



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 8 May 2008

Jeudi 8 mai 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 8 May 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 8 mai 2008

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 12, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act in relation to adoption information and to make consequential amendments to the Child and Family Services Act, when Bill 12 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, except pursuant to standing order 9(d), there shall be no deferral of the third reading vote; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 82. Debate?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the members from London–Fanshawe, Oakville and Etobicoke North.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: I'll pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from London–Fanshawe.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We're debating here today a very important topic that has been brought to the House many different times.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's a closure motion, yes.

In the past, this very important issue came before the House and was debated many different times. I remember in 2005, when this bill came to the House and went to committee, and we listened to many different people. I know that many people were passionate about it and spoke in detail about the importance of this subject, because for many different reasons many people who spoke about it couldn't connect with their natural parents, and natural parents couldn't connect with their kids. So we brought before this House a bill and debated it. As you know, the privacy commissioner back then, and the court, fought and ruled against it.

As you know, many different issues come to this House, and with good intentions we debate them and many people vote in support. That's what we're elected for: to reflect the needs and to manage and voice the concerns of the people we represent. As you know, many different bills and laws were passed in this province, and with changing times we open them again and modernize them and make them fit the era we live in and try to reflect the needs and requests of the people of Ontario.

This bill is one of those that came back and went to committee. We debated this bill many different times and in many different locations; we listened to many different speakers. As a matter of fact, the privacy commissioner came before our committee and spoke. She said that this bill is an important bill and should pass, because this time the bill reflects the concerns of the people of Ontario. This bill, as you know, came to this House and many people had a chance to speak and voice their concerns from every different party: from the government side, from the NDP side and from the Conservative side. I know some concerns were voiced by every side. But as a matter of fact, many people and all the stakeholders were pleased and happy with our present bill, because this bill reflects their concerns and speaks to their issues. This bill came to restore something that didn't happen in the past.

I've been listening to many different people. A mother lost her son, because she wasn't able to connect with him for a long, long time. She came and talked to us. I think it's fair; it's about time, because as we said many different times, times have changed. The secrecy is gone, and the time has come when people have a right to connect with their kids and when kids have a right to connect with their parents. That's what the bill is all about.

I know we're talking about many different child advocates; we're talking about people who need to connect with their parents. In this bill is a very important mechanism: a no-contact notice. I know many people are upset about it, but it's very important to mention. When we put this section in the bill, we know exactly how many people don't want to have a connection with their parents and how many parents don't want to have a connection with their kids, for many different reasons and issues. That's why we have a no-contact notice in this bill.

The no-contact notice will be active if this bill passes. This no contact notice will allow the kids, when they reach the age of 18 and become adults, to request a no-contact notice for connection with their parents or their families. If this section is violated by the parents, they will be subject to a fine of up to \$50,000, and \$250,000 for any organization or stakeholder that violates this sec-

tion. I think it's a very important mechanism to defend and protect, with a penalty for people who violate this section. Because we know strongly that so many kids for so many different reasons, when they become adults, still remember their childhood. Maybe they were abused; maybe they don't want to connect with their parents, for many different reasons. This section came to protect their interests and to protect them from any connections in the future.

0910

I know the honourable member spoke many different times about kids. We said many different times—the minister said it and I said it—and many different people said that this only applies to the adults; it doesn't apply to the kids. We have to treat adult people as adults. If we trust them to drive a car, if we trust them to drink, if we trust them to vote, I think we should trust them to have control of their records. If they wish to know about their past, they have a right to open the records and apply, and they have a right to connect with their parents.

I think this bill is important for all of us. As you know, as of September 2008, the closure veto will be replaced by a no-contact notice. I think this is very important. We listened to the privacy commissioner, who said this is an important bill. She came and spoke before the committee at the request of all members of the committee, and said that this bill has very important tools to protect people who don't want to have contact.

I think that we, as a government, listen to the people. As a government, we try as much as possible to connect with our colleagues from different sides of the House. We're trying to be reasonable, because in the end, we are here to serve the people of Ontario. But sometimes we have to act in a fashion that gives us the ability to protect the interests of the people who came and told us it is time to pass this bill. I listened to many people and stakeholders who came to our office and told us, "It's about time."

People throughout the history of this province have suffered because they have lost their loved ones. In the past, as you know, if you were unmarried, got pregnant and had a baby, in an era of family secrecy it was a sinful act. Therefore, the family and social services back then used to take the kids and put them in foster homes and gave them up for adoption, and the mother or the natural parents lost connection with their kids for years and years to come.

Many people came before, trying to connect with their kids. But there was no mechanism in the past to give them the right to connect. They had no ability to connect. That's why we came the first time, at the request of many people in this House, to open that record. The courts ordered that it was unconstitutional to have records opened totally.

Out of respect for the court, and also for the privacy commissioner, we came with a new version that reflects the needs and requests of many different people in Ontario, especially the people who are in charge of the files and know about the laws and regulations in this province,

and in consultation with many stakeholders. We created a mechanism and the tools in this bill to protect them and give them the right to be connected if they want.

I think that today, after thorough discussion of this bill and debate in this House, it's very important to put closure on this issue. It's very important to finish this, because people are looking forward to going back to a normal life. They're looking forward to connecting with their loved ones, whom they lost in the past due to many rules and regulations that would not enable them to connect with their loved ones. I know that many people would be happy about the passage of this bill. This bill is an important tool to give the mother who lost her kids for adoption, organization or whatever to reconnect and enjoy whatever is left of their life together.

We know very well too that some people don't want a connection. They don't want to connect back again. That's why we created a section, the no-contact notice, for the people who don't want to connect with their parents or their kids, for many different reasons. I think this is important. When you tie to it some kind of penalty, it protects the people who don't want to be connected. If one violates those sections in this bill, they are subject to a penalty.

This has been tried in many different provinces like British Columbia, Alberta, and New Brunswick, and has been successful. I don't understand why some people object to this section or this mechanism, because it's been tried in different provinces and has shown us that this works very well. They have no violations, and the people respect the law. No doubt about it, some exceptional people can break the law; it doesn't matter what you do. That's why we created a penalty for them: to tell them that if you violate this section, you're going to be penalized.

That's why people should be happy about this section and understand that we're dealing with adults; we're not dealing with kids. I know that the honourable member brings this issue about these kids forward to the House every single time. But she has to remember that when they become adults at 18 years of age, they won't be kids anymore; they'll be adults. We trust those adults to make an important decision about their lives. We tell them: "Yes, you can vote. Yes, you can drive. Yes, you can drink. Yes, you can get married and start a family." In the meantime, are we going to tell them, "You cannot know about your past life"?

It's very, very incredible. It's unbelievable. I think when we tell people they're adults, we should respect them as adults, and we should treat them as adults. The full meaning of "adult" has to be applied to those people, because they have a right. At the same time, the parents have no right to connect or to file any request for information until that adult becomes 19 years old. They want to see that one-year gap to get the connection between the parents and the kid—when they become an adult.

I think this bill strikes a very important balance in this important issue: to protect the people of Ontario who don't want to be contacted, and also provide the ability if

they want to connect with their families.. Many stories came before us in committee. I saw a lot of people and heard a lot of people crying, who thought at one time that they didn't want to connect with their mother and father because they left them out, but they didn't know the story. When they get the chance to see their parents, when the parents get a chance to see their kids, when they get the chance to connect and reunite, the love starts again, and they enjoy every minute of it. They think, "I wish I'd had the ability to connect a long time ago."

This bill came at the request of many people who told us "We want to have a chance to be reunited with our families," "I want to be reunited with my mother and father," or "I want to be reunited with my kids." We heard many different stories, as I mentioned. I say again, hopefully, in the end, we are working for the people of Ontario, working for the people who have suffered for a long time from the lack of the ability to connect with their father and mother.

Can you imagine that you had no right to connect with your father and mother? You're an adult, you are 40 or 50 years old, or 18 or 19 years old, and you haven't seen them and don't know much about them. You want to know how they look. You want to know exactly how you got your character. You want to know why you behave in the way you behave right now. You want to see who you look like. So it's very important to restart that natural connection between father and mother and their kids.

I think it's an important bill, and that's why today we decided to bring closure to this one, because it's about time. People have suffered enough over the years. It's important to give closure to it and to establish the mechanisms for the people who want to connect with their kids and to connect with their families.

0920

We listened to the child advocate groups who came before us and told us that this is a very important decision. I think that adults should have a right to connect with their kids and to make the decision on behalf of themselves. They don't want their rights being taken away from them. We're going to tell them, "You can do one thing, but other things you cannot do." How can you treat them as adults one time, and another time you say, "You're not an adult. You cannot make a decision on behalf of yourself"? That's incredible, unbelievable.

I think people these days are smart, and they are aware of what's going on around them. They have the ability to comprehend and the ability to make wise decisions, because the tools we've been giving them these days and the education they get make them able to make important decisions about themselves. We're not talking about decisions to change a government or change a life or change many of those kinds of things; we're talking about personal stuff. We're talking about personal things. We're talking about reconnecting them with their parents. They know; they listen to their feelings, their minds, their hearts. I think they are capable enough to be able to make that decision. It's unfair and it's unbelievable that some people cannot give them that right to make the

decision on behalf of themselves. We cannot act on behalf of them. So those adults, I think, know better about themselves. They have the ability to know and this bill will give them a right, when they become 18 years old, to put a no-contact veto or to say, "Yes, I want to connect with my parents." Also, on the other side, the parents cannot reach this connection until that child becomes 18 years of age. I think it strikes a good balance.

It's an important subject. Many people talk about it across the province. Probably you, Mr. Speaker, and many others in this House heard incredible, emotional stories about neighbours, about friends, about someone looking for his parents for many, many years. Very often we see it in the movies, we see it on TV, we see it on shows on TV. People are reunited and reconnected. I see the joy on their faces and the laughter because they reconnected with their natural parents, and the parents are connected with their kids who they lost a long, long time ago due to so many different traditional circumstances put on them without their ability to say yes or no—because back then it used to be a sinful act to have kids without marriage. If you lived with someone and as a result had a kid, you did not have a right to nurture that kid. Times change, and this bill speaks to that change of times. This bill came as a reflection of the people who asked us for many years and told us, "Yes, you have to put closure to it. Yes, I want to reconnect with my family. Yes, I want to start a new life again," because it's about time.

