pour moi, TFO, ce n'est pas une question de « restore my culture »; c'est une question d'épanouir ma culture et de m'allouer, d'être capable, de pratiquer et d'être informé en français, d'aller rechercher les services nécessaires.

Une affaire que j'ai apprise il y a longtemps, c'est sur les choix que nous faisons dans notre vie. Moi, j'étais un jeune—et on m'en a parlé plus tard—élevé en français, qui a fait son secondaire en français. Mais à un point, quand j'étais arrivé dans la communauté ontarienne, je me suis assimilé comme les autres. Cela devient un choix : si tu veux être Francophone, Italien ou n'importe quoi, il faut que tu pratiques ta langue. Tu as besoin de la parler. Tu as besoin de vivre ta culture. C'est quelque chose qu'on ne peut pas simplement laisser à la porte avec maman et papa, et quand ça nous plaît d'aller voir nos parents, dire, « On est francophones », et avoir une belle tourtière dans le temps des fêtes et de la tire en automne. C'est une question de toujours pratiquer sa culture et de la vivre. Je vais avoir la chance d'en parler un peu plus tard.

**M<sup>me</sup> Laurel C. Broten:** Je suis très fière de me joindre au débat et de donner mon appui au projet de loi 55. TFO, c'est certain, enrichit la culture franco-ontarienne. C'est une ressource indispensable au personnel enseignant, aux élèves et aux parents d'expression française. Mais TFO n'est pas seulement un outil d'apprentissage; c'est aussi une institution de base elle-même pour l'identité et la vitalité culturelle franco-ontarienne. Comme parent de deux enfants, maintenant je comprends bien les efforts que mes parents—un père anglophone et une mère fransaskoise—ont fait pour que l'on apprenne la langue française et que l'on comprenne notre culture francophone.

C'est certain que nous voulons que TFO continue à offrir des ressources qui répondent aux besoins uniques des élèves francophones. Et si le projet de loi est adopté, il accordera l'autonomie à TFO et fournira un meilleur soutien à nos élèves. C'est un pas en avant très important pour les enfants et leurs parents. Je comprends bien les efforts des parents anglophones ou francophiles en Ontario pour que leurs enfants apprennent la langue française. Dans notre maison, des programmes comme Toupie et Binou, et Arthur l'Aventurier, sont des mécanismes à assurer que nos garçons, Zachary et Ryan, s'engagent dans la langue française. Des livres Gilda la girafe ou Munsch, que l'on lit à la maison, sont utiles pour deux petits garçons de deux ans et demi qui apprennent une autre langue dans un milieu d'éducation francophone, et TFO fournit une grande partie de leur éducation. Alors, je suis très fière d'être ici aujourd'hui.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the minister responsible for

francophone affairs and the member from London—Fanshawe on Bill 55, the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act, 2008.

Certainly this bill makes TFO an independent entity. It's worth noting that TFO does, at this time, already have its own board of directors and its own budget of approximately \$23 million. It's based in Toronto. A Toronto office, to me, is a little surprising. I would have thought there might be consideration given to the office being located in the areas of the province that have more francophone members. Northeastern Ontario might be a natural location, and certainly northeastern Ontario, I'm sure, would appreciate government offices being located in one of the communities there.

**1420**

I know that the member from Burlington will be speaking to this bill, and the member from Thornhill, representing the Progressive Conservative Party. I do have some questions about the bill and will look forward to hearing them talk about it

I know that TFO does provide services for some 90,000 French-language students in the province, that nearly half of all Ontario's teachers rely on the French programming. Certainly in our family, all of my children have learned to speak French, something that I've always aspired to but haven't done myself.

We are generally supportive of this bill, but we do have lots of questions which we will want answered, and we want to see it go to committee as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je voudrais remercier les membres de London—Fanshawe, Whitby—Oshawa, Timmins—Baie James, Etobicoke—Lakeshore et Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Today, the government will deliver on its commitment to create an independent TFO that meets the specific cultural and educational needs of the francophone community.

Oui, en effet, la chaîne de télévision TFO n'est pas seulement une chaîne éducative, parce qu'il y a plusieurs émissions d'information publique comme Panorama, par exemple. Souvent la seule fois que les Franco-Ontariens se voient à la télévision ou que leur message est véhiculé, c'est à travers la chaîne de TFO. Alors, il y a beaucoup de gens qui ont été impliqués pour qu'aujourd'hui on parle en Chambre de l'indépendance de TFO.

Je voudrais remercier la nouvelle PDG de TFO, madame Claudette Paquin, qui a joué un rôle très important, et la présidente du conseil de l'administration Gisèle Chrétien. En fait, TFO est aussi un employeur, un employeur qui donne de l'emploi à nos nouveaux et nouvelles gradués soit de la Cité Collégiale, du Collège Boréal, de l'Université d'Ottawa, de l'Université Laurentienne. Il y a des gradués aussi de l'École secondaire publique De La Salle où j'étais samedi dernier pour célébrer leurs 25 ans. Alors il y a plusieurs personnes qui se sont données soit pour la création de La Chaîne dans les années 1987 et aussi pour l'émancipation

de TFO, l'émancipation des employés et qui raconte notre histoire—l'histoire franco-ontarienne dans tout l'Ontario.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'll be sharing my time with our party's education critic, the member from Burlington.

Je me lève aujourd'hui pour discuter du projet de loi 55, Loi de 2008 sur l'Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l'Ontario.

En tant que critique de l'opposition officielle assigné aux affaires francophones, je salue tous les efforts de promotions de la langue et de la culture françaises. Dans mon rôle de critique, j'ai passé beaucoup de temps à étudier la culture francophone de notre province et de la comprendre.

Je me suis familiarisé avec les quelque 1,4 millions d'Ontariens qui ont une connaissance pratique du français, presque 11 % de la population ontarienne, avec les quelque 488 000 Ontariens dont la langue maternelle est le français, et avec les quelque 55 000 Ontariens qui sont francophones et ne parlent aucun anglais. Je me suis familiarisé avec des îlots francophones comme Sudbury, et certaines parties de la région de Niagara, où des portions de la population vivent en français. J'ai appris beaucoup sur les membres de la communauté francophone dont les seuls liens avec leur culture se vivent par le biais de l'internet et de la programmation de la chaîne TFO. J'ai regardé ce que se fait dans notre système d'éducation afin d'encourager le bilinguisme.

La province de l'Ontario a près de 90 000 étudiants qui apprennent le français dans près de 350 écoles. Selon le ministère de l'Éducation, « près de la moitié des enseignants ontariens utilisent la programmation de la chaîne TFO en classe », ce qui est approprié.

Il me fait énormément plaisir de constater que tant de jeunes apprennent le français et sa culture, notamment parce que j'ai grandi au Québec durant l'intense période de méfiance qui régnait alors que le séparatisme faisait rage dans les cœurs et les esprits de plusieurs et que tous pensaient que les deux peuples fondateurs du Canada se sépareraient à jamais plutôt que de continuer à grandir ensemble.

Nous applaudissons donc la chaîne TFO pour la façon dont elle s'est développée afin de devenir une ressource essentielle pour les étudiants et les enseignants dans les écoles de l'Ontario. La chaîne TFO a mis au point une programmation éducative primée qui aide les parents les enseignants également.

Tout commence par une trousse de départ préparée pour les parents d'enfants d'âge préscolaire et d'écoliers de la maternelle. La chaîne TFO offre 225 différents guides pour les enseignants; 15 000 ressources éducatives cataloguées par niveau et par sujet. De plus, la chaîne produit 4 000 programmes éducatifs pour les écoles françaises, dont 1 600 sont offerts gratuitement.

Toutes ces ressources sont disponibles sur leur site électronique. Les employés de la chaîne TFO consultent les parents et les enseignants et leur montrent à utiliser

adéquatement les ressources offertes. Les Ontariens devraient être réellement impressionnés par la quantité de travail accomplie par la chaîne TFO pour produire sa programmation éducative. C'est une excellente utilisation des fonds publics parce que les Ontariens acquièrent ainsi une valeur tangible.

La façon dont la chaîne continue d'offrir ses ressources lui mérite pleinement la désignation de service public. Notre parti a l'intention d'appuyer le projet de loi 55.

I rise today to comment on Bill 55, the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act, 2008. As the opposition critic for francophone affairs, I commend any efforts that are made to promote the French language and culture. In my role as critic, I have spent a great deal of time studying and learning about the francophone culture of our province. I have become more familiar with the 1.4 million Ontarians who have a working knowledge of the French language, almost 11% of Ontario's population; more familiar with the 488,000 whose mother tongue is actually French; more familiar with the almost 50,000 Ontarians who are francophones and do not speak any English at all. I have learned about French pockets, communities like Sudbury and the Niagara region, where significant portions of the population are francophone. I have learned about these members of the francophone community whose only ties to their culture are through the Internet and the programming provided by TFO.

I have looked at our education system and have become aware of the work that is being done to encourage bilingualism. The province of Ontario has some 90,000 students from 350 schools who are learning the French language. According to the Ministry of Education, "Nearly half of Ontario's teachers regularly use TFO's programming in the classroom," and that is quite appropriate.

**1430**

It gives me great pleasure to see so many young people embracing the French language and culture, notably because I grew up in Quebec during the fiery era of mistrust, when separatism was on everyone's mind and everyone's lips, and many thought that the two founding cultures of Canada would grow apart and not together.

So we applaud the way in which TFO has organized itself to become an invaluable resource to both students and teachers alike in the classrooms of Ontario. TFO has created award-winning educational programs that help parents and teachers alike. It all begins with starter kits for parents of pre-school and kindergarten students. TFO provides 225 different teachers' guides; 15,000 educational resources, divided by grade and subject matter. In addition, TFO produces 4,000 educational programs for French-language schools, 1,600 of which are provided free of charge. All of these resources are available through their website. TFO staff also consult with parents and teachers, showing them how to use TFO's resources effectively.

The people of Ontario should be incredibly impressed with how much work TFO has put into its educational programming. It is good use of tax money because it creates value for Ontarians. The continuing resource base provided by TFO gives true meaning to the term "public service." Our party will be supporting Bill 55.

Although we will be supporting this bill, it doesn't mean we don't have several reservations about how the McGuinty government has handled this file. I want to outline concerns here, with the hope that the government will work on effective solutions. So I want to address the following issues.

In separating TFO, we have effectively created a new government department, complete with all the costs that go with that. Duplication of services could lead to reduced resources for other areas. You have to pick your battles, especially in these days of economic belt-tightening, which the McGuinty government likes to suggest are, at worst, a bump in the road.

What are the implications? The government failed to bring in this legislation prior to actually separating TFO from TVO. Coverage of this Legislature on both TVO and TFO is almost non-existent. Since taxpayers fund government-owned-and-operated networks, one could reasonably expect that the business of interpreting government to taxpaying citizens would be prime in the program makeup of these services.

This legislation legitimizes an entirely new department in the province of Ontario. The legislation calls for the creation of a new board of directors, plus regional councils and advisory committees. Will these appointments be more partisan appointments from a government famous for rewarding its friends with taxpayers' money? These are reasonable questions, given the track record of a tax-and-spend regime now entrenched in all aspects of Ontario's administration. Yes, we support all of the good that comes from what the bill intends, but we worry about the continued expansion of already bloated spending and a swelling provincial payroll.

Wherever we look, we see waste because of duplication. It's like school boards, hospitals and city councils. It's like lots of chiefs making lots of bucks. Everyone, it seems, requires a separate and duplicative infrastructure, with full support mechanisms. Money is spent many times over for parallel staff, equipment and properties. Administrative costs like additional auditors and more staff within ministries are needed just to oversee new departments. It's everywhere you look.

Where will the government get the money? Will we cut services? Premier McGuinty says he won't. Or will he increase taxes again, even if they are called fees or premiums? At the end of the day, who winds up paying all of these costs? No one can deny that after the basic income taxes we all pay, Ontarians already have to deal with the health premium, a tax that hurts poorer people, property taxes at the municipal level, the gasoline tax and the provincial sales tax. The only level of government I see currently thinking in terms of how much taxpayers can actually afford is the federal government. It at least

makes efforts to allow citizens to put a little more back into their pockets.

In June 2006, the government announced that it would separate TFO from TVO. The government actually did separate TFO from TVO in May 2007. Two years after they announced their intention, we are debating legislation intended to formalize this act. This begs an obvious question: Why didn't the government bring this legislation in between June 2006 and May 2007? This reminds me of the man who is thinking about buying a new car. He tells his wife, and she asks if the family budget can afford it. They agree that they should visit the bank, review their affairs and then make a decision. But the next day, the man turns in to the driveway with a top-of-the-line 2008 BMW. The McGuinty government sat around for a year knowing this was coming, and what did they do? Nothing. Then the separation came along. Did they act? No. TFO has been a de facto separate entity since May 2007, almost a year to the day. That's two years of no plan, two years of no action.

Now there is action, at a cost, and before it has been discussed, debated or passed by this Legislature, which does have jurisdiction over it. All the while, TFO's legal status has been in limbo, because this government hadn't separated them from TVO in legal terms. So this bill isn't really a subject for debate; this bill is a fix.

Selon Claudette Paquin, le chef de la direction de la chaîne TFO, « La chaîne TFO est bien connue pour les services qu'elle offre aux étudiants de langue française, les enseignants et les parents. Elle est grandement appréciée par les francophiles à la grandeur de l'Ontario. Ce projet de loi représente l'étape finale dans la désignation officielle de TFO comme entité indépendante et autogérée de télédiffusion éducative. Nous espérons avec tout cœur que ce projet de loi sera adopté. »

Les membres de ce côté-ci de la Chambre sont d'accord avec l'évaluation que M<sup>me</sup> Paquin fait de TFO. Sans aucun doute, et avec le soutien du parti, le projet de loi sera adopté, mais nous ne pouvons pas passer sous silence qu'il s'agit du travail d'un gouvernement arrogant, qui de plus en plus souvent met la charrue devant les bœufs et trouve ça normal. Ça ne l'est pas.

According to Claudette Paquin, the current CEO of TFO, "TFO is a well-recognized resource for French-language students, teachers and parents, and is greatly appreciated by francophiles across Ontario. This legislation is the last step to officially make TFO into an independent, self-governed educational broadcaster. We hope with all our hearts that the legislation will be passed."

We on this side of the House agree with Ms. Paquin's assessment of TFO, and undoubtedly, with the support of our party, it will be passed. But it cannot go unsaid that this is the work of an arrogant government that more and more often puts the cart before the horse and thinks that's just fine. Well, it isn't. After waiting two years for this legislation to be introduced, of course M<sup>me</sup>. Paquin hopes this bill is passed. If you were her, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't you?

TFO is an organization whose efforts I support and applaud for what it does, but it is also an organization that has been purchasing property, acquiring assets and entering into contracts. How is it that we have departments splitting off from one another without legislative control? Can the minister explain who would be responsible in the case of a legal dispute? This sort of mismanagement begs the question: Who is actually running things? Is the minister running her department, or is the department running the minister? We have learned that with this government in control of taxpayers' money, the inmates are in control of the asylum. Clearly, this is a government that has no plan.

TVO et TFO sont financés en grande partie à partir des fonds publics. Le plus gros partie de leur programmation est éducatif ou alors à caractère significatif.

**1440**

J'ai mentionné tout à l'heure qu'il y a une exception. Il s'agit du manque chronique d'attention portée par nos deux télédiffuseurs aux débats de cette Chambre. Je fais référence aux télédiffuseurs ontariens dont nous discutons aujourd'hui et également aux télédiffuseurs financés par le gouvernement canadien : CBC ou Radio-Canada.

On peut également argumenter que ces organisations détiennent non seulement la responsabilité d'offrir aux Ontariens une couverture médiatique régulière et juste de ce qui se passe en Chambre, mais que leur responsabilité est plus grande que celle d'un télédiffuseur privé dans ce domaine. Leur responsabilité accrue est justifiée par le fait que les télédiffuseurs privés doivent se faire compétition pour attirer les auditeurs. La nature de cette compétition exige d'eux qu'ils présentent un contenu apprécié d'un auditoire plus vaste.

Les télédiffuseurs financés par les deniers publics reçoivent leurs budgets des fonds publics et ce sont ces fonds qui leur permettent d'offrir au public ontarien un contenu qui les fait approfondir leur connaissance de notre province.

Je crois qu'il est particulièrement important pour les membres de la communauté francophone d'avoir accès régulièrement aux débats de la Chambre sur la chaîne TFO. La chaîne qui présente les débats réguliers de la Chambre ne diffuse pas les débats en français. C'est inacceptable surtout que nous entendons souvent le gouvernement de monsieur McGuinty faire état de son soutien des droits de la communauté francophone. Pour la plupart de ceux qui appartiennent à la communauté francophone, la chaîne TFO représente la meilleure fenêtre sur les nouvelles provinciales d'importance.

Il n'est pas étonnant que ce gouvernement veuille limiter l'accès des francophones à ce qui se passe ici étant donné leur piètre rendement. Mais, ce gouvernement a l'obligation d'offrir aux Ontariens de l'information régulière et juste, et il en a les moyens.

Both TVO and TFO receive the bulk of their funding from the people of Ontario. For the most part, they provide either educational or highly relevant programming. I have mentioned that there is an exception, and

that is the incredibly poor coverage that the proceedings in this House receive from both our public broadcasters. I refer to the Ontario-operated networks we were discussing here today and also to the Canadian government-funded CBC and Radio-Canada. One might argue that these organizations not only have a responsibility to provide the people of Ontario with timely and accurate access to what happens in this chamber, but that they have a greater responsibility than a private broadcaster might.

The reason they have a greater obligation is that a private broadcaster must compete for listeners or viewers. Competition requires them to provide content that is marketable to a broader audience. The government-funded broadcasters are subsidized by taxpayer dollars, and it is this subsidy that enables them to provide content to the people of Ontario that enhances their knowledge of our province.

I believe it is especially important for members of the francophone community to have regular access to the proceedings here on TFO. The regular legislative channel does not produce the proceedings of this House in French. That is appalling, considering how often we hear the McGuinty government claim to support the rights of the francophone community. For many in the francophone community, TFO represents the best access they will have to provincially relevant news.

Given the performance of this government, I understand why they would want to limit how much access francophone people have to what happens here. But this government has an obligation to provide timely and accurate information to Ontarians, and it does have the means. I wonder if my fellow members even know what the level of coverage of these proceedings is on these channels, which we control on behalf of and for the benefit of Ontarians.

On TFO, there is no coverage of the proceedings of this House outside of their daily news program. TVO in English does a little better, but not much better. Question period is on daily from 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. on TVO. I wonder how many Ontarians set their alarm clocks for that. Come to think of it, probably about the same number who'll watch it live on the Legislature at its new prime time of 10:45 a.m., but that's another debate. There is no other access on TVO to current provincial political debate, except when the excellent Steve Paikin does a program on provincial politics.

This is the government that cancelled Studio 2 and replaced it with a format that wouldn't have as many opportunities to embarrass this government. In fact, many have speculated that the sole reason for the change at TVO was the consistent yet legitimate criticisms of the government's performance. This government's actions when dealing with our publicly funded broadcasters seem to be consistent with how they handle every other issue: partisan politics before good public policy.

I support all efforts to provide access to alternate language and cultural programming. In fact, as the member for Thornhill, I have the honour of representing one of the most culturally diverse ridings in Canada.

According to Stats Canada, in Ontario there are 266,000 people who speak neither French nor English. Of those 266,000, 26,600—or exactly 10%—live in Markham and Vaughan, in my riding. There are 145 languages spoken in Thornhill. I have been in Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, Ultra Orthodox Jewish synagogues, a Filipino social club, a Korean community centre, and to Chinese events of all kinds. And that's just the tip of the iceberg in one small community of Ontario.

I hold community round tables that are ethnocentric. No matter which community, they all express the burning need for resources to maintain and share their cultures. So what are we doing about that? One of the highest priorities of this government should be finding better ways to integrate newcomers into our society. Could we improve adult ESL, for example, on government-funded TV channels? I suggest that the answer is yes. Just an idea, but given that this bill was jointly introduced by the minister responsible for francophone affairs and the Minister of Education, I would certainly hope so.

Immigrants represent the future of Canada and, indeed, the future of Ontario. We don't make enough babies anymore. If that requires any proof, visit Thornhill with me. This government should be developing new ways to help promote and share cultures, new cultures with the newcomers—and we just came up with one.

So what's it going to be—more cricket club grants or a meaningful plan on how to promote and maintain the cultural diversity of our communities?

J'aimerais terminer en soulignant le long et riche passé de la francophonie ici en Ontario. Les francophones ont élevé des générations d'enfants ici, travaillé et contribué à la construction de notre province. Le Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario s'est toujours battu pour promouvoir et célébrer cette culture ici en Ontario et continuera à le faire. Ce projet de loi, même s'il arrive tard, permettra d'assurer aux francophones de cette province que l'accès continue au contenu médiatique dans leur propre langue. Je crois sincèrement que nous pouvons tous appuyer ce projet, mais j'aimerais quand même rappeler au gouvernement que le pouvoir de ce que nous avons créé dépasse amplement le concept d'origine. Utilisons ce pouvoir sagement.

In closing, francophone people have a long, rich heritage here in Ontario. They have raised generations of children here. They've worked hard, and they've helped to build our province. The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario has fought and will continue to fight to ensure that their culture is promoted and celebrated here in Ontario. This bill, although late, will help to ensure that the francophone people of this province have continued access to media content in their own language. I believe it is indeed something that we can all support, but I again would remind the government that the power of what we have created goes well beyond what is envisioned. Let us use it wisely.