I think this time, this bill speaks to different elements and respects the rule of laws in the province of Ontario. After thorough consultations with the privacy commissioner and many different stakeholders in the province of Ontario, this bill came to light. I hope, again, we will be able to serve the people we promised to serve and hopefully will give them the right to see life again and start a new life.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak. I hope my other colleagues will have a chance to speak and explain more about the importance of this subject.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate today and speak after my colleague from London—Fanshawe. This is a particularly interesting bill in that it asks us to take what is a very emotional issue and all the emotions that attach themselves to an issue like this and apply some logic to it in the form of legislation that strikes—a key word, I think, that the previous speaker used was "balance." I think that's what we've been tasked with as legislators, to try to bring forward a piece of legislation that gets the support of the House, that appeals to all people in the province of Ontario, whether they be people who have been part of an adoption process in the past in which they entered into that process under certain conditions or certain promises or certain expectations, and at the same time apply a set of rules to adoptions that are to take place in the future. I think it comes down to some of the basic human emotions, in

that we want to know who we are; we want to know what our history is; we want to know what our family is all about; we want to know what our forefathers did, what our ancestors did. I think there's just an emotional attachment to our past that we have that's innate in all of us.

Also—not more importantly, but certainly from a different perspective—you need to look at this issue from a health perspective as well. Certain health conditions, certain diseases, certain medical conditions travel throughout the generations, and there's an expectation that some of those traits genetically get passed on to the offspring. Certainly, you can use medical information to your own benefit, being a child, if you know what has happened in your past. If you know that perhaps on the mother's side or on the father's side you are predisposed to certain genetic conditions, you can do something about that now. We have the technology; we've made advances now in medical technology where you can take action within your own life to make your health a much better experience as a result of having that.

So there are a number of reasons why we need to approach this in a very balanced way. There are people in the past, as has been spoken to earlier this morning, who entered into adoptions or put children up for adoption in a different age, in a different place and time and under different expectations, and certainly under much different moral rules at the time, perhaps would be the best way to put it. The expectation was that that privacy and those agreements would be protected throughout that person's life. Now, obviously, as time has moved on, some of these children who were adopted have decided they would like to find out what they're all about—where they came from, what their family history is—and have made requests that they be allowed to do that. I think there's agreement around the House from all parties on a number of things, and one is that all Ontarians should be able to learn more about their own personal history. I think where the dispute may come in, or what the debate may centre on, is just what format that takes and just what legislation is passed to allow that to happen while at the same time respecting the agreements that were entered into in the past.

That's why introducing this new legislation, in the form of Bill 12, is going to make open adoption records, moving forward, turning a corner in Ontario's adoption laws, but at the same time, those people who have involved themselves in the adoption process in the past, whether they be adopted children or birth parents, would also have their privacy respected. What the new legislation we are talking about today, Bill 12, in effect does, if it's passed, is it allows adopted adults and birth parents whose adoptions were registered in Ontario to apply for copies of their adoption orders and birth registrations, or to register a disclosure veto in cases where the adoption order was made prior to September 1 of this year. That, I think, strikes the balance that the member from London–Fanshawe was talking of, in that we're trying to please two masters: those adoptions that are yet to happen and those adoptions that have happened in the past.

I think the legislation that is being brought forward by the government in this regard is consistent with the recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and it's also consistent with the decision of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. All adoptive children and all birth parents can still register a no-contact notice or a notice of contact preference. So I think the legislation is trying to deal with all aspects of this very emotionally charged issue. It's trying to apply some logic to this that ordinary people in Ontario can rely on if they decide to enter, in the future, into some sort of an adoptive arrangement.

Certainly, the adoption process in itself is one that garners a great deal of attention and fuels a great deal of emotional thinking. I spent 12 years on the board of the children's aid society in the region of Halton. Two of those years I served as president of that organization. I was able to see the impact that foster parents and adoptive parents could have on a child's life where that child, for no reason of their own, has found himself or herself in a situation where their birth parents are not going to be the ones who raise them. You see the huge difference that it makes in the outcome when you have people who are prepared to come forward and to take on the responsibility of being the adoptive parents of a child who simply has no one to rely on.

0930

The previous speaker asked us to put ourselves in the shoes of an adopted child, dealing with everyday issues when you are at school, perhaps, and you look around the room and you see a lot of other children in your class who know who their mom and dad are, who just haven't known anybody else since birth than their parents. Then put yourself in the shoes of a child, a young girl or a young boy, who doesn't know who their mom or dad is, who knows perhaps that they've got two wonderful people who are prepared to look after them, but don't really know where they came from.

That's the intent of this legislation: as those children move through the adoptive process and into adulthood, to allow them access to that family history that's personal and very important to them. As I said right from the start, I think all members of all parties would believe in the concept that people should be able to learn their own personal history.

Also, as we move forward, I think we need to enshrine that in legislation as best we are able to do. We had the one attempt at this; it's no secret that it took a journey through the court system and was ruled unconstitutional. I have to thank Minister Meilleur for bringing this back very quickly and asking us to deal with it with some haste, because when the previous bill was passed, I think it had the support in concept of most members of the House, certainly, indeed a majority of the members of the House, and yet the journey to get to that point had been a very emotional one and for some members very personally emotional. But I think we had reached a spot where we thought we had it right and it was time to move forward.

Now we have an opportunity to make the previous bill even better, to bring it in line with what the courts have asked us to do in their ruling. By introducing new adoption information disclosure legislation, it's going to, as I say, meet the court's demand or meet the court's request that the legislation be framed in a way that is constitutional, and also go back and meet the same tests we attempted to apply in the past when we knew we were trying to apply logic, reasoning and the rule of law to what is essentially a very emotional issue, and to one that, in the past, has been treated a certain way.

I think the views on adoption have changed. Previous speakers thought to speak about the way that society viewed unwed mothers in the past. It's simply one that has changed over the years, and one that I think the legislation we bring forward now should mirror. So it's an attempt to do what people have asked us to do in granting them the right to explore their own personal history, protect the interests of those who have entered into the adoptive process in good faith in the past and expected that good faith to be preserved throughout their lifetime, and bring a balance to the situation that I think is deserving of the support of all members of the House.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: First of all, of course it's a privilege to speak on this very important and emotionally charged issue which, as my honourable colleague from Oakville has aptly stated, is one of the flow of information as well as catering to some very deep, legitimate and long-held needs of the various communities that are involved in the adoption process.

I can tell you, as the Chair of the social policy committee that was empowered to listen to the various stakeholders across Ontario, I think we were reminded once again about how important these issues are, about the deep-seated feelings on many different sides, whether it is for full and easy access in a bilateral way with or without consent from either side, or others who were perhaps speaking more towards the privacy issues and that those privacy issues might be breached.

Of course, that's what we're attempting to do here with the amendments, with the contours that we're offering to this legislation in order to not only make it constitutional, but also, we hope, to allay some of these concerns, fears, difficulties and challenges.

I have to say as well that beyond my parliamentary capacity here and as Chair of the social policy committee, the thing that really resonated for me was the medical or health argument. As a physician, I know very strongly and well the fact that so many diseases and illnesses and various maladies and conditions have their genetic basis. When we say that, we kind of glibly attribute genetic causes, but at some point there are ways for us, as a society and as health practitioners, to try to tease that out, to try to dissect some aspects of what exactly that genetic impact may be on this generation and/or succeeding generations.

For example, there are very common conditions, probably under-recognized among the general population, that lead to chronic low hemoglobin or chronic anemia, things

like thalassemia minor and thalassemia major. These are, yes, genetic disorders. These are generally passed through the male bloodline and they can sometimes be recognized only in an emergency circumstance, where an individual comes to an emergency room and for whatever reason they may be required to have their blood measured or they may have been subjected to very significant blood loss, and lo and behold, the results come back 10%, 20%, 30% below what was expected. Then, of course, everyone starts getting upset as to what exactly is the origin of it. Very often this is traced to the genetic bloodline inheritance. That's the kind of thing that somebody might want to know or might benefit from knowing very early on in their life, because, of course, there are particular measures and therapies and regimens and so on, depending on the individual case, that people can avail themselves of.

Of course, beyond that there is a whole long list, probably something like 3,000 disorders and counting that have an even stronger genetic imprint or footprint that lasts throughout the generations. Whether it's degenerative disorders like Huntington's disease, or things like Alzheimer's or early onset heart disease, these are all things that a person who deserves respect and dignity and a fair shot at a fully potentiated life ought to know and be able to access. Hopefully, with some of the contours and amendments and rethinking that's been going on with the legislation, we'll be able to address these particular issues.

As I say, there are many different streams in this adoption argument, many different areas that deserve concern, whether, as we mentioned earlier, it's the legal ramifications, the emotional impact and so on. But as I say, the thing that really resonated for me on a first-hand basis, as our participants and presenters were offering their testimony and their very deeply moving life stories, was that many of them—and indeed many of the members of the opposing parties—also mentioned this aspect of the medical information, the free and easy access to it, and of course the challenges thereof.

So there are a number of things we're attempting to accomplish with this new legislation. For example, our government wanted to take immediate steps in introducing new legislation that, if passed, would make open adoption records a cornerstone of Ontario's adoption laws. If this legislation is passed, adopted adults and birth parents may be able to receive previously unavailable information through access to information contained in original and substituted birth registrations and adoption orders, including identifying information.

The disclosure veto would only apply to adopted persons and birth parents who had their adoption orders made in Ontario before September 1, 2008. The disclosure veto is consistent with the September 2007 decision of the Superior Court of Justice and the views of Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner.

0940

Going forward, adopted adults will be able to apply for copies of their adoption records and birth regis-

trations. Birth parents will be able to apply for information from these documents. These documents may provide, for example, adoptees with information on where they were born, their original name at birth and the names of their birth parents; for birth parents, the new name of the child they placed for adoption, including their new name when they were adopted and where the adoption took place.

In place of this legislation, there's also a no-contact notice mechanism, which carries with it the toughest penalties in the country. Adoptees can register to put themselves on that no-contact list to protect themselves from unwanted contact from birth parents. Of course, this was a provision that was very strongly represented to us, not only by some of the participants and the presenters but also by some of our respected colleagues in the opposition parties. Non-compliance with this notice can result in a fine of \$50,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a corporation. As you'll know, three provinces in Canada have this type of mechanism in place and have said that it is sufficient in protecting the safety of adoptees.

As you'll imagine, there's a lot of legalese and a lot of competing clauses and super-contingent clauses buried within this legislation. I think that's only right, given, as we spoke earlier, the supercharged nature of this whole adoption process.

But I have to say that one of the privileges of being the chair of the social policy committee was to hear firsthand from so many Ontarians who were affected by adoption. I noticed that we have in the government gallery members of the adoption communities, some of whom testified very poignantly that they had been reunited after I believe it was 20 years plus—

Interjection: Thirty-five years.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thirty-five years plus. That is something that really cannot be manufactured, cannot be spun. There's no public relations company that could come up with that, not even our own able staffers here at the Liberal Party. That is something that deserves recognition, deserves action, deserves our full support and our full respect.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: At the outset, I want to say how disappointed I am, and the other opposition members are, in truncating this debate when we've only had one day of debate. I had an opportunity to speak on this previously. Mr. Prue from Beaches–East York had an opportunity to take up only half his time that was allocated. No other member of this Legislature had the opportunity to speak, save the government members at the opening.

I consider this bill probably the most important bill that has been introduced by this government since the election. The rest of the legislation has been dealing with monetary issues, truck speed limitations—

Hon. David Caplan: Back-to-work legislation on the TTC.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Yeah, back-to-work legislation on the TTC. That was an important piece of

legislation that took a half an hour in this place. It was agreed to by all parties in a co-operative manner. But the rest of the legislation really doesn't affect the future lives of so many Ontarians. This bill can affect as many as over a million people.

Hon. David Caplan: I've just demonstrated—

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: If the minister for infrastructure wants to speak, why doesn't he take some time and allow this debate to go on and use his position in cabinet? He has no feeling about the implications of this bill on the future lives of Ontarians.

This government has badly botched this bill. They have ducked, bobbed and weaved around their mishandling and lack of competence with regard to this legislation. They were warned in the previous debate on Bill 183 about the total lack of concern about the privacy of Ontarians going back prior to this time. They were scolded in this Legislature by me and my party for going back and breaking the word with the Ontario people who had put up their children for adoption and the adoptees that these records would be sealed and that they would not be revealed without their consent. We warned them about that. We said, "You will likely have a constitutional challenge," and they went ahead. I believe that that shows the total lack of regard by this government for privacy rights. They have been captured by one interest group, going forward.

I would just recommend to all of the members of the Legislature, particularly the government backbenchers, to read the decision of Judge Belobaba with regard to privacy rights and this whole issue. He has a very good, reasoned decision and some of the information in his decision is so important for all to know and to read.

For instance, we talk about a balance in this particular debate. I want to talk about page 25 of his judgment: "The feelings and the fears of the 'non-searching' adoptees and birth parents who do not want to be found are no less legitimate and no less compelling. The impact on their lives and those of their families is just as significant. The difference here is that there are few, if any, clinical studies documenting this impact because the non-searching population prefers anonymity and is hence unorganized. Unlike the searching population, it does not have lobby groups working on its behalf. But the evidence before this court is clear that opening records retroactively will be harmful to the non-searching members of the adoption triad. Lives could be shattered. The evidence is also clear that some adoptees and birth parents are not interested in being reunited. They do not want to revisit the past. And, as one adoption expert noted, these feelings and these individuals are completely normal."

We recognize, in our party, that the laws have to be changed. Societal attitudes have changed. Going forward, we agree with having a more open adoptive system. We believe in that. But what the judge points out is that the other group has never been represented in public or in front of our legislative committee.

I think the last member spoke to exactly what the effect of this law will be. After August 31 of this year,

according to the legislation, the records will be open for adoptees and natural parents to see, providing the child has reached the age of 19. At that time, then, both sides can get those records. This stands for all adoption records made before September 1. But prior to that time or after that time, either side can register two kinds of notices with the Registrar General. They can register a non-contact notice or a veto to the disclosure. They are very different in nature, in terms of what they do. If the person registers a veto disclosure, they are saying that the information will not be given to the other party about the birth records, so that privacy will be maintained by that person. Experience shows that 3% to 5% of the people in a jurisdiction will do that. As I understand it, we have about 500,000 to 600,000 adoptions that have been recorded in our province, so it affects probably double that number of people, perhaps even more. So there are a lot of people involved in this.

I want to talk a little bit about the non-contact notice. The judge also had some things to say about the non-contact notice and how it affects people. First of all, it's not a penalty of \$50,000; it's a penalty of up to \$50,000. Secondly, if one of the other people involved in the adoption, either the natural mother or the adoptee, is contacted and doesn't want to be contacted, what are the chances that they're going to undertake a prosecution of the person that they don't want to be involved with? It's not going to happen. It's like restraining orders that are now in place. The police are reluctant to do them. The police are not going to prosecute this kind of thing. Why on earth would somebody who doesn't want to be contacted or deal with the other party undertake a litigation process against their natural mother or their adopted child?

0950

The other part is, these people are not without feelings. Even though they may not want to have anything to do with them, they still understand that there is a connection. The likelihood of somebody going after or prosecuting a natural parent or a natural child is so remote it's unbelievable.

Number four: The government talks about other jurisdictions in our country that have non-contact notices in their legislation. They haven't had their legislation in place long enough to have any experience with any kinds of breaches. The oldest legislation was done in 1996; that's only 12 years old. The adoptions normally take place at a very young age—the kids aren't 18 or 19—therefore there is no experience with this particular matter.

I also want to go back to the judgment of Judge Belobaba and read what he has to say with regard to that issue: "The non-contact provision"—I read from page 33 of his judgment—"does not prevent the release of the information. As for the non-disclosure procedure, as I have already noted, the board"—oh, that's another issue which I will not bore the Legislature with.

I do want to read the other part, though, on page 60 of the judgment:

"The no-contact provision. As the affidavit evidence before me makes clear, the harm is not contact, but disclosure. The applicants object to the fact that their identities will be disclosed to persons that they would least want to have this information. Whether or not contact actually takes place in breach of the no-contact provision is a secondary concern." So the no-contact is a phony excuse with regard to an issue that I'm going to mention, going on.

"The no-contact restriction will not prevent or minimize the harm that could result"—this is in his judgment—"to the date rape victim that put her child up for adoption 20 years ago when she was young. Today she is married with her own family. She continues to live in the same community, as does the birth father. Her family does not know about the adoption. If the adoptee identifies her and tells the birth father, the birth father will spread the news through the small community and this will create great harm to her marriage, her children and to the stability of the family.

"The no-contact restriction will not prevent someone from stalking or watching or making phony phone calls or front-door deliveries. As C.M. stated in her affidavit:

"The no-contact" provision "is totally irrelevant to me"—this is a natural mother—"because no contact will not mean that they cannot watch me, they can't drive past my house. This person could get my name and give this to the children that she has, to other friends, to relatives. It ... does not provide me any comfort whatsoever—whatsoever, other than I could be stalked."

"The no-contact provision would not prevent the disclosure of one's identity and with that identifying information"—this is another applicant under this lawsuit:

"It would not be hard to use the Internet or do simple investigation and research in order to learn myriad details about my life and who I am.... It causes me stress and anxiety that someone with a particular interest in my identity and who I am could then find my address and learn about my interests and associations." Then he goes on about the no-contact provision. So the no-contact provision that this government talks about is a joke.

My caucus and I agree with the legislation. The former legislation, Bill 183, which was passed in 2005 in spite of our warnings and my warnings to the government about the retroactivity with regard to the veto, contained for the future the option for a small number of individuals to have a veto disclosure. The minister answers back, "Well, these people can have the no-contact provision." I think I have debunked the notion about the no-contact order. The no-contact order only relates to the person who has received the information. So in the instance of one adoptee who obtained the information about the mother or father, they can share that with their brothers and sisters and there is not a no-contact order against them. Those children, or the other relatives, can go to the parents, knock on the door or do whatever they want, and there's no penalty. They can't be fined; there can be no prosecution against them. So they can share this infor-

mation with whomever they would like. The people who receive the information are not bound by the no-contact provision. That was debunked in the last debate.

Under Bill 183, we had special protection for people who had been in severe circumstances. Our hope was that, going forward with the legislation, after September 1—when an adoption order is made, we wanted, in a very small number of cases, an option for those people to also have the right to have a veto disclosure. I don't know what the number would be, but it would be a very small number of individuals in our province; I'm guessing less than 100 a year.

What we wanted, because the children's aid society brought this before the committee in the form of a written brief which I picked up and subsequently went to the minister about before the clause-by-clause, and said to the minister, "In fairness to you, Madam Minister, I want to tell you that I'm going to introduce in committee tomorrow"—because there was a one-two kind of process on this bill, which I disagree with as well. I think that, seeing an amendment coming and wanting to make the bill better, the government would have been much wiser to postpone the clause-by-clause and deal with this bill in a reasonable and logical fashion, especially given the fact that they had been struck down by the courts on their first try.

But what we wanted to do was to say, if the children's aid society was forced to take a child out of a home and then the court ordered, as they do in a very minor number of cases—one in 100, in terms of children's aid society intervention—that the natural parents not only had lost custody but they lost access to the child—this happens in only one out of 100 kids that the CAS is forced to take out of the homes, because the CAS tries dearly to put those kids back into the family home. That's their first objective. When that is an impossible situation, primarily because there has been severe abuse to those small number of kids—attempted murder, starvation, rape, serious assaults, those kinds of things. In most cases, I'm told by children's aid workers, these are cases where there's mental illness in terms of the natural parent or there is severe drug abuse in that home. They take that child and put them in an adoptive home, and that new adoptive name is not released to the natural parents, the perpetrator of the crime, these violent people. These kids are truly victims of our society, victims of crime. Sometimes their parents are charged with criminal offences and sometimes not, but in most of these severe cases, they would be charged with some kind of criminal offence.

1000

What we wanted to do—and I was supported by the NDP in the amendment, which I warned the minister about the day before—is that in the extreme number of small cases we wanted a half-a-block—not a full-block—veto on the disclosure, so that the child, when he or she reached the age of 19, could say, "I want to keep my adoptive name secret from my natural parents, because I'm still reliving the horror of the abuse that took place during my childhood."

You know, it's odd that this week, when we're celebrating Children's Mental Health Week, we're moving closure on this kind of debate and we're being refused a reasoned amendment with regard to this one matter. What we wanted to do was, when the kid reaches 19, they're put in control of when they might want to take off a veto. The children's aid society would file a veto. Once the child is 19, the children's aid society is out of it, and it's in the hands of the child.

I also had in my amendment, in favour of the abusing parent—things do change in life in those kinds of things—an opportunity for the abusing parent to challenge the veto in an appeal sense, so that they would have an opportunity to challenge what the CAS had done in imposing this veto on behalf of the child. My amendment didn't prevent the child from finding out about the parents. And you know what? The parents already know about the child. They had the child probably for three or four years of their life, and they know a little bit about the child, but I wanted to put the power in the hands of the child who had been psychologically, emotionally damaged.

I talked to adoptive parents of one of these children, who said to me that every day that child is with her, they have to deal with this emotional, upsetting psychological harm the child has had. It's hard for me to imagine that every one of these children who has been severely abused doesn't suffer some form of mental illness. Why would we put the stress on that child and on the adoptive parent that, when that kid reaches 19, the abuser, the criminal, is allowed, in this legislation, as a matter of right, to find out the adoptive name of their child whom they so badly abused that a court had said, "We're taking you away, and we're not even going to give you access to your child, because you've been such a horrible parent."