1450

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 55, the Ontario French-language Education Communications Authority Act, 2008—it is a mouthful.

My colleague from Thornhill has illustrated our caucus's support for TFO and the importance of the francophone community to the social fabric of our province. The member from Thornhill has also shared some of our areas of concern with the current draft of Bill 55. It is my hope that, as this piece of legislation moves forward through the clause-by-clause process and in particular through public consultation, necessary changes are made to realize the full potential of Bill 55.

I wish to reinforce several of the points made by the member from Thornhill and to expand on issues that fall within the purview of my portfolio as education critic.

Ontario has a rich multilingual heritage, in particular our francophone community, which was instrumental in the creation of this great province. Our northern communities, descendants of the *coureurs des bois*, have a strong and vibrant francophone culture that is alive and well today. Together with the francophone community in south Niagara, these two groups form the largest concentration of francophones outside Quebec. We, as legislators, need to ensure that these francophone communities, together with French-language schools throughout Ontario, have the tools they need to share their language and culture with the next generation.

TFO also offers a comforting welcome to the new and expanding francophone immigrant community in Ontario, which derives great benefit from the educational programming. New Ontarians who arrive here from all corners of the globe with French as their mother tongue will find a connection to the place of their birth, a medium that speaks to them in their own language, and hopefully an opportunity to learn more about their new homeland.

I commend TFO for the invaluable resources it has provided and continues to provide to the over 90,000 francophone students in this province. In addition to enhancing the educational experiences of our francophone students, over half of Ontario's teachers use TFO programming in their classrooms.

My colleague has eloquently defined the benefits and importance of TFO to the social fabric of our province and has raised some of the concerns that we, as a PC caucus, currently have with Bill 55.

During the tenure of the McGuinty government, we have witnessed a sharp decline in the accountability of ministers in this government with regard to the programs under their jurisdiction. From the children's aid society, to Caledonia, to the year-end Liberal slush fund, accountability to taxpayers has clearly been a distant concern to the McGuinty cabinet, if at all.

In keeping with the importance of accountability to taxpayers, I understand that the governing authority of TFO is to make reports to the minister. Aside from the obligatory annual business plan for the fiscal year, there

are no established timelines for the submission of reports to the minister.

I come from a report-driven organization. Any organization of the size and scope of the province of Ontario must also be report-driven. How else can we possibly keep tabs on everything? It is my hope that firm time frames for reports will be established by the ministry so that all parties can be thoroughly accountable to the Ontario taxpayers. The left hand must know what the right hand is doing if we are to remain accountable to the taxpayers and make the right decisions in their best interests.

I would appreciate the Minister of Education's clarification regarding another issue of accountability. There appear to be several ministers and government representatives who are authorized to release funding to TFO; in fact, there may be too many. The TFO authority is answerable to the Minister of Education, and it is the Minister of Education who approves the annual business plan and hopefully receives various reports throughout the year. TFO has its own accounting system with provincial/federal contributions and membership revenue flowing into their separate account. My cause for concern revolves around the Lieutenant Governor's ability to authorize the Minister of Finance to advance amounts to TFO out of the general revenue fund of the province. It appears inconsistent that a government representative, who is not responsible for the oversight of the TFO authority, would be granted the power to direct funds to TFO.

I'm not questioning the LG's ability to act in the best interests of the people of this province, but it is inefficient and unfair to task two busy representatives of the government with multiple responsibilities for TFO. The verification of information will cause unnecessary delays, as representatives for TFO are required to secure information from two divisions of the government to achieve one goal. As legislators, our goal should be to create thoughtful, necessary and complete policies, not to complicate the matter with unnecessary twists and turns and regulations.

I found further cause for concern—and one that I have to say is appalling to include in this legislation. Under the legal section of the bill, the clause reads as follows: that if the authority has unpaid judgments after making all reasonable efforts to pay, then the Minister of Finance will pay from the consolidated revenue fund the remainder. What kind of message are we sending to the taxpayers of Ontario? This is how the McGuinty government goes about establishing legal, financial criteria? I do not believe that it is fiscally prudent that legislators build in default plans for loans or fiscal irresponsibility on the part of agencies. If the government makes it clear from the outset that it is ready, willing and able to absorb any debt or defaulted payments, what incentive is there to be fiscally responsible?

To be clear, my question is not a reflection on the accounting standards of the TFO authority. It is a statement in general, both as an MPP and as a taxpayer, in

respect to all legislation created in this chamber, that we do not continue to build in escape clauses for financial mismanagement. Instead, we should be very clear that the funding we commit to a project, be it one-time or base funding, should be utilized accordingly and in keeping with the budget that has been submitted by that organization. The taxpayers in Ontario expect us to hold our organizations to account, and our legislation should respect that understanding.

For over 24 years, I was not only responsible for assisting to draft local legislation but was accountable to the rules and regulations set out by this province, which authorized the bylaws that constituted our legal framework of operation.

I again seek clarification from the minister regarding the powers section of this legislation.

The TFO board of directors creates and submits bylaws to the Minister of Education for approval. However, the bylaws take effect two weeks after filing. Everyone here in the chamber knows that the minister will not have had the opportunity to review or approve those bylaws within a short, two-week-window period. My concern is that the TFO board will allocate funds and resources to the implementation and execution of the new bylaws two weeks after they have been filed. If the minister rejects the new bylaws or suggests changes after they have already been implemented, then scarce resources will have been wasted because the process is flawed. The axiom that it's better to beg forgiveness than to ask for permission should not be codified in this legislation. If that continues to be the case, imagine how many new taxes the Premier would dream up, or user fees, as he prefers to call them, if he didn't have to bother with that pesky little process of informing the people first.

I continue to be puzzled by the division of responsibility between the LG and the minister. This is an ad hoc arrangement at best, and does not appear to serve the interests of the TFO organization or the taxpayer. For instance, is it the LG, not the minister, who has the authority to establish a subsidiary? TFO is going to have a budget for a government relations adviser just to sort out the multiple layers of bureaucracy built into this legislation.

#### 1500

Why is it hard for the McGuinty government to develop a streamlined, cost-effective and efficient process? It seems that whenever this administration sticks its nose into an issue, it's like herding cats; everyone and everything is scattered in all directions. Instead of offering a simple, straightforward chain of command that TFO and its board could clearly and easily follow, the McGuinty government offers convoluted delineations between the Ministry of Education and the LG's office. When there is no clear-cut final decision-maker, omissions, crossed wires and costly errors can occur. It is our hope, on this side of the floor anyway, that the McGuinty government finally takes the bull by the horns and digs in to fix the mess it is creating.

At the end of the day, there is only one taxpayer. I was very mindful of that fact at the regional level and, believe me, I have not lost sight of this in this chamber.

In speaking to the issue of the funding model, the lion's share of financing does come from the province of Ontario. The federal government is a contributing partner and the balance, of course, of the TFO budget is derived directly from cable subscribers—once again, three funding sources but only one taxpayer.

The TVO budget prior to the split with TFO was \$84 million, of which the taxpayers of this province and the country contributed \$68.5 million. The significance of this sum would indicate a certain responsibility to offer educational programming that brings federal and provincial issues into the mainstream content.

There used to be significant coverage of these issues and legislation that appeared before the Ontario Legislature and the Canadian Parliament on the acclaimed TVO program Studio 2. Despite the fact that taxpayers of Ontario form the largest contributors to the TVO coffers, Studio 2 was dropped from the program schedule. One would think that the demise of a program featuring politicians would slip quietly into the night with little fanfare. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Shockingly enough, the taxpayers of Ontario actually enjoy watching a more comprehensive, less adversarial discussion of the issues that directly affect them, their families and their community. They were justifiably upset when the program was removed from the airwaves.

I am continually impressed with the number of my constituents who regularly watch question period. Mr. Speaker, I venture to guess that you may even have to wear sunglasses to hide your celebrity from time to time in the grocery store.

Shortly, the proceedings of the Legislature will be available on the Internet, but for our rural and northern constituencies, their dial-up Internet access is not going to cut the mustard. Right now, if you want to watch proceedings of this Ontario Legislature on TVO or TFO, the same organizations that receive the majority of their funding from this level of government, you're going to have to set your alarm clock very early—3 a.m., to be precise. To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, you have not slapped a parental advisory on question period as yet, although it has come close a few times. Inappropriate content aside, I cannot think of any other reason why the Ontario Legislature would be on TVO and TFO at 3 in the morning.

My caucus colleagues and I are not suggesting that TVO and TFO use their prime-time slots for government programming; it's exactly the contrary. As a mother and a grandmother, I would like to see children's programming on throughout the day and also the early evening. The current quality of children's programming on TVO and TFO stations is of a very high calibre. However, at 8 p.m., when most kids are headed to bed, it is not unreasonable to expect that the programming switch to a more adult content and keep the taxpayers abreast of the decisions that have affected them in their everyday lives. The notion that people may in fact miss programming

that keeps them up to date on the working initiatives of their government can be supported by a corresponding decline in membership revenue. I don't know if you are aware, but memberships dropped from a healthy 100,000 memberships to 65,000 memberships at the end of 2004-05, directly after Studio 2 was dropped from the TVO/TFO lineup. Over one third of the viewers left the TVO/TFO family as a result of that programming decision.

Clearly, the people of the province of Ontario want to have access to their elected representatives. I'm not suggesting that the government begin to interfere in TVO/TFO programming decisions. I am suggesting that the talented, creative minds in this medium get together and offer young people a glimpse into the workings of government on their level. The United States has been very successful in this form of programming in the past. Their youth understand the political processes and many are actually engaged in it, as we've witnessed throughout this primary season.

My daughter and her friends could probably recite the educational shorts that appeared frequently on the ABC channel. One of my favourites was on how a bill became a law. It's an animated feature of a bill and the process that the bill travels to become law. The intended recipient of the message does not immediately identify the cartoon as an overtly political or educational tool, as it's really too fun to be good for you. They just knew it had a catchy lyric and a story of the bill that was engaging. That is the kind of information about government that I would expect to see, as would my caucus colleagues, from an organization whose focus is educational programming but also receives a majority of funding from this government body.

TVO has three stated priorities:

- (1) to help children become successful learners;
- (2) to help parents take an active role in their children's education; and
- (3) to create adult programming geared towards citizenship and social issues.

Are the taxpayers of Ontario really taking full advantage of the rights inherent in their citizenship? Are they up to speed on the latest social issues affecting our communities? I would argue that they are not, as in election after election, voter turnout drops to abysmal levels. Perhaps if the people of Ontario understood the ins and outs of government, the opportunities that they have to participate in the democratic process, then the number of people at the ballot box would increase.

Likewise, Canadian history is perceived as a narcoleptic's dream come true, but we do have an exciting and interesting story to share with our youth. We just need to present it to them in a way that speaks to them, in a medium that attracts their attention and captivates their imagination.

While I believe that the Ontario Legislature, her representatives and the issues that we are dealing with are not adequately covered, TFO is doing an excellent job fulfilling their first two priorities. The Magic School Bus and the adventures of Miss Frizzle's class are extra-

ordinary and serve to complement and enhance the school curriculum. Success in the classroom is often about creativity, and TFO offers educators a unique teaching tool that connects with the children and reinforces their lessons. The Magic School Bus is only one of 4,000 educational TV programs available to French-language schools. Some 1,600 are free to the Internet, and TFO also offers 225 pedagogical guides for teachers.

TFO is a fabulous resource for our educators, parents and our children, but what suggestions can we offer to assist this organization to preserve and promote the French language and culture? I found it disturbing and short-sighted that the McGuinty government mandated that the TFO offices be located in Toronto. In the 2007 election, our leader John Tory and our PC caucus pledged to move a portion of government jobs outside of the Toronto area to spread civil service opportunities around the province. Clearly, the McGuinty government is not so inclined and, judging by this administration's neglect of our rural and northern communities, has no intention of supporting communities outside of the greater Toronto area. The loss of manufacturing and industrial jobs has hit the north and the Niagara regions particularly hard. Here was a win-win situation right on the Premier's doorstep and he chose to step right over it in favour of throwing Toronto yet another bone.

#### 1510

The decision to locate the offices of TFO in Nipissing, the Nickel Belt or Niagara should not be based strictly on the fact that these communities have been hard hit by job losses. There are job losses all the way across Ontario. No, there's more to it than that. These three communities constitute the second- and third-largest francophone populations outside of Quebec in Canada.

In Niagara, the francophone community has recently experienced another loss. The French-language division of CBC closed their offices in Welland. This closure occurred at a time when the francophone community has undergone a resurgence of grassroots support. Bonjour Niagara is focused on attracting Quebec tourists to the Niagara region to experience the various festivals and events and a francophone agricultural-culinary trail. It would be a tremendous boost to this particular community if they could showcase their initiatives to francophones across the province and potentially across Canada.

TFO is uniquely positioned to connect francophones in remote locations, or those who live in a predominantly anglophone community, with larger francophone individuals in other parts of our province. We could help these strong, vibrant communities reach their full potential by simply moving some office space.

The citizens of Sudbury identify themselves as a truly bilingual community, with over 40% of the population identifying themselves as bilingual and 28% listing French as their mother tongue. Our northern communities have not received the same amount of attention as our southern communities' urban counterparts by this McGuinty government.

The Minister of Education could have supported the culture and language of our northern francophone population by giving them this opportunity to bid on this project or put forward and argue for locating bilingual services up there in their region. Instead, this government has mandated in legislation that the offices of TFO be located in Toronto. The McGuinty government is the doting parent on a favourite child, while the rest of Ontario seems to receive scraps. One way to preserve and protect the French language and culture is to show communities across Ontario what a vibrant, active francophone community really looks like.

As I was examining the role of francophone resources in our public and separate school systems, I found an interesting difference that I hope the minister can explain. The separate schools begin their francophone programming at a much earlier age than the public board. Grade 1 is the typical level at which French language and culture is introduced to the separate school students. By contrast, public school students do not usually receive French instruction until about grade 3. If the McGuinty government is intent on not only preserving the French language but also promoting it, I would encourage the minister to investigate the haphazard application in French-language programming in schools across Ontario. This loosey-goosey introduction of the French language in our school systems speaks to the inconsistencies that continually crop up throughout this administration.

It is my expectation as a legislator, the education critic and as a grandmother who will have a student in the public education system in the near future that the French-language curriculum be applied equally among the school boards. Separate school students are getting a two-year advance on average in comparison to their public school counterparts. The minister should be ensuring that a level playing field exists among the students in her charge, particularly if the minister is focused on preserving and promoting French language and culture. It would be interesting to see how many students from the public system enter French immersion in comparison to the separate board.

I wish to be very clear about what my expectations for the distance-education portion of Bill 55 are. Access to distance education is extremely important, again, to our forgotten northern and rural communities. It is disturbing to me and to my caucus colleagues that the minister may permit TFO to charge fees for this distance education. The bill reads, "The authority shall not charge a fee ... in respect of a student resident in Ontario unless the minister has approved the amount of the fee." The bill should state, "The authority shall not charge any fee at all in respect of a student resident in Ontario."

This should not be a grey area at all. The Minister of Education should know better. The TFO is funded in large part by the province, through the Ministry of Education. Ontario students should not be paying extra for resources and programs that are already funded through the Ministry of Education. This issue is one of fundamental fairness, something the McGuinty government

professes to understand. Charging an Ontario student a fee for a program supported by the government is double-dipping. They have already paid for that service once as a taxpayer and are now being asked to pay for that service again as a student. This government loves a user fee and seems to inject them anywhere they can. I am serving the ministers notice that I will not stand by and watch our students pay the price for poorly constructed legislation.

The TFO has been operating as a separate entity for approximately a year now. Clearly, the McGuinty government is as slow as molasses in January. If our government-funded agencies simply cannot wait for the government to keep pace, I would prefer that the chicken come before the egg. However, in this case, we must perform our due diligence in order to ensure that TFO has the operational mandate that meets the needs of its viewers.

While some of my comments and concerns regarding Bill 55 are procedural in nature, the one issue that is the hardest to swallow in the mandating of TFO is the mandating of TFO offices in Toronto. I feel that by codifying the office location, we are doing a disservice to our significant francophone communities across Ontario. TFO is an incredible resource whose programming and relevancy would only be enhanced by its presence in a strong, vibrant francophone community. I encourage the representatives of these francophone communities to raise this issue to the committee process, and I welcome them to contact myself, my colleague from Thornhill and the minister to share their thoughts on this issue.

If government is to be truly accessible to the people it serves, then the McGuinty government should realize that it serves the interests of all Ontarians, even those who live outside of the GTA.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss Bill 55. I look forward to hearing from the stakeholders during that very important public process. It is my hope that the francophone community in particular will take the opportunity to consult with us.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je suis content qu'il y a du support à travers l'Assemblée, dans les trois partis, aujourd'hui pour la création de TFO comme sa propre organisation, son propre maître chez lui quand ça vient aux services que l'on donne à travers TFO. Quand j'écoutais les discours que le Parti conservateur vient de donner, je me trouvais des fois un peu entre deux débats : on dit sur un point que oui, on croit qu'il est important d'avoir une TFO autonome, mais ils veulent en faire, à l'intérieur, une organisation bilingue, si j'ai bien compris. Mais ce n'est pas ça que la communauté francophone avait demandé. J'écoutais les députés conservateurs, qui disaient qu'il y aura peut-être une duplication si on aura une administration séparée. Écoute, l'idée d'avoir une organisation autonome, c'est que tu pourras prendre tes propres décisions faisant affaire à tes valeurs comme organisation, et que les francophones dans la province pourront se trouver chez eux à TFO; faire cela à l'intér-

ieur d'une administration conjointe nous ramènerait là où on était déjà il y a deux ou trois ans. Donc, j'apprécie le support qu'on a de la part des députés conservateurs, dans le sens qu'ils vont voter pour ce projet de loi. Mais je veux être très clair que je ne suis pas en faveur d'avoir une administration jointe. On veut avoir une administration séparée, comme on a fait avec TFO. Eux, ils sont autonomes.

Je vais avoir une chance plus tard d'en parler en plus en détails, et j'apprécie l'opportunité de donner ces commentaires.

**1520**

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I rise today to speak in support of the TFO legislation. There are two very important reasons that I support this legislation. The first is that I represent the riding of Ottawa Centre, which is a designated bilingual riding. Ten per cent of the people who live in Ottawa Centre—11,690 people, in actuality—are francophone, and 37%, or 41,150 people, are officially bilingual. So it's a riding with quite a significant French population and a riding that takes its bilingual heritage very seriously. We need to make every effort to ensure that we increase the number of bilingual residents in my riding of Ottawa Centre by teaching them and by providing tools to learn French.

The second very important reason I support this legislation is that I am somebody who is also going through the process of learning French. I'm making myself trilingual, in fact, and officially bilingual. For some years, I have been taking French lessons, as a promise I made to the minister responsible for francophone affairs that I will one day be officially bilingual. I have used TFO—the website and the programming—as a resource and a tool to learn French.

I'm sure there are a lot of people in my riding of Ottawa Centre who rely on TFO in various French schools and at home to ensure that they have the necessary tools. This legislation ensures that French remains vibrant and not only that we learn about the French language, but also about Franco-Ontarian heritage, which is very much a part of our Ontario and Canadian culture.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? The member from Dufferin—Caledon got up first.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Your time will come.

I want to start by acknowledging the speeches by my colleagues from Thornhill and Burlington. Once we, as legislators, acknowledge our desire here to make TFO separate from TVO, we must have a thorough understanding of what this means to Ontario taxpayers and to those of us who wish to promote the French language in Ontario.

While we cannot micromanage the programs chosen by TFO and TVO, and do not wish to, I must say that I am disappointed by the recent decision by TFO to close their Queen's Park bureau. I quote from Christina Blizzard: "But in an ominous move, TVO recently closed its Queen's Park bureau. This came as a shock to many long-time journalists around here." She goes on to say,

“It seems an unusual move. After all, it seemed logical that a public broadcaster funded by the provincial government would put a heavy accent on provincial politics.”

It ties in to a resolution my colleague from Nepean–Carleton has brought forward, talking about the fact that we would like to have the provincially funded cable stations TVO and TFO broadcast the daily question period in order to provide all residents of Ontario, particularly those in rural Ontario, with access to the daily proceedings—I’m sure the member did not mean at 3 a.m.

I think it’s important that we encourage TVO and TFO to publicize question period and, ideally, debates, because that is the only opportunity for the vast majority of voters in Ontario to view the responses of the government without the filter of the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Moi aussi, j’aimerais féliciter le membre de Thornhill, ainsi que la députée de Burlington pour son appui au projet de loi. C’est encourageant de voir qu’il y a certains projets de loi qui peuvent recevoir l’appui des trois partis, et ça a l’air d’en être un.

Depuis plusieurs années, TFO développe sa programmation de façon indépendante. On a après ça mis des membres d’un conseil d’administration indépendant. Certainement, je suis toujours fière de mentionner madame Gisèle Chrétien, qui est la coprésidente et qui vient de mon comté. On a également donné un budget indépendant à TFO afin qu’elle puisse mettre en œuvre son mandat. Et, comme j’ai déjà mentionné, j’étais très fière de participer à l’ouverture officielle de ces nouveaux locaux. Pas loin d’ici, d’ailleurs, on est en train de former à même la grande ville de Toronto une communauté francophone avec les locaux de TFO, les locaux des centres de santé communautaire, les locaux du Centre francophone de Toronto, ainsi que l’aide juridique francophone. Donc, c’est encore là quelque chose de très bien. Et maintenant, avec ce projet de loi 55 sur l’Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l’Ontario, TFO va devenir un organisme permanent et indépendant. C’est une progression qui a été lente, mais qui a en valü la peine et qui pourra certainement, pour les années à venir, aider l’épanouissement et la vitalité de la communauté francophone.