I just don't understand. We go through this legislative process—I've tried to be as reasonable as I possibly can with regard to putting forward my amendments. I've shared them, as I said, before bringing them, and I heard this awful, patronizing crap coming back from government members with regard to this balance that they had reached between the people who wanted more open disclosure and the other people. But there hasn't been any balance. As Judge Belobaba pointed out, the people who want anonymity and would argue the other side of this case have never been there. They can't organize, they're not lobbies etc. I might add that Judge Belobaba also points out that there is no conclusive evidence with regard to what happens after the disclosure of this information. All the sociological studies have been one way and, because of the nature of the anonymity and privacy part of it, the researchers just don't find out about the bad stories with regard to adoption disclosure. I believe that in most cases they are happy reunions, and this is what is good for both the adoptee and the natural parent, but it isn't always that way. The research, he says, is skewed one way as opposed to the other.

I don't know. Given that Bill 183, the previous bill, had this protection in it, I just can't understand why the government wanted to drop this protection for some of

the most vulnerable people in our society: kids who have been beaten up by their parents, who have psychological problems. We put additional stress on them and the adoptive parent. As I said before, these people are saints. People who adopt these children are people who are saying, "I'm going to put my life aside for a young person who has real issues, and I'm going to deal with this as we go forward and I'm going to help this child out, even though I'm not the natural mother or father." I have so much respect for those people. I say to the members opposite: Why would you not put the power in the hands of the individual?

I talked to the privacy commissioner about my amendment. The privacy commissioner, as you know, supports the government's legislation now. She didn't support it before because of the retroactive effect of breaking privacy rights. But she indicated to me that if the Legislature decides to further amend Bill 12 to provide additional privacy protection through a prohibition against disclosure where the adopted person was a victim of abuse by the birth parent, the commissioner would offer no objection. In other words, the privacy commissioner has said in writing that she would have no objection to my amendment. That letter was to me, but in the spirit of trying to move this place, I shared that with the minister. I said to the minister, "Look, the privacy commissioner has no objection to my amendment," because I thought that the minister before tried to intimate that there might be some objection to the amendment. It's quite clear that the privacy commissioner would be in support of more privacy rights for vulnerable people, which is her general position.

I talked with the advocate for children, and the advocate for children said this: "It's clear that children who have been adopted should retain control over information about themselves. If they do not wish information to be shared, they should have the right to withhold this information." We're not going to do that in this legislation. At the age of 19, that is going to be turned out with regard to future adoptions after September 1. But what I wanted to do was, in this particularly small number of cases, say that the government should institute the option of a veto disclosure going forward.

1010

I do want to thank a number of members of the government caucus who have come to me privately and said, "I agree with you, Norm. I wish we could support your amendment." I want to thank them personally for their support over the last two weeks. That included, I might add, a couple of ministers, at least.

I've been in this Legislature a long time, and my tie with privacy and information issues has been long. I was responsible for that area of law from 1981 to 1985 in Premier Davis's cabinet. So I fully understand, I believe, the issues relating to privacy. I learned at that time how important privacy issues are to the public at large. Notwithstanding that, I understand as well, as does my caucus, that going forward there is a change in society with regard to adoption records and we're willing to accept

that. But we have to have some special provisions in dealing with very special people. I'm disheartened that the legislative process has failed in this regard. I'm disheartened because I think we and I acted in an honourable way with regard to the amendments I brought forward. I think the reaction has more to do with saving face than it has to do with doing what is right for the people of Ontario going forward.

I guess the only saving grace here on this issue is that, as this will only be for adoption records after September 1 of this year, the next government will likely have the opportunity to change this law. They will have the opportunity because there will be few adoptions made of children more than 14 or 15 years old; I doubt if there will be any in the particular circumstance that I have. I want to say that I fully intend to talk about this in the next election. I fully intend to have the party that I represent, the Progressive Conservative Party, say to the electorate, "We're going to change the law in this regard to protect these victims of abuse." I'm going to go on the stump. I'm going to go to as many ridings as I can, and say to people, "The Liberal government is an uncaring government. They don't care about children. They're on the side of the perpetrator of the crime. They have little feeling about kids who are the most vulnerable in our society." I'm going to talk about the no-contact provision, about what a phony farce that argument is, about how anybody can stalk somebody, they can watch somebody, and that a judge is very unlikely to ever make an order under this provision of the law. I'm going to say that one of the first bills a Progressive Conservative government would bring would protect these kids who are so in need of protection going forward.

I don't understand the government at all on this issue. I guess they think they're going to appear weak because they listened to the argument and changed their legislation. My view of this place is that if a government listens and changes its position, it's a sign of strength, a sign of confidence that they can listen to a reasoned argument and make a change.

This phony baloney about a balance: Read Judge Belobaba's decision about balance, in terms of this particular matter. There is no balance here between the right to privacy, in certain special circumstances, and the right of the perpetrator of a crime to find out.

The argument I heard from the parliamentary assistant that when these kids are 19, we've got to treat them as adults: Yeah, we treat these kids who have emotional ages much younger than their chronological age as adults. Kids who are 19 have the emotional age of 12- and 13 year-olds because of the abuse that has been brought upon them. I don't understand how on earth the parliamentary assistant can stand up and say, "We're going to treat these people like adults because they are adults. We're not going to provide them with protection because they are adults." They can put up with their abuser, they can put up with the parent who beat the shit out of them. They can—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I withdraw that. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I got upset.

I don't understand this, and I will fight it. I will fight it if I have to go through another election to fight it. I will be in every one of your ridings talking about this. I will be in your ridings. I will get to the regional press, and I will talk to them about your lack of care for our kids. It's disgusting.

Your Premier talks about being a leader on issues like the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is a minor issue in relation to this. I know lots of people are upset about it; I'm upset about it. But I'll tell you, when I talk about kids and about protection for kids who need protection, there's nothing more important in what we do.

Before, in this debate, I have represented the interests of people who were not there to represent themselves. I represented before, in this debate, the privacy of mothers who had been raped, in terms of their never wanting information to get out about their connection to the child they gave up 30 years ago. It was only through my debate before that the government brought in a half-baked kind of amendment to protect that privacy. That's the reason it went to the courts and the court struck it down.

I went to fight for people who weren't lobbying me. I guess what bothers me most about Dalton McGuinty and his government is that if you have a lobby group, you win. Sometimes lobby groups are overzealous about their positions. They don't balance in a reasoned way between the rights of one and the other. They have extreme views. That's how lobby groups operate. They have extreme views. It's up to us, who represent all the people, not only the people who are vocal and can get a lobby group together. It's up to us to represent the people who can't be there. It's even more important that we represent the people who can't speak up for themselves.

I and my caucus are speaking today for kids in the future who are going to be badly abused by their parents, and who have no political clout. There's not a vote in this province that will be garnered from this group of kids; there won't be a vote in the whole province on it. But I believe most strongly that the most important duty of a legislator is to speak for those who are vulnerable, those who can't speak for themselves. I'm so proud of my party and my caucus for standing behind me and saying, "Norm, we're with you, because you're right. You were right before with regard to the privacy rights."

1020

I don't understand the arrogance of this government that got it so wrong before and will not listen to reasoned debate on this particular issue. I don't understand their arrogance and their uncaring attitude toward some of our most vulnerable kids. I am furious with them, and I will do everything I can to change this law in the future. I've got to tell you, I've had some success in the past and I hope to have success in this. I know I've got my guys behind me. I know the NDP is behind me.

We would have loved to vote for this bill because we think it generally goes in the right direction, but this issue

is so important to us that we cannot support this bill on third reading.

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise in this House to speak, first of all, to the closure motion, which I find appalling. I have been in this House many times for closure motions and I have to say, generally, I don't like them. This closure motion has been invoked before the parties have even had an opportunity to put up their principal speakers.

As the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills stated, the government had an opportunity to stand up and wax eloquent about why they thought this was a wonderful bill. Then an opportunity was afforded to the Conservative Party to speak to the bill in their leadoff, and the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills did a very capable job on that day of accomplishing that. It then turned to me, on that day of debate, to speak about the NDP's position. I barely got into my speech when time ran out. I accept that. That happens to me a lot, having a bifurcated speech—give a part one day, give a part another day. But as I was about to come back this morning to give the remainder of my speech, I discovered that the government intended to invoke closure. I guess I can get some of it in in the closure motion, but it means that they don't even want to hear what the opposition parties have to say. They don't even want to hear from members, other than those who might have an opportunity to give an initial speech on this very important bill. No doubt there are literally 10, 20 or 50 members of the House who want to stand up and speak on this bill, either in support of it or in opposition to it, and that opportunity is not being given.

For the life of me, I do not understand, with so little on the agenda, with a time period up until the middle of June and only a few bills remaining, why the government needed to invoke closure in the middle of the opening arguments, and I am appalled that this government has done this. I am appalled that government members stood up and spoke about welcoming debate. They did not welcome debate at all. They have simply acted in an undemocratic fashion in this House, which is supposed to be the democracy of the people. They have acted to make sure that those who want to speak are not given an opportunity. I have to say, I am ashamed and appalled for those government members, because if they don't have the good sense to be ashamed and appalled themselves, then someone needs to do that for them.

I stood here and listened to the government spin around the bill. The government's spin is all about, "We're doing all these wonderful things." I agree with the bill, but the spin of the government had nothing to do with why this bill is before us. They never once mentioned the decision of Judge Belobaba—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I did.

Mr. Michael Prue: You did today, but not the first time.

They never once mentioned that the reason this was here before us is because the courts ordered it back. We, as a Legislature, have to be mindful of what the courts

and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have to say, and that is why the bill has to be changed.

I listened to what the government had to say and I listened intently to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills on the last occasion. He made a very impassioned and real argument about one of the shortfalls in the bill. Certainly, I am mindful of it; I am wary of it. I understand how people who have been the subject of abuse, children who have grown up in terror or in horrible circumstances, may want to protect their identity beyond the age of 19. I fully understand the argument that he had to make.

When I began my speech on the last occasion, a speech which was not completed and now never will be, I talked, first of all, and made it abundantly clear that notwithstanding what had happened in the committee, notwithstanding that my motion had not been successful—that would have been a motion to strengthen the right of adoptees to find out about their birth parents, even stronger than what had been contained in the original bill—and notwithstanding the fact that I supported the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills on his amendment in order to protect the victims of abuse, I would support the bill. I'm not standing here in opposition to the bill. Notwithstanding what has happened, I still intend to proceed and vote for the bill. It has been a long time coming, and for the 99% of adoptive parents, birth parents and adopted children who want to reunite and find out their roots, I have no real problem with this bill.