Donc, de notre côté, on va être contents de l’appuyer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response? The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** As my talk suggested, along with my colleague the member for Burlington, this really isn’t a good versus bad situation that we’re discussing. This is a situation of how to and how much, more than anything else. TFO certainly gives us the tools to teach. In the future, I would just like to see the facts following the legislation, rather than the legislation following the de facto creation of an organization. It begs the question of, as I mentioned when I spoke, who is running the enterprise? That to me at this point is not clear. We’ve got two ministries talking to us, we’ve got a board of

directors that has been split but doesn’t really have the legal power until we pass this bill, and I’d like to see that nailed down.

In response to a couple of the members who spoke, the member for Timmins–James Bay raised an interesting point about our party being somewhat hot and cold. On the one hand, we agree with the concept. We simply say we agree with the idea and we will vote yes, but we have expressed and we continue to express concern over the control of this exercise.

In terms of what the member for Ottawa Centre had to say, his points made sense entirely to me. If he wants to learn French, TVO is certainly a good place. When this bill was introduced, I spoke of getting my French up to snuff by watching Panorama. Again, it is not about the how; it’s about the why.

My colleague from Dufferin–Caledon cited as well the bureau shutdown, which was a salient aspect of what both I and my colleague from Burlington had to say. If you want to connect with the population and you’re funded by the Ontario government, it makes eminent sense to run a bureau in Queen’s Park, and the first line of education for the population of Ontario would be carrying the proceeds of this particular Legislature.

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

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je veux premièrement dire que je vais partager notre temps avec la membre de Nickel Belt, madame Gélinas.

Avec ça, j’aimerais commencer en disant, comme néo-démocrate et comme francophone—et je parle pour le reste du caucus—que le caucus NPD va supporter cette législation. Cela a toujours été une question pour nous de quelque chose qui avait besoin d’être fait. Justement, comme la ministre va savoir, c’est quelque chose que nous, à ce bord ici de la Chambre, ont toujours demandé au gouvernement de faire. Que c’est fait aujourd’hui, peut-être que ça aurait été fait un peu plus tôt, mais que ça va se faire, c’est ça qui est l’important. On va donner l’appui.

Je veux parler un peu sur le point non seulement de l’importance de TFO pour la communauté francophone, mais je veux donner un aperçu de ce que c’est, être francophone dans la province de l’Ontario. Le monde a besoin de comprendre que d’être francophone, ce n’est pas seulement que tu est né d’une famille francophone. C’est quelque chose que tu as besoin de vivre.

1530

Sans des organisations comme TFO, comme nos centres communautaires francophones, comme nos écoles, comme nos institutions postsecondaires comme l’Université de Hearst, Collège Boréal et j’en passe, c’est pas mal difficile de vivre en français. Si tu n’as pas ces organisations, tu n’as pas en place l’habilité de vivre en français dans cette province.

Je veux donner un peu de l’histoire de ce qui m’est arrivé et de ce qui m’a vraiment bouleversé, à un certain point de ma vie, dans le sens que je n’avais pas réalisé que j’étais devenu assimilé. C’est l’expérience de beaucoup de jeunes francophones qui demeurent dans des

régions désignées sous la Loi 8, comme Timmins ou Ottawa ou autres, mais qui se trouvent un peu, même s'ils sont majoritaires—moi, d'où je viens, dans mon comté, les francophones sont majoritaires, mais encore, on est porté à parler l'anglais. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il y a plus de francophones qui parlent l'anglais que d'anglophones qui parlent le français. C'est bien simple.

Si tu rejoins des amis sur la rue, avec peut-être cinq ou six jeunes francophones qui jasant ensemble, mais t'as deux ou trois anglophones avec vous qui ne comprennent pas ton langage, pour communiquer, tu parles en anglais. Il y a moins d'anglophones qui parlent le français, quelque chose que j'espère qu'une belle journée on pourrait voir diminuer, puis on voit justement, même dans cette Assemblée, beaucoup de personnes qui ne sont pas francophones de souche, qui ont appris le français après. Je pense qu'il y a du monde qui a fait beaucoup de progrès, mais je veux dire qu'on en a encore à faire.

Mon expérience : Je viens de Timmins. Mes grands-parents des deux bords étaient francophones. Mon grand-père, Ovide Bisson, vint de la province de Québec au début des années 1900 pour établir son entreprise forestière dans la ville de Timmins sur le lac Nighthawk. Il élevait une famille de neuf enfants, frères et soeurs, qui ont, eux, demeuré dans la région de Timmins pour un temps. D'autres sont partis. Le point, c'est que sur le bord de mon père, c'étaient des francophones.

Sur le bord de ma mère, c'étaient des Lehout. Les Lehout, comme les Bisson, sont arrivés au Canada droit au début des années 1600 et étaient parmi les premières familles à arriver sur les deux bords.

On est très fiers chez nous de la manière que j'ai appris, quand j'étais un petit gars, nos traditions francophones et notre langue et notre culture. Donc, j'étais élevé avec la vieille tradition : les chansons à répondre, la bouffe, les fêtes qu'on a eues dans le temps de Noël, la manière dont on fait des affaires au Carême, la manière dont on faisait les affaires quand on avait quelqu'un à baptiser ou quand il y avait des noces ou même quand quelqu'un était décédé. On vivait une communauté francophone dans notre famille.

Moi, je n'avais jamais pensé pour deux secondes que j'étais anglophone. J'ai toujours pensé que j'étais francophone. Mais ce que j'avais réalisé à un assez jeune âge, quand je suis arrivé au secondaire même si j'allais à une école francophone dans le temps—à cette heure, on appelle ça l'école secondaire Thériault; c'était le début de Sacré Coeur, qui est devenue l'école secondaire Thériault, la plus grande école secondaire dans la province présentement. Même si je suis allé à l'école en français, quand je suis allé sur la rue parfois, on était anglophone. On parlait plus l'anglais sur la rue qu'on ne parlait le français. La seule place qu'on parlait le français, c'était dans notre famille, ou on va dire à l'école. Il n'y avait pas beaucoup d'occasions d'utiliser ton français, mais nous autres, on pensait, "Alors, j'ai 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 ans. Ce n'est pas important," parce qu'on savait qui on était. "Mon nom est Bisson. Je suis franco-

phone. C'est la fin de l'histoire." On n'y a pas pensé pour deux minutes.

Eventuellement, ma femme et moi, on s'est trouvés, comme on dit. Ça fait 32 ans que nous sommes mariés. Elle aussi est francophone. Elle est une Beauchamps. Comme vous le savez, c'est une famille de longue date qui est arrivée au Canada dans les années 1600 aussi, puis on peut tracer les racines des Beauchamps juste à la ville de Québec, vers 1650 environ, 1656.

Le point que je fais, c'est que dans ma famille chez nous, quand j'étais un petit gars, et dans la famille de mon épouse et moi qu'on a eue ensemble, nos deux filles Julie et Natalie Bisson—deux francophones aussi—on s'est toujours pensés francophones.

Mais le fait que j'ai réalisé à un point de ma vie, c'est que, quand j'étais au collège—parce qu'il n'y avait pas de collèges francophones dans le temps, c'était seulement des collèges francophones—et quand j'étais au milieu de travail, le travail, c'était tout en anglais. Quand je regardais les sports à la télévision ou que je lisais le Timmins Daily Press ou le Toronto Star, c'était tout en anglais. Ce que je n'ai pas réalisé, c'est que j'avais commencé déjà la route à perdre mon langage, et, deux, à devenir assimilé; en d'autres mots, que je ne pensais plus en français.

Où j'ai eu vraiment la peur de ma vie, c'est qu'à un point—environ 1983, 1984, quelque chose comme ça—j'ai appliqué pour un poste bilingue avec la Fédération du travail de l'Ontario pour être coordinateur du programme BEST. BEST, c'était un programme d'alphabétisation et de seconde langue au milieu du travail. Moi, j'avais appliqué pour un poste comme coordinateur bilingue. Bien, j'ai fait mon entrevue, mais ceux qui ont fait l'entrevue ne parlaient pas deux gouttes de français, donc je l'ai passée très facilement. Ils m'ont engagé. C'est peut-être pour ça qu'ils m'ont engagé, parce qu'ils ne comprenaient pas. C'est toute une autre histoire. On peut faire des blagues.

Où j'ai vraiment eu peur : c'est la première fois que j'ai travaillé, comme francophone, en français et que j'ai été capable de m'exprimer en français avec mes collègues et ceux avec qui j'avais besoin de faire affaire dans le programme où je me trouvais. Je me rappelle la journée. J'étais à Hearst, et on connaît tous Hearst. Hearst est francophone. Dans mon comté, comme aussi à Ottawa, il y a beaucoup de monde qui peuvent faire toute leur vie en français, et jamais parler l'anglais, qui vont être bien corrects chez eux parce qu'ils sont majoritairement francophones. Mais ils vivent et ils choisissent de vivre en français. Et à Hearst, comme à Mattice et dans d'autres communautés, c'est exactement ça qu'ils ont fait.

Je me rappelle être chez—dans le temps c'était United Sawmill, appartenue par M. Fontaine, ancien député libéral de Cochrane-Nord. J'y ai été faire ma première présentation en français à United Sawmill, avec les patrons, les « boss » qui étaient là, comme on dit en bon français, et avec le syndicat pour expliquer le programme BEST. Je n'ai pas été capable de le faire. Je me rappelle

que j'ai commencé à bégayer. Je ne pouvais pas dire deux mots sans penser en anglais et faire une traduction vers le français, au point que cela m'a fait peur à la souche, dans le sens que je me suis rendu compte finalement que ce que mon père m'avait dit quand j'étais un p'tit gars m'était arrivé : que j'avais choisi de ne pas vivre en français. Avec cela, j'avais perdu jusqu'à un certain point ma langue. Le seul temps que je parlais français, c'était quand j'étais voir maman et papa, quand je parlais à mes grands-parents et quand je parlais à nos petites filles. Dans ce temps-là les petites filles étaient assez jeunes. Elles avaient peut-être cinq, six, sept ans. Quand tu parles à une petite fille ou à un petit garçon à la maison, ce ne sont pas de longues conversations avec des mots très développés. C'est plutôt, « Arrête ça. Va te coucher. Fais dodo. » Ce sont des phrases bien courtes.