But I went on to talk about the problems with the bill, and there are two. The first one is that it does not allow people an opportunity to try to investigate whether or not their birth parents are still alive. If the birth parent was born in Ontario and died in Ontario, then there is no real problem, because the registrar of births and deaths will be able to look and see whether the birth parent has died, and will inform the adoptee that his or her birth parent has now died and the records will be unsealed and the adoptee can find out. The problem in the amendments that I tried to proceed with through the committee stage was to have it ensured that if the birth parent dies in a jurisdiction other than Ontario—and there are some provinces with whom we share information—the adoptee can find out, or can have reasonable access, or can have people within the civil service check the records to see whether, in fact, that may have happened.

I gave a story—I can just imagine it now—of a person 75 years of age or so going in and saying, “I believe my mother, who would today be over 100 years of age, may be dead.” They say, “What's her name?” He says, “Well, I never did know that, but I do have a birth date, because I'm entitled to that. I have a birth date and my mother, if still alive, would be 100 or more than 100 years of age.” They say, “We can't do anything without a name.” That 75-year-old person walks out the door and might never, ever find out. It seemed unreasonable to me.

I stated on the last occasion, in my discussions with Dr. Cavoukian—we went back and forth, and she said that although she didn't like the amendments that I had

proposed, there needed to be a mechanism and that she would help me work on a mechanism to open that up so that there could be a reasonable presumption, after a period of time, to have people given an opportunity and the civil service to help them to determine whether or not a parent had died, if not in Ontario, then in another province or in a foreign jurisdiction, so that those birth records could be unsealed. We were not successful. Notwithstanding that, I informed the House that I intend to vote for the bill.

I was about to speak, on the last occasion, about my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and his impassioned speech on protecting the children of abuse. I didn't get there, so I'm going to have to spend whatever remaining time I have today, which is about 16 minutes, talking about that particular aspect of the bill. I know there are some who fear reopening this debate, or looking at the debate and whether or not we need to ensure privacy protection for a minority. Certainly, it was not a factor when Bill 183 was passed by this House in the previous Parliament. It was not a factor because it was in the bill, but it's out now. I think it's out to the detriment of those who may have suffered from abuse.

Now, I read the letter from the children's aid society, and I read it intently. They were the ones who first red-flagged the issue. They were the ones who said that we need to take a very strong and good look at this, as to whether or not the victims of abuse should be put at risk.

1030

I, too, was a member of the children's aid society here in Toronto for a number of years, both as the mayor of East York designated by Metropolitan Toronto council as it then was, and later on as a member of the megacity council of the city of Toronto. I was appointed to the children's aid society. I went to many, many meetings and discussions about cases and case files and policies related to children who had been literally taken from their homes. In the majority of cases, it's not that they were taken from their homes for violence or sexual or psychological abuse. Very often they were taken from their homes because the families were incapable of caring for them, often because of alcohol problems, drug problems, mental disease problems, problems of psychological breakdowns, sometimes even just poverty. Families became incapable of looking after their children, and with most of those the children's aid society worked strenuously to try to reunite the children with their families after the problem had been resolved. In some cases they were very successful, and I compliment and applaud them for the very difficult work they do.

But in some cases, the children had to be physically taken away from their parents for a whole range of things: things like incest, things like rape, things like violence and beatings and starvation and things that we would consider too horrible to imagine. Those children are taken away from the parents literally against the objections of those same parents. They are taken away, they are put first of all in foster homes, and then from foster homes, if they are young enough and lucky enough, they go to the homes of a willing family and are adopted.

I was also, as a member of the Metropolitan Toronto council and later the council of the city of Toronto, on the children's abuse committee of Toronto. It was a society that was right on Yonge Street just north of Davenport; we went to meetings. It was about the abuse of children and what happened to children who were abused, and not only what happened to the children who were abused, but their mandate was also to work with the abusers to make sure that those abusers did not continue in their actions. It was a gut-wrenching experience. It was a difficult experience to see the programs that were designed for young children who had been the subject of psychological or sexual abuse in their own homes, usually by members of their own families.

It was also a gut-wrenching and difficult experience to see the programs that had to be developed for the abusers themselves, abusers who often saw nothing wrong in what they were doing, abusers who, in some cases, could be counselled, in some cases could be helped and in some cases seemed to me to be beyond that understanding or willingness to change their ways.

The member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills made a reasoned argument in committee. He said that those children who had been subject to abuse, who had been taken away by the children's aid society, who had been lucky enough to find willing adoptive parents and who tried to put the psychology and the horror that happened to them in their young lives behind them, needed assistance. We need not, at the tender age of 19, open up that wound and tell the assaulting parent, the parent who had committed rape or incest upon them, of their whereabouts, of their name and who they were.

The no-contact veto, in my view, is not strong enough. I heard what the minister had to say in this House, but in my view, it simply was not enough. I concurred with the motion from the Progressive Conservative Party, and I concurred that we needed to do more. But in so doing, I also asked the member who put forward the motion, the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills, about people who had changed, because as a member of the child abuse committee of Toronto and as a member of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto for those many years, I understood that sometimes people change. Even an abuser, if the drugs are removed, if the alcohol is removed, if they have received psychological or psychiatric counselling, or social work had been done—even an abuser who had been sent to jail and who had learned through mental anguish and everything that happens to a person in jail, and had had an opportunity to reflect, could conceivably change.

I did not want, nor do I want, to keep that parent away from that child for all eternity. What he suggested was very rational: A child who is still afraid can say, "I don't want this," and a parent who is insistent upon seeing the child can appeal. The appeal can be heard and it need not be a lengthy one, but I think that some board or some body at some point needs to look and satisfy themselves that the person has changed, that the psychological or the psychiatric counselling has worked, that social work has

worked, that jail has worked, that a person showed remorse and was unlikely to offend or do it again. Then there could be an opportunity for those people to reunite and to assuage the fears of the young person who had been treated so miserably and so poorly.

I said that and I understood that, and we talked to Dr. Cavoukian about not only the motion that I tried to put forward—she's agreed to work with me on that one—but also what the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills had put forward. There was agreement and general consensus that it could be done and that it should be done. But we come to this House and instead of trying to work in an atmosphere where we are trying to assist the bill, even a bill that I'm going to vote for—I am simply trying to tell you that this bill could and should be made better. There is total reluctance on the government side to do something which I think would strengthen the bill—to allow people to get to know their parents once a certain age has passed and the parent is likely dead, and to protect the victims of physical and sexual violence. It appears not to be.

We've received a letter, and it's already been read into the record, from Dr. Cavoukian. We also received a letter the other day from the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, in a letter dated May 5, made it very abundantly clear that this process ought not to be delayed, and I respect that. Agnes Samler, the Provincial Advocate, said, "Let's not delay this process."

But then she went on and made some very telling statements about her position and the position of youth with whom she had consulted that I do not believe have been reflected at all within the body of this bill, and that should have been reflected. She writes on the second page of her letter:

"The concept of having personal and identifying information made available to biological parents may be overwhelming and could provide an ongoing threat to children in their developing years. Any legislation should not simply rely on the fact that a young person has reached a particular age but should take into account the potentially negative effects of sharing information without the consent of the affected young people."

This is part of the problem with the government's position that once you turn 19, you are an adult, and an adult is an adult is an adult. What she has clearly stated is that there is a potentially negative effect of sharing information that should not be meted out at the day one reaches the age of majority.

She went on to state in her letter on the same page:

"Another concern expressed by young people is that all of the attention was focused on the wording of the legislation and the rights of adults. What resources would be available to the young person who opens up communications with the biological family, finds the process extremely painful and guilt-ridden and wants to close the door to that relationship? Who will provide the resources and support them through that process?"

This has not been canvassed within the four walls of this legislation. This has not been spoken about in this

House. Quite frankly, I think the government needs to start looking at the reality of what the bill is going to contain.

1040

Finally, in this letter, again on the second page, Ms. Samler goes on to state: "As Canadians, we have accepted and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 of that convention states: 'In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.' Article 12 goes on to state: 'The child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child.' This current bill demonstrates that we are not yet prepared to fully meet our promises under the convention."

In the government's hurry to ram this bill through without debate, these voices are not being heard. In the government's hurry to ram this bill through without debate, members of this Legislature are incapable of standing up and speaking to the provisions of the bill that are still troubling. As I stated earlier, I am generally in support of the bill. The bill will do what my colleague Marilyn Churley, the former member from Toronto-Danforth, attempted over many years to do, what people in this House have fought for for a generation: to have the adoption bill opened and to have the adoption bill work for the benefit of the adopters, the adoptees and the biological parents.

I do not want to stand in the way of the passage of the bill, but I am asking the government—they should care for the ramifications. They should listen once in a while to what others have to say, be it an opposition member, be it the privacy commissioner, be it the advocate for children or be it the children's aid society. These are important voices that have not been listened to. These are important voices that have something to say.

I heard what the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills had to say, that luckily there probably won't be too many people adopted between September of this year and the election of a new government some three years after that date who would be subject to the potential abuse. I would suggest that even one child who might fall through this crack is one child too many and that the government, in its haste on this day to push through this bill, is doing a disservice to the children of this province and is doing a disservice to those who have been the subject of mental abuse and is doing a disservice to those who, through age and time, may never be able to find out who their birth parents are. That causes me some considerable consternation. It causes me some considerable grief.

In my 20 years in political life, I find this often to be a very frustrating place. In municipal politics—and anyone who was ever in municipal politics in this House knows—when somebody within the council comes up with a good idea, even though that person may oppose you from time to time, you listen to the good idea and you incorporate

it. In this House, no idea, other than something that originates on the government bench, is ever given any credence or credibility. In this House, the government, in its attempt to push through bills like this without actually listening to the privacy commissioner, without actually listening to the child advocate and without actually listening to the children's aid society or those who would speak for them, quite frankly, has done a disservice to all.

Having said that—and I again go back to my original position—I realize that the number of people who will be affected by not including this is small. I have stated, as I have stated from the beginning, that I will be supporting the bill, and I am sure that most of the members of my caucus will be supporting the bill on third reading. But we are extremely upset at the way this government has rammed it through. We are extremely upset that they—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: Their catcalling says that they're vulnerable on this, I think.

I will be voting for the bill, but I would much rather be voting for a bill that did everything that this bill should be doing, rather than doing a job that is only half good.

Mr. Speaker, I understand it's about the time. I will continue on the next date.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The debate stands adjourned.

Debate deemed adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce some guests to the Legislature today.

On behalf of the member from York South-Weston, I'd like to welcome Kristina Madonia, a teacher from Weston Collegiate Institute, and the students from Weston Collegiate Institute, who will be visiting the Legislature this afternoon.

On behalf of page Mikaela Henderson, in the east members' gallery: Brenda Henderson, her grandmother, and Sara Henderson, her cousin.