Et ce qui est arrivé : ça m'a fait peur, et là je me suis rendu compte que, parce que je n'avais pas choisi de vivre en français, j'avais commencé à m'assimiler à la culture majoritairement anglophone, et ça m'a vraiment fait peur. Quelqu'un nommé Richard Hudon—certains vont reconnaître le nom—est vu comme militant dans la communauté francophone. Mais pour du monde comme moi dans le temps, il était très important de reprendre qui j'étais comme francophone, et il m'a fait réaliser que tu n'as pas besoin, même si tu travailles dans un milieu anglophone, de penser en anglais. Tu peux travailler comme électricien, ce que j'étais dans le temps, en français, et quand ça vient à raisonner les maths et la théorie et toutes les autres affaires qui sont importantes pour faire mon travail, quand je suis avec un collègue francophone, choisir de parler en français—pas parler seulement de l'anglais parce que tout le monde d'autre dans la mine parle anglais. Deux francophones vont se rencontrer dans la cage ou dans un « drift », comme on dit en bon français, puis ils vont se parler en anglais. C'est là où j'ai commencé à dire qu'il était important de m'exprimer en français et de commencer à vivre en français. Cela m'a pris longtemps. Aujourd'hui je me trouve 90%, 95% habile et capable de penser en français au même moment que je le parle. Mais même aujourd'hui, après toutes les années qui sont passées, 25 années, ce n'est pas toujours facile. Le point est que, à un certain point dans ma vie, j'avais commencé l'assimilation.

Et qu'est-ce que cela a à faire avec ce débat? Ce sont des institutions comme TFO, comme nos écoles, comme les centres de santé communautaire, comme toutes les autres institutions dans nos communautés qui choisissent et demandent, exigent, qu'ils ne sont pas des organisations bilingues. C'est pour cela que je me sentais refroidi un peu quand le député conservateur a commencé à parler : « Bien, on comprend que c'est important, mais on peut peut-être fusionner l'administration parce que, après tout, ça n'a rien à faire avec les services qu'on donne à la clientèle. » Complètement faux. Si tu n'as pas une administration francophone, comment veux-tu que cette organisation-là va vivre en français et donner les services en français? C'est quasiment impossible.

Je regarde les débats qu'on a eus et je veux remercier—dans le temps, c'était John Baird, le ministre responsable des services communautaires. Il y avait une refonte de la santé mentale, et on voulait fusionner le Canadian Mental Health Association, une association bilingue, avec l'association à Kapuskasing, qui était francophone. J'étais allé voir John, et j'ai dit, « Fais pas ça. À la fin de la journée on aura une association à Kapuskasing-Hearst-Smooth Rock Falls, une association francophone qui vit en français non seulement dans l'administration mais dans les services donnés à la clientèle. M. Baird—on va lui donner le « credit »—a accepté et on a refusé le fusionnement de ces deux organisations.

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Moi, je peux vous prédire : si on aurait fusionné ces deux organisations, les services tels qu'on a présentement à Hearst, à Kap, à Smooth Rock Falls et les points entre ne seraient pas les mêmes qu'on a aujourd'hui. Oui, on aurait des services. Peut-être qu'on pourrait dire un « acte » de plus. Peut-être qu'il y aurait certaines affaires qui auraient pu arriver avec le Canadian Mental Health. Mais la question, c'est qu'avoir une administration francophone permet à l'organisation de vivre l'expérience de la communauté et de mieux la desservir, ce qui est important pour la communauté elle-même. Donc, quand on parle d'un fusionnement, quand on parle de la création de son propre acte qui donne l'autorité pour TFO, dans les années à venir, de toujours demeurer en français, c'est terriblement important.

Si on ne le met pas dans la législation, il va y avoir un temps où le gouvernement va arriver ici à l'Assemblée, et si c'est seulement un ordre du Conseil, du cabinet, qui dit qu'on donne l'autorité, que TFO est une organisation qui vit sa réalité en français avec l'administration et avec tous les services qu'elle donne, ça peut être changé tel que ça, et on n'aura rien à dire. Au moins, avec un acte, le gouvernement aurait besoin de venir ici proposer un acte, ce qui donne une chance à la communauté de se protéger et de s'organiser. Donc, je pense que c'est important pour cette raison-là.

L'autre affaire—je vais le dire vite—sur la question de TFO, c'est qu'on a un conseil d'administration de neuf personnes qui sont nommées. Moi, je pense qu'ils essaient de faire de leur mieux, mais on a besoin de toujours, toujours penser et réfléchir à qui on dessert dans la communauté provinciale pour s'assurer que les représentants des différentes parties de la province, qui représente aussi non seulement une région géographique mais aussi un aperçu peut-être un peu différent. Qu'on essaie de combler ces postes d'une manière par laquelle on peut avoir une bonne réflexion de la communauté francophone.

Ce n'est pas dire que je n'ai pas de confiance en l'administration présent, ou en le conseil d'administration. C'est juste pour dire qu'on a besoin de s'assurer, quand on remplace ce monde-là, qu'on dit, « C'est non seulement la représentation géographique, mais aussi l'aperçu que le monde peut amener de leur communauté. »

Par exemple, ici en Ontario il y a beaucoup de nouveaux Canadiens qui viennent non de la France, non de la Belgique. Ils sont francophones, mais ils viennent de l'Afrique. Eux autres, ils ont un aperçu comme francophones très différent que nous ici en Ontario, dont les ancêtres sont venus de la France. Eux autres ont eu une expérience différente en Afrique. C'étaient des pays qui ont été colonisés par les Français, qui ont trouvé leur indépendance, qui ont une culture très différente de la nôtre, même si on partage une langue, et qui viennent ici et choisissent de vivre en français en Ontario.

On a besoin de refléter sur TFO, par exemple, cette réalité et de dire, « Être francophone, ça ne veut pas dire que tu as besoin d'être francophone comme les Québécois ou les personnes du nord ou de l'est de l'Ontario, ou comme les Français de France. Être francophone, c'est être qui tu es, et peut-être que ta culture est un peu différente si tu viens d'une autre partie de la Terre. »

C'est une affaire que je trouve intéressante : des fois, nous les francophones, on se donne un « disservice » à ce point. Par exemple, si on entend parler des anglophones de différentes parties de la Terre, on ne pense jamais à leur accent. Si un Écossais arrive avec un Anglais et nous parle ici en Ontario, on ne dit pas qu'il parle le méchant anglais parce qu'il a un accent écossais. Mais parfois, ce qui va arriver, c'est qu'il va y avoir des francophones avec des accents différents, et on les juge un peu différemment à cause de cet accent. Tout ce que je peux dire, c'est qu'on a besoin d'arrêter cette affaire. On a besoin de dire, « Si on veut s'assurer que le français demeure vif et qu'on épanouit le français, il faut accepter tout le monde dans notre famille et réaliser qu'on n'a pas tous exactement les mêmes points de vue, et que nos cultures et nos traditions peuvent être un peu différentes. Et vive la différence. »

On a besoin de refléter ça non seulement sur le conseil mais aussi dans notre programmation à TFO.

Je veux finir sur ce point. Je veux répéter ce que certains députés conservateurs ont dit, et ici ils ont parfaitement raison. TFO, c'est vraiment la seule instance où on puisse aller chercher tous les francophones et les regrouper ensemble pour leur donner de l'information. On a notre émission Panorama, qui est très importante. La plupart d'entre nous la regardent régulièrement, parce que c'est la manière dont on s'informe non seulement sur ce qui se passe comme francophones en Ontario, mais ce qui se passe en Ontario. On n'a pas besoin de donner juste des nouvelles francophones quand ça vient à ce qui se passe à travers les manchettes, on a besoin de parler de ce qui se passe.

Une des affaires que j'aimerais voir c'est qu'on ait un meilleur budget et d'être capable d'épanouir ces programme-là comme Panorama pour donner aux Ontariens francophones l'habilité d'aller rechercher les nouvelles chaque jour sur la chaîne TFO. On aurait au moins une habilité d'être capable de voir un aperçu ontarien.

Un problème que je vois : on regarde RDI et c'est excellent. Ils donnent une portion ontarienne jusqu'à un certain point mais c'est plus un aperçu de ce qui se passe

au Québec. La réalité francophone en Ontario est très différente de la réalité québécoise envers la politique et envers beaucoup d'autres dossiers. C'est pour ça que je pense que c'est important d'être capable de rapporter ce qui se passe ici, non seulement à Queen's Park mais à travers la province, une émission qui pourrait bâtir sur le succès de Panorama et épanouir notre habilité comme francophones d'aller chercher ces informations.

Donc, je vous dis que les néo-démocrates vont supporter ce projet de loi. On regarde vers une journée où on pourra regarder des services même mieux qu'on a présentement à TFO pour s'assurer que la communauté francophone peut continuer à s'épanouir ici dans la province de l'Ontario.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Wow! Un projet de loi qui rend TFO un organisme permanent et indépendant.

Du côté des différentes communautés francophones en Ontario, ça faisait longtemps qu'on attendait ça. C'est sûre qu'au fil des années, on a vu que TFO a été capable d'augmenter sa programmation. De plus en plus, la programmation était pour et par les francophones. On a vu la création d'un conseil d'administration indépendant pour la composante francophone de la programmation. On a vu après ça des budgets qui se sont rattachés à ça pour permettre une programmation francophone typiquement franco-ontarienne.

Puis bien entendu, il y a quelques semaines de ça, on a fêté en grande pompe l'ouverture de ces nouveaux locaux ici, pas loin de Queen's Park. C'était une belle fête. Tu pouvais voir tout le monde qui était là. Tu pouvais voir la fierté. C'était un accomplissement qui avait pris tellement de temps, et tellement de gens y ont travaillé, et c'est finalement arrivé, c'était la fête et le gens de TFO y avaient mis le paquet. C'était bien organisé, on était bien reçu et on pouvait vraiment célébrer avec eux un pas important.

L'autre pas important sera certainement le projet de loi 55, de l'Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l'Ontario, qui fera de TFO un organisme permanent et indépendant.

C'est important de féliciter M<sup>me</sup> Gisèle Chrétien. M<sup>me</sup> Gisèle Chrétien est sur le conseil d'administration de TFO depuis longtemps et elle en est la coprésidente. C'est une dame qui demeure dans mon comté, qui travaille fort pour assurer l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone. C'est une ancienne présidente du Collège Boréal, le premier collège de langue française dans le nord de l'Ontario. Cela m'apporte à l'importance de l'infrastructure pour le développement et l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone.

Certains d'entre vous vont se souvenir de la bataille qu'on a appelé S.O.S. Montfort. S.O.S. Montfort était une coalition de gens concertés qui voulaient sauvegarder l'Hôpital Montfort. Ils avaient retenu les services de M<sup>c</sup> Caza, un avocat local d'Ottawa, là où est situé l'hôpital Montfort. M. Caza a été capable d'utiliser le préambule de la Loi 8, sur les services en français, qui démontre que la Loi 8 engage la province de l'Ontario à préserver et à faire l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone.