On behalf of page Vanessa Chiarello, in the west public gallery: Rosa DiBrina, her grandmother, and Vincenza Chiarello, her mother.

On behalf of the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, we'd like to welcome Madame Guitha Bruyère and Madam Lucile Bruyère in the east members' gallery. They're from Club Joie de Vivre in Embrun, in the member's riding. I'd like to welcome them today.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Given the number of interjections yesterday, I sense that some clarification around the sub judice rule might be helpful.

Sub judice, in brief, is a voluntary restriction on the part of a legislative body to refrain from discussing matters that are before a judicial or quasi-judicial body. In

other words, it is a self-imposed restriction that the Legislative Assembly places upon itself so as to avoid prejudice to a judicial case. At its core is the principle that the separation between legislative and judicial bodies is to be respected.

The sub judice convention is intended to apply to statements, debate and question period.

As, quite apparently, members are well aware, in Ontario, we have codified the sub judice convention in standing order 23(g).

However, until 1970, Ontario did not have a sub judice rule; instead, practices and customs at Ottawa and Westminster served as the basis for the Speaker's decision.

In 1966, Speaker Morrow delivered two rulings which (a) set out more precisely the interpretation to be given to the sub judice rule, and (b) gave some leeway for debate on civil matters not yet set down for trial, thus loosening a stricter prohibition on debate by way of a 1964 ruling by the same Speaker.

Then, in 1977, Speaker Rowe cited and endorsed several principles enunciated by a committee of the Canadian House of Commons which implied an even less restrictive interpretation of the rule.

These rulings formed the basis for a new sub judice rule which was adopted in 1978 and remains today.

Notwithstanding that Ontario has a standing order on sub judice, historically the voluntary nature of the convention makes it difficult to outline the jurisdiction of the Speaker.

With respect to question period particularly, Speakers here and in most other jurisdictions have adopted the practice of minimal responsibility with respect to the sub judice convention, principally leaving it up to the member who asks the question and the minister to whom it is addressed. (This is largely borne out in the Ontario precedents, with Speakers rarely interfering. The last time on record that a Speaker ruled a question out of order based on sub judice was Speaker Turner in 1982.)

The reason for this approach is that it is impossible for the Speaker to know which cases are at which stage in every instance and that the minister involved is in a better position to judge whether engaging in the discussion has a danger of causing prejudice.

The minister has the option of refusing to answer the question on grounds of sub judice, as has been set out most often in these situations.

Additionally, the problem facing a Speaker is that for him or her the determination when a comment will have the tendency to be prejudicial is speculative—that is, it cannot be done until after the remarks have been made.

Thus the Speaker will exercise his discretion with respect to the convention only in exceptional circumstances, when it is absolutely clear that doing otherwise would unfairly influence a judicial proceeding.

In 1976, there was a House of Commons special committee set up to review the “rights and immunities of members.” The committee considered the sub judice convention and recommended that “when there is doubt in the mind of the Chair, a presumption should exist in

favour of allowing debate and against application of the convention.”

It is this long-standing practice that I have and will continue to apply to this House, interfering when and only when I am entirely satisfied, as standing order 23(g) says, “that further reference would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceeding.”

Having said that, I would caution all members to be mindful of the rule, its history and its purpose, and to take excessive care that they avoid making comment on judicial cases that might have the effect of being prejudicial to proceeding before the court of record.

1050

ORAL QUESTIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Deputy Premier. We know Premier McGuinty is adept at using announcements and photo ops to distract from his government's mismanagement of the economy. As we witnessed two weeks ago, he'll make an announcement even when he doesn't know what he's talking about.

Without question, the most disturbing comment he has made recently is his express concern for the use of Lord's Prayer in this assembly. Can the Deputy Premier explain why Premier McGuinty is suggesting removal of the Lord's Prayer from proceedings of the Legislature? Just who is asking him to do so?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the government House leader.

Hon. Michael Bryant: It is something that's being sent to an all-party committee. I also note that we are the only Legislature where the Lord's Prayer, exclusively, is said by the Speaker of the House. That is something that's being reviewed by an all-party committee, and obviously, we look forward to hearing what all parties have to say.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Since March 17, we've had 117 petitions tabled in this House opposing removal of the Lord's Prayer. That's representing over 23,000 Ontarians. We're told this week that the government's website dedicated to the issue crashed because of the flood of e-mails opposed to Mr. McGuinty's proposal.

When the Premier was asked if the overwhelming opposition might change his mind, he said, “No way.” That response raises questions of trust. Will the House leader assure us that the recommendations of the committee looking into this issue will be brought back to the House and the government will not blindsides the opposition and the public expressing concern, like they did with their so-called family-friendly rule changes, where they bullied what they wanted through this place with no consultation and no compromise?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Again, the recommendations by the legislative committee will, obviously, be made to the Legislature. The reality is that this is something the

Speaker himself is going to have to consider as well, as are all members of this Legislature. It is a legislative matter, after all, and not a government matter, although I'm happy to answer the question.

I think that this is something that will involve some discussion and some consultation. That's why we have a committee sitting together to consider this. I can't imagine a more appropriate consultation—by legislators, of legislators—than an all-party committee. We look forward to its recommendations.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I think you can understand the reservations on this side of the House. When there was a family-friendly committee formed, it was totally ignored.

I want to make it abundantly clear that the official Progressive Conservative opposition is adamantly opposed to removal of the Lord's Prayer from legislative proceedings. This is an issue of significant concern to a great many Ontarians. It has to do with the history of this place, the history of this province and our great country.

Ontarians have a right to know where every member of this Legislature stands on removal of the Lord's Prayer from our proceedings. I ask the House leader if he will commit his party to a free vote on this important issue.

Hon. Michael Bryant: Of course, the whip will deal with issues of whipped votes. The question of whether or not something even goes to a vote is something that presumably the legislative committee will deal with. I'm not going to prejudice the findings of the committee. As the Premier said, this is an issue that has been considered by our public education system. It's an issue that has been considered in a variety of governmental and public contexts.

I certainly would be more than happy to share my views with the member, but what's important here is that there's a legislative committee looking at that. I would ask the leader of the official opposition to acknowledge that we ought to let the committee do its work and to not prejudice the committee's deliberations.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A recently released report states that in the province of Ontario there is an existing threat of a *C. difficile* outbreak. It also states that control of this strain requires measures beyond normal infection control procedures. That being said, Minister, why have we not heard from you or your ministry about this situation?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think that the matter of infections in hospitals is an often spoken about and much publicized challenge in health care environments, and one would only need to Google to understand that.

If the member is speaking more specifically about circumstances which we've all become aware of just in the last day or so related to Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, I can tell the honourable member that we're going to take measures, working with the Ontario Hospital Association

to add *C. difficile* as a reportable circumstance. This will dramatically enhance the transparency associated with these challenges which do occur from time to time in Ontario's hospitals. I think this will be a very, very substantive improvement, enhancing the public's awareness of these challenging circumstances in hospital environments.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And I thank God for the good work and the outstanding effort done by the staff at Joseph Brant hospital in dealing with this situation on their own. They're certainly a leader in the province.

As minister responsible for the management of health care in this province, you should be able to take the necessary steps to ensure that when people go to a hospital for treatment today, or a long-term-care home, they don't end up dying from this very dangerous superbug. Can you tell us today how many hospitals and how many long-term-care facilities in Ontario are dealing with similar outbreaks of *C. difficile*, and if you don't know, how can you guarantee Ontarians today that hospitals and seniors' facilities are safe?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think the honourable member herself, as a former health care worker, would understand that the responsibility and obligation associated with the management of challenges like *C. difficile* is not something that a head office of a ministry manages. It requires everybody to be aligned in that regard, and when we think about *C. difficile*, it really does reinforce the absolute and sheer necessity of very aggressive policies, like handwashing, which is really about the behaviour of individuals in the hospital environment, be they staff, visitors or patients themselves. We need to encourage all of those activities in arming ourselves in battle appropriately against these very challenging infections.

To the honourable member's question: There is no data collected on that point, but as I had a chance to say yesterday and in my earlier answer, we're moving forward with a very aggressive regime, which I'll speak about more in my final supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The outbreak of *C. difficile* in Quebec caused the loss of life of over 2,000 people. It was a wake-up call to all health ministries across the province. Manitoba and Quebec have implemented new reporting systems. In 2004, the Canadian Medical Association recommended that each province develop a plan for the reporting and tracking of *C. difficile* cases so that outbreaks can be managed and controlled.

I know that Joseph Brant hospital has been asking and applying for five years for dollars for renewal and reconstruction, and part of that is to deal with the new standards for infectious disease standards that are out there.

Given that this is Emergency Preparedness Week, why has nothing been done since 2004 to bring in reporting requirements with respect to *C. difficile* and a plan to track and monitor these outbreaks? Dr. Michael Baker in your ministry stated: "The public have a right to know what we do. We have no reason to keep information like

that from the public.” What have you been waiting for, Minister?

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, the honourable member’s assertion that nothing has been done is, of course, inaccurate: 137 funded positions for people to focus specifically on infectious disease are one parcel of what has been done, and two of these individuals are working in the very hospital that the honourable member speaks about today.

Most certainly there is a growing body of awareness about the opportunities and necessity of enhancing transparency in our public health care system, not just about the presence of *C. difficile* but about a range of other things. Those were contained, in part, in Bill 171, which the honourable member voted against in this very same Legislature about a year ago. Working with our partners at the Ontario Hospital Association, we intend to come forward very soon with a very, very rigorous reporting mechanism that will, in some senses, challenge the public, because it will provide greater transparency about some of those challenges which occur. But we know it’s the right thing to do and it will dramatically aid patient safety.

1100

PLANT CLOSURES

Mr. Howard Hampton: I have a question to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, I introduced a bill to expand the safety net for laid-off workers by ensuring that those workers would be eligible for severance pay when their factories, mills or operations close. Yesterday, members of the McGuinty government borrowed a page from Stéphane Dion, sat on their hands and refused to vote on the bill. My question is this: Why won’t members of the McGuinty government stand up for workers already hard-hit by the recession? Why are you afraid to take a stand in favour of workers who are struggling in a difficult economy?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to begin by saying that this government takes our responsibilities when it comes to protecting workers very seriously. If the leader of the third party thinks we’d be so irresponsible as to support something without reading it, he is dead wrong. We take our responsibilities when it comes to workers across this province very seriously; when it comes to ensuring that whatever we do, the impacts of what we do on the economy are known. We take our responsibilities to ensure that everything we do in this place helps us to generate jobs in this province; not doing things that could do the opposite and kill jobs, hurting the very people across this province, the workers of this province, whom we’re trying to help.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The McGuinty government says they’re helping workers, when over 200,000 manufacturing workers are out of a job, and in northern On-

tario, direct and indirect, 40,000 people are out of forest sector jobs.