L'argument de base a été que, quand tu es Franco-Ontarien, à tou les jours de ta vie tu te lèves et tu prends la décision de ne pas te laisser assimiler. Parce que la route facile, comme mon collègue M. Bisson l'a dit, la est de prendre la route de l'assimilation. Si tu décides de vivre ta vie en français en Ontario, ça va te demander un effort constant. M<sup>e</sup> Caza a comparé ça un peu à—on est dans un beau grand lac et il fait chaud. Nous, les francophones, on nage, puis les anglophones, se promènent en bateau. De temps en temps tu deviens fatigué, puis tu aurais envie d'embarquer dans un bateau, toi aussi, mais si tu embarques dans le bateau, si tu te laisses assimiler, ça veut dire que tes enfants seront assimilés, eux aussi, et illos vont vivre leur vie en anglais, et tous tes descendants vont vivre leur vie en anglais parce qu'il y a très peu d'anglophones qui font le saut vers la francophonie, mais il y a beaucoup de francophones qui font le saut vers l'anglais. Et une fois que tu fais ça, c'est non seulement pour toi, c'est pour tes enfants, c'est pour tous les descendants. Tu ne feras plus partie de la communauté francophone.

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Mais M<sup>e</sup> Caza était capable de développer l'argument que pour les francophones, il y a des petits fiords dans ce grand lac-là. Il y a des places où on peut aller se reposer pour pouvoir continuer à prendre la décision de continuer à nager. Puis ces fiords-là, c'est les infrastructures francophones, c'est les organismes qui appartiennent à la francophonie et qui permettent aux francophones de se reposer.

Bill 55, An Act to enact the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act, will make TFO a permanent and independent organization. This is an act that the different francophone communities in Ontario have been waiting for for a long time.

Through the years, we have seen TFO develop its own programming, then have their own board of directors that looked over the programming. They got their own budget and, a few weeks ago, celebrated their new location in downtown Toronto, not far away from Queen's Park. But with this bill, they will be a permanent and independent organization. They will be part of the francophone infrastructure of Ontario.

Why is this important? Well, some of you will remember SOS Montfort. That was a huge grassroots organization that helped save the Montfort Hospital. What Montfort did was hire the services of lawyer Mr. Caza. At the basis of his argument was that in Ontario, Franco-Ontarians, every morning, have to make the decision to remain Franco-Ontarian. It is a lot easier to go with the majority. As my colleague Gilles Bisson has mentioned, it is a lot easier to just go with the language of the majority and speak English all the time. Mr. Caza showed that Ontario is like a big lake: It's nice and warm, and people have a choice.

Every morning, you can decide to swim in the lake—and that would be that you decide to remain Franco-Ontarian—or you can hop in a boat. The anglophones go in boats. If you don't feel like swimming anymore, you

hop in a boat. The problem with hopping in a boat is that, if you decide to not use your French every day, you will quickly become assimilated, your children will be assimilated and the rest of the children after them will also be. You would have lost; you won't be Franco-Ontarian anymore. But he also showed that for Franco-Ontarians to maintain their language and be able to thrive, they needed little islands where they could rest. Those islands were francophone institutions. By making TFO a permanent and independent organization, we are creating one of those islands where Franco-Ontarians can go and rest.

When I talk about how important it is to have infrastructure: C'est très important pour les Franco-Ontariens d'avoir leur infrastructure francophone. Quand on parle d'infrastructure francophone, c'est sûr qu'on est en train de créer TFO. Si, celui dont on parle aujourd'hui, c'est important. Mais il y en a d'autres qui existent. On parle des d'écoles francophones, que ce soit les écoles primaires et secondaires. On est très fier également de nos collèges francophones, qu'on parle de la Cité Collégiale à Ottawa ou du Collège Boréal et ses multiples campus. Il y a les églises francophones qui sont là. Il y a également les centres de santé communautaire francophones. On a les centres pour personnes âgées, et dans un certain rapport les caisses populaires, qui s'efforcent aussi d'offrir les services en français.

Quand on parle d'infrastructure, on parle vraiment d'organismes francophones qui ont, à la base, un conseil d'administration francophone. Donc, les réunions du conseil se font en français, les gens qui siègent choisissent de venir et parler français et, la plupart du temps, la chartre est également écrite en français. On va trouver quelque chose là-dedans qui dit que c'est pour et par les francophones. La langue de travail d'un organisme, une infrastructure francophone, sera également le français.

Je vais vous donner des exemples de pourquoi c'est important. Les politiques des ressources humaines dans les organismes francophones, ça sera également en français. Si les employés sont syndiqués, la convention collective sera écrite en français.

Qu'est-ce que ça fait pour le Franco-Ontarien ou la Franco-Ontarienne qui hésite, qui est insécure?, Le député Bisson nous a donné son exemple où, il s'est toujours considéré francophone. Mais à force de parler l'anglais tout le temps, à un moment donné, ton français commence à être un peu moins sécure. Moins tu te sens confortable en français, moins tu as de raisons de l'utiliser et plus tu le perds.

Dans un organisme francophone, j'étais directrice générale d'un centre de santé communautaire francophone pendant 11 ans. Souvent je voyais des gens qui avaient été éduqués en français, qui parlaient français, mais qui travaillaient dans des hôpitaux depuis 10 ou 15 ans. Les dossiers sont en anglais. La langue de travail est en anglais. Le conseil d'administration, tout se passe en anglais. Cette personne-là va beau parler français. Si tu passes 40 heures de ta vie à travailler en anglais, à un moment donné c'est l'anglais qui sort. C'est l'anglais avec lequel on était le plus confortable.

Ces gens-là faisaient application pour venir au centre de santé communautaire parce que, dans le fond d'eux autres ils savaient qu'ils voulaient revenir au français. Puis souvent pendant l'entrevue, c'est plus ou moins bon. Il y a de la misère; le vocabulaire ne vient pas parce que c'est peu naturel. Ces gens-là, quand on les engage, quand on leur donne la chance de travailler dans un milieu francophone—l'épanouissement se fait très, très rapidement. Ils sont fiers. Ils mettent le temps, les efforts et l'énergie pour avoir du succès. Ça, veut dire que non seulement eux autres ont gardé leur français, mais aussi pour leurs petits enfants, pour leurs descendants, on vient de faire un pas. C'est les îlots que M<sup>c</sup> Caza avait expliqué, que si on veut l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone, il nous faut des infrastructures pour la communauté francophone. M<sup>c</sup> Caza a pu le démontrer, et dans la vraie vie, comme l'exemple que je viens de vous donner, ça marche. Ça marche à 100%, donnant à la communauté francophone des institutions francophones, et vous allez voir que l'épanouissement va se faire.

I was talking about why it is important to have francophone institutions. Right now, with Bill 55 we are creating an independent, permanent francophone infrastructure with TFO. TFO is a big one, and this is the one we're talking about today, but there are others. I'll give you examples of the primary and secondary schools in the French language, whether in the public board or the Catholic board. We have the two French colleges, La Cité collégiale and Collège Boréal in the north, with all of its campuses. There are French churches, French community health centres, French elderly person centres, and, to a certain extent, caisses populaires target the francophone population.

When we talk about francophone infrastructure, what we mean is that the board of directors hold their meetings in French. Their statutes are written in French and often target the francophone population. The language at work is French, so that when people come to work, we expect them, between themselves, naturally to be speaking French. The human resources policies are written in French, so that if people want to know about their holiday pay or whatever, this is available to them in French. If it is a unionized work environment, then the collective agreement will be written in French.

What those francophone institutions, as I call them, do is what Maître Caza was describing. They create safe islands for francophones to protect their language and develop.

**1600**

I'll give you an example. I was the executive director of the francophone community health centre in Sudbury for 11 years. Often, when we would do interviews, we would get people, like my member Mr. Bisson said, who felt that they were francophone but they hadn't spoken French at work in 10, 12, 15 years. Most of the workers came from hospital settings. The hospitals chart in English; the language at work is English; the relationship with management and human resources is in English; the collective agreement is in English. Yes, they had spoken

French to some of their clients who were francophone, but really, their life at work was in English. If you've lived through 10, 15 years of this, and all of a sudden you come to a job where we interview you in French, it's often shaky. But those people would get the job because they were qualified in their French. Within months, they would regain that confidence. That means that not only would they be proud and able Franco-Ontarians; that would also mean a difference for their children and their children's children.

Those are the islands that Mr. Caza was describing. This is a place where francophones can rest, it is easy, you don't have to put in an effort because it is all around you. Those are important, and this is what we're creating with TFO.

Dans mon comté, environ 40 % de la population sait parler français, et 28 % parle le français à la maison.

Dans le projet de loi 55, le gouvernement a mandaté que l'Office—on parle ici de l'Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l'Ontario. Nous, habituellement, on l'appelle TFO, mais c'est son vrai nom. « L'Office a son siège sociale dans la cité de Toronto. » C'est mandaté. On y dit également que « L'Office ne doit pas créer de filiales si ce n'est avec l'approbation du lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil » et que « L'Office nomme les conseils régionaux et les comités consultatifs qu'il estime nécessaires ».

Pour nous, c'est sûr que l'on veut dans un premier temps le comité consultatif pour le nord, la région de Cornwall, et les régions de Timmins, Sudbury et d'autres régions où il y a de fortes concentrations de francophones, mais on aimerait également que TFO puisse y avoir des filiales pour ainsi faciliter un contenu plus régional et local pour que lorsque les Franco-Sudburiens et les Franco-Timminois—je pense qu'on les appelle ça, les francophones de Timmins—regardent la TFO, bien qu'on ne voit pas seulement que la francophonie de Toronto, mais qu'on y voit également la francophonie de Cornwall, puis de Hawkesbury, puis de Sudbury, puis de Timmins, puis de Welland et des autres parties de l'Ontario où on retrouve une grosse concentration de francophones. Ça, c'est un peu regrettable et certainement quelque chose que l'on aimerait voir améliorer.

In my riding, about 40% of the residents speak both English and French, and 28% speak French at home.

Bill 55, the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority Act—what we usually call TFO—says, “The head office of the authority”—talking about TFO—“shall be in the city of Toronto.”

It goes on to say, “The authority”—here again, that's what we call TFO in this bill—“shall not establish a subsidiary except with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.”

Paragraph 8 goes on to say, “The authority shall appoint such regional councils and such advisory committees as it considers necessary to advise it in developing the policy and operations of the authority.”

So, in a sense, we are satisfied that the authority can put an advisory committee in place, but we would

certainly like to see full-fledged subsidiaries of TFO in areas of the province that have, like my riding, very high concentrations of francophones. It would be very good for the Franco-Ontarian people: francophones from Sudbury, from Timmins, Cornwall, Hawkesbury, down in and around Welland, Penetang—everywhere you have a concentration of francophones—to be able to see themselves on TFO, that the programming is not solely based out of Toronto but some of the programming really brings out some of the interesting features of the rest of the francophones in Ontario. So this is part of the bill where we would really like to see a bit of enhancement.

J'aimerais également vous parler de la diminution du financement en langue française en Ontario. Puis, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de faire référence à quelque chose qui s'est passé il y a bien, bien longtemps, peu de temps après le tournant du siècle, en fait, au début des années 1900 avec le Règlement 17.

Pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas leur histoire franco-ontarienne en détail, le Règlement 17 c'était le règlement qui interdisait l'enseignement du français en Ontario. C'était une politique d'assimilation où est-ce qu'on voulait assimiler les francophones en Ontario, puis la meilleure façon de les faire disparaître c'était d'empêcher l'enseignement du français. Comme ça, tout le monde deviendrait anglophone. Ça c'était le Règlement 17. Le Règlement 17 a eu des effets dévastateurs sur la communauté francophone.

On connaît l'importance de l'éducation comme déterminant de la santé. Le Règlement 17 lui-même a eu un effet dévastateur sur le niveau de santé de la population francophone.

Quand on regarde l'étude sur la santé des francophones en Ontario, une étude qui a été parrainée par le Service de santé public de Sudbury mais pour toutes les régions de la province, on s'aperçoit vite de l'effet dévastateur du Règlement 17. Le règlement qui empêchait l'enseignement du français en Ontario. Les francophones fument plus, font moins d'exercice, ont plus de problèmes avec l'obésité. On y retrouve plus de diabète, plus de maladies cardiovasculaires, plus de maladies chroniques moins bien contrôlées, moins de visites chez le dentiste, moins d'accès aux services de santé mentale, et la liste continue—très longue. Le rapport était fait comme ça.

C'est sûr qu'en ce moment on est content d'avoir les conseils scolaires francophones, que ce soit le conseil public ou le conseil catholique, mais ce dont on a besoin également c'est une formule de financement équitable qui reconnaît les besoins spécifiques des francophones en matière d'éducation. C'est pas suffisant d'avoir un conseil scolaire et d'avoir une école francophone. Il faut également qu'elle soit financée en rapport avec ces besoins. Et ça, ça touche directement le financement de TFO.

I wanted to talk a bit about the decrease in the resources allocated to French-language education in Ontario. Whenever I talk about French-language education, I like to talk about regulation 17. For some of you who don't know your Franco-Ontarian history as well as

you should, regulation 17 was the bill that made teaching in French illegal. It was a bill that was put in place for assimilation. If the francophone population was not allowed to be educated in their own language anymore, they would become assimilated and everybody in Ontario would become English-speaking.

Back then, it sounded like a good idea; it certainly wasn't. Regulation 17 had a devastating effect on Franco-Ontarians. A lot of them could not go to school. I would say that the sharpest kids in the bunch were able to do the switch from francophone education to anglophone education, but most couldn't and basically ended up not going to school.

Education is a key determinant of health. The fact that francophones did not have access to education in their own language had a devastating effect on the health of the francophone population. We've had two health status reports on the Franco-Ontarian community in Ontario, and those reports are a case study as to the effect of education on the determinants of health. We can see that more of the francophone population smokes; we have a problem with obesity; more of us struggle with chronic illnesses and high blood pressure; we have more accidents; fewer Franco-Ontarians access dental services or mental health services; and the list goes on and on.

**1610**

I talk about this because it was very good to create a francophone school board, whether it be public or Catholic, but if we don't fund those school boards in a way that allows them to meet the needs of the francophone community, then we've kind of missed the boat.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I forgot to tell you that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, well. Mon collègue me donne des petites notes. Vous allez m'excuser.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** C'est de l'encouragement, Madame Gélinas; c'est seulement de l'encouragement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mon collègue me donne de l'encouragement; c'est ça.

En terminant, j'aimerais souligner deux événements qui se passent et encore là qui sont liés à TFO et à la francophonie en Ontario. Le premier c'est le Salon du livre qui aura lieu à Sudbury en de fin de semaine. En fait, ça commence jeudi. Le Salon du livre a lieu à tous les deux ans. Il y a des dizaines de milliers de personnes qui viennent à Sudbury pour participer au Salon du livre. Il y a toutes sortes d'événements créatifs. Je me souviens l'année dernière de l'autobus de la poésie. Je vous invite d'ailleurs à un 5 à 7 avec le poète Sudburien, M. Michel Dallaire, qui présentera un de ses nouveaux livres. On a des spectacles pour la population francophone, dont M. Zachary Richard qui sera à Sudbury dimanche soir, en collaboration avec la Slague et le carrefour francophone. On fera probablement le lancement de notre nouvelle librairie francophone à Sudbury. Et le Collège Boréal en profite pour faire les états généraux de la francophonie à Sudbury.

C'est sûr qu'il en reste encore beaucoup à faire. On peut penser au service juridique. La clinique juridique de Sudbury est présentement en grève. Je vous encourage, mesdames et le monsieur, tenez courage; on est derrière

vous. La clinique juridique est présentement en grève et l'aide juridique à Sudbury, ce sont des organismes bilingues. La communauté francophone serait mieux desservie avec une aide juridique et une clinique juridique francophone pour mieux rencontrer les besoins de la communauté francophone.

Mais pour l'instant, la mise en place permanente et indépendante de TFO est quelque chose de bien, et quelque chose que nous, les néo-démocrates, on va appuyer. Je vous remercie. Du côté des néo-démocrates, nous allons appuyer ce projet de loi.

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** L'éducation et la culture françaises sont un des volets majeurs de la vision globale de notre gouvernement. Elles sont un des caractéristiques qui définissent l'Ontario, et font un modèle pour le monde entier. Alors que nous célébrons le 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la création des conseils scolaires francophones, il est important que nous continuions à soutenir l'éducation en français.

Nous sommes fiers des réalisations des élèves d'expression française. Ils ont beaucoup travaillé pour assurer leur réussite scolaire. Leurs parents se sont attachés à les soutenir. Et il en a été de même des éducatrices et éducateurs et du personnel de soutien dans les écoles français.

En tant que gouvernement, nous avons fait un effort concerté pour veiller à ce que les élèves de langue française disposent des ressources voulues en salle de classe et chez eux. Nous devons encore, cela va sans dire, relever des défis tant qu'aujourd'hui que demain. Cependant, si les progrès accomplis au cours des 10 dernières années sont une indication, j'estime que les élèves francophones de l'Ontario ont un avenir plus radieux devant eux.

Je pense que tant que nous leur permettons d'avoir accès à des opportunités, à des ressources adaptées à leur besoins, ils les saisiront et relèveront les défis.

On behalf of the government and the McGuinty vision, and indeed all members of this caucus, and without a doubt all members of this Legislature, it's important for us to foster this precious resource of heritage, of diversity, of pluralism, specifically embodied here in the language and the culture and the heritage that is French. I'm very proud, therefore, to support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I have no problem with the creation of yet another government agency or organ or board, or whatever it is, but I do have trouble with the fact that when I try to get help for some kids in my area who have autism, I can't get money for treatment. I haven't heard any debate over the cost of doing these kinds of things. I haven't heard any debate over the cost of the present TVO. I think if we have TVO in English, we should have it in French. Perhaps there's even a better argument for having one in French, rather than one in English.

Notwithstanding that, nobody talks about costs. We're not providing the basic services for our kids to get the help they need. I talk about one specific constituent of

mine. I guess my preference at this point in time is that until my constituent kids can get the proper help for their problems, I would rather not have TVO at all. I think their need is greater. I think their need is prior to this need. Nobody seems to talk about costs when we create new government institutions.

I can't argue that there shouldn't be TVO for the francophones in our province because, as I say, I think they're in a more difficult position to maintain their culture than the English people are. But if we're going to do this, we should know what it costs—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** En tout premier lieu, j'aimerais féliciter madame la ministre Meilleur, déléguée aux Affaires francophones, pour avoir introduit ce projet de loi qui répond aux besoins de la communauté francophone.

Ce projet de loi-là est très important pour la communauté francophone, mais aussi pour tous les jeunes qui sont inscrits à des programmes d'immersion dans nos écoles. Nous savons qu'en Ontario, nous avons plus de 550 000 francophones, plus de un million de personnes qui sont considérées francophiles, mais des milliers de jeunes veulent poursuivre leurs études en français et en anglais afin d'avoir une meilleure opportunité pour trouver un emploi. Des milliers de personnes, de jeunes, dans nos écoles en Ontario sont inscrits dans des programmes d'immersion.

J'assistais tout récemment à une réunion dans la région de Toronto. On nous disait qu'il manquait de personnel pour enseigner des cours en français dans nos écoles anglophones. Cela démontre qu'aujourd'hui les jeunes, lorsqu'ils reviennent de l'école après avoir suivi quelques heures dans les cours d'immersion, veulent s'améliorer, veulent écouter des programmes en français, et puis TFO est tellement reconnue pour ses programmes éducationnelles. Donc, nos jeunes reviennent à la maison, les parents ne parlent parfois aucunement le français, mais la seule façon de à développer davantage leurs connaissances, c'est en regardant les programmes à la télévision de TFO.

Donc, je crois que c'est très, très important pour notre jeunesse et pour nos aînés qui, dans l'est de l'Ontario, ont beaucoup de difficulté d'avoir des nouvelles de l'Ontario. TFO est là et, avec l'administration, le pouvoir qu'on va leur donner. Maintenant, nos aînés vont pouvoir poursuivre, et connaître aussi—les francophones vont connaître—des besoins de la communauté francophone.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? There being none: Response.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I think I was a little bit fast standing up, there. Sorry about that.

First, to the member for Etobicoke North.

J'imagine, puisque vous sembliez être en accord avec ce qu'on avait présenté, que vous êtes également en accord qu'on aurait besoin de regarder dans le court terme à l'expansion de TFO pour leur permettre d'avoir des bureaux satellites permanents—puis là je vais vous prêcher pour ma paroisse un petit peu—certainement à

Sudbury, dans le bout de Cornwall, à Timmins et dans le sud de la province, et j'espère que vos mots d'encouragement incluait ça également.

For the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, I've been working in French in Ontario for a while. The arguments that there are other pressures and priorities could apply to any endeavour in the French language. At the end of the day, you either make the decision to invest in and support the Franco-Ontarian community, like Bill 8 suggests, or you don't. When you make the decision to support, that will mean that it becomes a priority. That means that some resources have to be allocated to that—hopefully, not to the detriment of IBI therapy for those kids.

Pour le membre de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, c'est sûr que nous aussi on reconnaît qu'il y a un demi-million de francophones en Ontario et qu'il y a un demi-million de francophiles en Ontario. L'investissement que le projet de loi 55 fait avec TFO va profiter à tous ces gens-là, mais il va vraiment profiter à tous les Ontariens.

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

**M. Mike Colle:** Je propose l'ajournement du débat.

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

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Mr. Speaker, we have an agreement here to move adjournment of the House.

Je propose l'ajournement de la Chambre.

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

This House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1622.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
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<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
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Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	
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Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah</b> (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted</b> (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (ND)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
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Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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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 / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
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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 / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / 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 / 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 / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
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Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	

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Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman  
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