The fact of the matter is that members of the McGuinty government have consistently opposed any measures that would help laid-off workers. My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Paul Miller, brought Bill 6, which would ensure that workers get their severance pay and their vacation pay. McGuinty government members blocked that. We brought forward a bill to ensure that the most vulnerable workers could join a union by signing a union card. McGuinty government members opposed that. Yesterday, the Stéphane Dion manoeuvre: Sit on your hands and refuse to vote.

Why is the McGuinty government so opposed to any measures that would help laid-off workers even get decent severance pay?

Hon. Brad Duguid: My question would be, why would the NDP be opposed to a \$1.5-billion investment in retraining and training of the workers across this province? Why would you be opposed to that? That’s what workers need.

Look, when a worker loses their job, we all feel it. We understand the impact it has on the worker; we understand the impact it has on the worker’s family. That’s why we are indeed investing \$1.5 billion in training, so we can help that worker who has the unfortunate circumstance of losing their job get back up on their feet, find another job, get the training they need to find that job. That’s where our priority lies. It’s something we’re very proud of and something that’s going to help workers right across this province.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Over 200,000 workers out of their jobs, and the McGuinty government is proud that 10% of them are going to get retraining. What happens to the other 80%? Obviously, the McGuinty government doesn’t care.

The example I gave yesterday: Workers, some of whom have worked for 20 years, 25 years, at a facility—it’s taken over by an American company. The American company gets the patents, the technology and the order books. The workers, some of whom have worked 25 years, are out on the street, without even severance pay. And what’s the response of McGuinty government members? They sit down, refuse to vote, refuse to stand up for those workers.

I ask again, what do you have against workers who’ve worked for 25 years, who’ve basically given their working life—why are you opposed to them getting severance pay when they’re put out the door?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Maybe the leader of the third party doesn’t know this, but he should, because he served in government in this place at one point in time. Ontario is the only province with statutory severance pay obligations for businesses in the entire country. We’re the only one in the entire country that provides statutory obligations when it comes to severance pay. No other province across Canada requires employers to provide this statutory severance pay protection.

I don’t know why the member would be coming forward with these kinds of suggestions. He talked about

his payroll tax proposal in the previous question. The leader of the third party has to realize that this is a tough economic time that we're going through. Our thoughts are with those workers who may be losing their jobs. At the same time, we're moving forward with a five-point plan to ensure that those workers receive the protection they—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Howard Hampton: I guess the McGuinty government's answer is, these are tough economic times and workers are on their own.

But to the Deputy Premier, my question concerns what is happening in our nursing homes. Last Wednesday, Wally Baker, a Toronto nursing home resident, died after a fall from an automated lift. Three days earlier, another nursing home resident, 87-year-old Florence Rose Coxon, was strangled by the restraining belt that kept her in her wheelchair. This morning, the Ontario Health Coalition released a report showing that even with investments in long-term care, resident needs are not being met.

My question is, when will the McGuinty government realize that residents in long-term-care homes and nursing homes deserve a minimum standard of three and a half hours of personal care per day?

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, I do want to express, with respect to the incident and the death the honourable member mentions, just a couple of points that I think are important. Firstly, the coroner's office is investigating each of those circumstances, and the conclusions that the honourable member has drawn could prove to be correct, but they've not been substantiated by fact through those investigations, and I do think that's important.

On the matter at hand, everybody in this House agrees that with respect to long-term care, our priority must be continuing to put more bodies at the bedside, to drive more resources into the long-term-care sector and to enhance our capacity to support people. That's exactly what our government's strategy has been all along. I was pleased to see that the honourable member has acknowledged the investment that we've made in long-term care, acknowledged that there has been some progress. In supplementary, I'll tell the honourable member about the investments we have made.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The minister refers to a coroner's investigation, and there will be a coroner's investigation, but there have already been coroners' investigations into nursing home situations. In 2005, the Casa Verde inquest handed the McGuinty government no less than 85 recommendations to improve the conditions in Ontario's long-term-care homes. In particular, the McGuinty government was told that a minimum standard of care was imperative, yet the McGuinty government continues to stall, and today there is still no minimum

standard of care in nursing homes like this one, where two seniors have now died.

Instead of telling residents in long-term-care facilities to wait, why doesn't the McGuinty government commit to a minimum standard of care today, as the Casa Verde inquest recommended three years ago?

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, it's not fully appropriate for the honourable member to say that those standards aren't in place. We have initiated regulations that, as an example, established the necessity of 24/7 RN coverage in all long-term-care homes and reinstated the principle of at least two baths per week to enhance the quality of care for those residents.

On the matter of the standards, Shirlee Sharkey, quite a well-known and respected figure in health care, will very soon produce a report that will guide the implementation of those standards. We've been focusing on making investments that have brought, to date, about 5,000 additional workers into the long-term-care environment. In this fiscal year, we have 1,200 RPN positions that are being implemented, and more than 800 additional personal support workers will be added to the long-term-care environment, enhancing the ratios of care for our loved ones. When that honourable member was in government, they had a minimum standard of 2.25 hours. Even the health coalition today acknowledged that we're at a much higher standard already.

1110

Mr. Howard Hampton: What the health coalition and the Ontario Nurses' Association point out is that the minister stands up and says, "Oh, we put some money into long-term care," and when you look at the other end, the care still isn't being provided. Maybe that money is being used to wipe out a nursing home's deficit; perhaps it's being used to take care of some of their WSIB difficulties; but in fact the level of care is not improving.

Meanwhile, workers, families and experts agree that our loved ones in long-term-care homes and nursing homes deserve a guaranteed minimum standard of three and a half hours of hands-on care per day. They're all in agreement. They've been in agreement for some time. Why does the McGuinty government continue to deny three and a half hours of hands-on personal care in our nursing homes and our homes for the aged when seniors are dying in our nursing homes and homes for the aged and people who work there and, in many cases, family members say—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's very, very disappointing that on a morning when the same health coalition is in the building and makes a presentation, the honourable member says differently than they did. They did acknowledge that the investments have resulted in more people working in long-term care. They've actually corroborated the numbers that we've been using. They encourage greater investment as well.

On the matter of greater investment: Number one, we have a minimum standard coming forward. It will be informed by the work of Shirlee Sharkey. Number two:

There have been enhancements in the ratios of care. At present, it's 2.94, and over the course of this fiscal year, it will be increased to at least three hours' minimum average standard of paid care in long-term-care-home environments. Through the course of our mandate, we'll increase that number to 3.25 hours. That will be a total of 20 million annual additional hours of care for our loved ones in long-term care.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is also for the Minister of Health. Today we have indeed heard, very sadly, of yet another death in a long-term-care facility. Minister, you promised a revolution in long-term care. Why is it, then, that Bill 140, the long-term-care bill, passed a year ago, has not been fully enacted by this government?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member. It's a little bit late in the game for that party to show interest in the residents in long-term care. They didn't demonstrate very much of it while they had the opportunity in government. There was a standard when that party came to office of 2.25 hours, and they eliminated the standard. There was a standard, and they eliminated it. Then we brought forward a bill, Bill 140, which the current Minister of Revenue worked very substantially on, and we're working through the regulatory processes to enhance all of the impacts of that bill. One element of that is the minimum standards that I spoke to in my earlier answer. I'm glad to see now that the Conservatives will be supporting initiatives to enhance the quality of care in long-term care. They did precious little of it when they were in government.

Mr. Peter Shurman: It's their bill. Bill 140 was touted by this government as the long-awaited solution to the crisis in long-term care, but long-term-care facilities and the families of the patients in those facilities continue to raise serious concerns about the level of care, the hours of care, the resources available to provide the care needed.

Minister, this House and those people need your revolution and they need it now. When are you going to fully implement Bill 140? What are you waiting for?

Hon. George Smitherman: We haven't waited at all for the regulatory elements of a bill to be fully implemented. Since we first arrived here as a government, we've been investing in long-term care.

That's why, even before this honourable member was elected in this Legislature, our government had added nearly 5,000 additional workers in the long-term-care-home environment. That's why, in this very fiscal year, there are more than 2,000 additional workers being added to the long-term-care-home environment.

If the honourable member wants to stand up and renounce the commitment that his party makes continually about their willingness and desire and plan to cut \$3 billion out of health care, there would be some more coherence on the honourable member's part.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Deputy Premier. It's about the poverty consultations. We hear that the poverty minister is now, at the last minute, inviting a few select low-income people to join the group. But the meetings are still not open to the public and they're still being held behind closed doors. Why won't the minister find a way to allow all community members, especially those living in poverty, to bring their experiences directly to her?

Hon. George Smitherman: First off is to acknowledge that there are a wide variety of mechanisms by which any Ontarian can make observations, and we would really encourage them to do so.

The honourable member's assertion that in the work that the minister has done on this she hasn't been meeting with people who are very relevant to poverty or impoverished individuals is something that she's plainly told the honourable member is not the case. You only have to look to the time that she spent in Peterborough and Cobourg to recognize that the minister has been meeting with the very voices and very individuals that we seek to add some substantial benefit to.

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: As the honourable member continues to say, "Not meeting with anyone that was poor," at the same time, the minister had dinner at a youth shelter.

So I think that the honourable member needs to offer a much greater degree of clarity. The minister is out there doing a wide variety of meetings. We encourage people to send us their views as we tackle this substantial challenge.

Mr. Michael Prue: We received this e-mail yesterday from Terrie Meehan, a resident of Ottawa. She wrote:

"I live on ODSP. I am on the steering committee of the ODSP Action Coalition. I am the community member representative on the steering committee of the Alliance to End Homelessness, an organization that did get one of the select invitations.

"Selecting a few people secretly for a round table and/or last-minute meeting without allowing communities adequate time to prepare is not conducive to respecting the community that this process is to serve."

Providing last-minute invitations to community members who have experienced poverty first-hand is simply a slap in the face. When will this government allow full participation, open up these meetings and stop closing the door?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do think that it was interesting that in the honourable member's question he quoted an individual who's from an organization who said that they weren't getting access, and then mentioned that they were. The point of the matter is that the minister is engaging across the breadth of the province of Ontario in a widespread consultation that will bring her the viewpoints of representation from literally dozens and dozens

of groups established for the very purpose of their advocacy on these issues.

Beyond that, there are a wide variety of mechanisms by which individuals can make their views known, including through all members of the Legislature, who have, in this very, very exciting forum, the opportunity to present those views. The minister is working hard. She's in touch and working to meet with dozens and dozens of groups across the province of Ontario. Other members of the committee and MPPs will be doing the same. I'm very, very confident that this debate and discussion will enhance our capacity to address this challenging problem.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I hate to call a point of order in question period, but the Minister of Health, the Deputy Premier, continuously states facts in this House representing the positions of the official opposition. They are completely untrue. I will be following up with a letter. He should be apologizing, withdrawing and committing to never raising these kinds of issues again in this place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not a point of order. I look forward to receiving this letter. I will review the letter.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to address the statement that I heard the Minister of Health make.

Interjections.

Mr. Frank Klees: It is a point of order because, unless I'm mistaken, the last time I looked at our standing orders, the Speaker is to remind any member in this place that if they are intentionally misleading the House, that is out of order.

I would ask you, Speaker, to rule on this, as to whether or not a minister of the crown who makes a statement that the official opposition has as its policy to cut \$3 billion from health care—and, if that is not the case, whether or not that is intentionally misleading the House. I would ask you to rule on that, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I look forward to the letter that will be arriving from the Leader of the Opposition. I will review the Hansard and will make judgment at that time.

Hon. Michael Bryant: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I know that members would not want to say indirectly what they've said directly. If we're going to have a situation where points of order are used in effect to engage in rebuttals, then we're going to spend question period on points of order. Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it to you as to whether or not you want to continue hearing points of order that are not points of order.

1120

PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. The International Consortium on Anti-Virals is a not-for-profit drug development organization dedicated to the discovery and development

of anti-viral therapies for neglected and emerging diseases, and is also committed to ensuring accessibility to all those in need.

ICAV is currently developing therapies for a variety of diseases such as avian influenza, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, dengue fever, Lassa fever, yellow fever, Ebola and Marburg. ICAV's goal is to deliver one drug to the market every five years that is affordable, effective and accessible.

On February 14, I was pleased to join ICAV's CEO, Jeremy Carver, and Trent University president, Bonnie Patterson, at ICAV's international headquarters, located at Trent University in my riding, to announce \$2 million in funding from our government. Minister, can you outline the importance of this funding?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to share with the House that some three million to five million people around the world suffer from influenza, severe illness, and it's estimated that some 250,000 to 500,000 people around the world die from influenza.

There's an amazing coalition that has been built at Trent University in Peterborough with the International Consortium on Anti-Virals. I was pleased to provide, from our ministry, some \$2 million, which matches a contribution by the federal government of some \$2 million, because of the tremendous nature, the global opportunity that presents itself for Ontario researchers to be at the leading edge of dealing with this global challenge. As I said, some half a million people in the world die every year from influenza, and when we look at SARS, HIV/AIDS, all of these types of viral illnesses, we need to be prepared for that.

BMO Nesbitt Burns says there could be—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: Through the international collaboration of scientists, governments and industry, ICAV is accelerating the discovery and development of anti-viral therapies—to think that our research capacity and capability in Ontario allows us to complete and partner with not just other provinces but other countries in the world to achieve these successes.

Can the minister outline what our government is doing to strengthen and create international partnerships through ICAV?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Ontario is quickly becoming known around the world as a place where we have this spirit of collaboration, not only within our own province but with international researchers around the world. I would say to the member, just the other day we had the announcement of the International Cancer Genome Consortium, and the fact that we are the world headquarters, right here in our province's capital city.

But I want to particularly talk about the announcement in Peterborough. Trent University is a medium-sized university, but it's punching well above its weight when it comes to internationally recognized research. I want to commend Dr. Michelle Chrétien and Dr. Jeremy Carver for their globally significant research, their leadership,

that is allowing our province to play an amazing role in seizing this global opportunity. As I said, it is a global challenge, and our ability as a province, using research and innovation to address a global challenge, will have—

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

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Madam Minister, I beg you to reconsider an amendment to Bill 12, to permit severely abused adopted children a right to retain their privacy on reaching the age of 19.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member for his concern and his question. But again, I want to reiterate that Bill 12 gives the protection that this member is asking for. If the bill is passed, the individual will be able to apply for a copy of their adoption order and birth registration, and they will be able to register a disclosure veto in cases where the adoption—after September 2008. In addition, the proposed legislation provides that the birth parent or adopted adult—because we're not talking about children; we're talking about adults here—who chooses to register a disclosure veto could voluntarily provide information and that all adopted adults and birth parents can still register a no-contact notice—

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: A no-contact order does not prevent a father from stalking a daughter. Madam Minister, in balancing the rights, you have gone in favour of giving a rapist father a right in law to know the adoptive name of his daughter rather than giving that daughter the right to retain her privacy on reaching the age of 19. Is that a correct balance of rights between a perpetrator of crime and a victim?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: In the case that the member is citing, there are other measures in the Criminal Code that this person would be entitled to take to protect herself or himself.

What the member is asking has been rejected by all other provinces in Canada. The member of the other side has been canvassing all sorts of organizations to come to us, and do you know what these organizations are telling us? They're telling us: "[I]t is our view that the determination of abuse"—this is coming from Defence for Children International—Canada. "[I]t is our view that the determination of abuse mechanism is not necessary. Furthermore, we support swift passage of Bill 12"—

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

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Six months ago, on November 8, 2007, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses and

women across this province came to Queen's Park to demand a commitment from the McGuinty government to step it up on women's issues. Sadly, this government still remains inactive on all of their demands. For example, Nellie's—one of the first shelters in Ontario—doesn't have enough money to stay open. Like other violence-against-women shelters, Nellie's is faced with a growing gap between funding received from the government and the actual costs required to run its services and programs. So I'm asking: When will this government step it up? When will you fund Nellie's so it doesn't have to close? When will you prevent sexual assault against women?

Hon. George Smitherman: I noted from the honourable member's question that she would leave the impression with people that there have been no steps taken in this very important matter of public policy, but that's not the full picture. Indeed, the domestic violence action plan contributed \$82 million to a wide variety of initiatives to help intervene earlier, identify women and children at risk sooner and to provide better community supports. There were training sessions that involved 6,000 professionals; there was substantial expansion of the domestic violence court program to 54 jurisdictions; public campaigns initiated in communities; new shelter beds opened—a very substantial number—since 2003; and funding for an assaulted women's helpline that has helped to address challenges.

I could acknowledge that there are, I'm very certain, unmet needs, and opportunities where we can further expand and enhance programming, but there has been a very substantial investment—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is Sexual Assault Prevention Month, and Nellie's has been asking you for funding since 2004. They currently turn away five women every day. They're filled to capacity and their doors are going to close unless you step it up and help them with funding.

So I'm going to ask again. The question is very simple: Are you going to step it up and help them with funding or not?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to say to the honourable member that our investments since 2003 have gone up by 20%, to about \$190 million. The honourable member is raising a very particular circumstance that I will take under advisement. I'm not as familiar with the direct funding relationship of that one organization. I'm familiar with the work that they do and the necessity of that work and the support and role that it plays here in the city of Toronto. As I've said, I'll take that under advisement, work with the honourable member and endeavour to get back to the honourable member with the answer.

1130

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As you know, my

riding is home to the University of Guelph. The university's history dates back to 1874 when the Ontario School of Agriculture was established on a farm originally provided by the provincial government.

Since 1964, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has had a unique agreement where the ministry provides transfer payments that allow the university to offer diploma programs in agriculture and related disciplines and to manage extensive research programs in support of Ontario's agriculture, food and related industries. This formal agreement with the university has delivered results, including such innovations as the development of omega 3 eggs. Could the minister please tell this House about some of the accomplishments this partner has provided to the ministry—

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: This is a very important issue, particularly for—well, for everyone in Ontario, because we all enjoy the quality products that come from Ontario farmers.

What I can say is, yes, our government is committed to partnerships and committed to innovation. That is why the provincial government has, over the last number of years, provided \$54 million to the University of Guelph. What has that \$54 million gotten us? It has leveraged more than \$1 billion a year in returns. As a result of that, we can say that the agri-food industry is the second-largest economic driver in Ontario. It delivers \$30 billion a year to the provincial economy. We believe that by continuing to make investments, as we have, in partnership with the University of Guelph, focusing on innovation, that will continue to build the strength of the agriculture industry in the province of Ontario.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Indeed, the University of Guelph-OMAFRA partnership is at the heart of the Guelph agri-food economic cluster. It's made up of 60 agricultural, technology and biological companies and 24 research facilities, contributing 6,000 jobs. These jobs represent 10% of Guelph's workforce.

In the 2008 budget, our government announced \$56 million in additional funding to the University of Guelph. Just last week, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs announced a renewed 10-year agreement with the university which will carry with it \$300 million over the next five years. Could the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please tell this House what this new agreement will mean to the university, the agri-food sector and the people of Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I was delighted that the honourable member was able to join me at the University of Guelph with dozens and dozens of industry stakeholders, dozens of representatives from the University of Guelph and also representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I thought it was an excellent demonstration of how all three groups came together and recognized why we needed to have a partnership.

I also think it demonstrated this government's commitment to the agriculture sector, because in addition to

the new \$56 million for research that was in the budget, we were able to sign an agreement, a commitment of \$300 million over the next five years, with the University of Guelph. They will be working with agriculture partners in the industry on innovation that will enable the industry to better compete in the global marketplace. We know there are particular pressures—

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

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Your Premier has stated repeatedly that coal is bad and he would get rid of it in Ontario. In fact, he has claimed that the use of coal has led to 667 deaths a year in Ontario. Deputy Premier, I ask how he justifies the financing of the conversion of blast furnaces at Dofasco steel from natural gas and oil to—listen carefully—pulverized coal? How do you square this with the people of Ontario? How do you square that hypocrisy?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw "hypocrisy." How do you square such duplicity?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: The member is absolutely right: We are determined to eliminate the use of coal in electricity generation in the province of Ontario. We've already made some very strong steps forward in that. We are committed in the year 2014 to completely eliminate any production of electricity through coal.

All members may not be aware of this, and the public may not be aware of it, but in the year 2011, we're determined to cut the use of coal by another third. We cut it by a third in 2006, we'll cut it by another third in 2011, and we will completely eliminate it by 2014.

There's no question that we're taking a leadership role in North America on this. We are dedicated and determined to eliminate the use of coal in electricity generation in the province of Ontario, and we'll do that, and we'll hit our next target in 2011 and completely eliminate it in 2014.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Liberal principles are like the weather: variable. They change very quickly. It's clear that the only thing that matters to this government is politics. Principles mean nothing whatsoever. If they see coal as bad politics, they dump it. If they see it as good politics at Dofasco, they burn it. Minister, would you simply admit to this House and to the people of Ontario that when it comes to your principles regarding coal, they were pulverized into dust long ago?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I think what the public is interested in is a determined plan to eliminate the use of coal. I appreciate that he had written down that cute little saying there, but just for the public we are speaking to,

I'm very proud to say that in the next 18 months we'll have more new generation coming on stream, electricity generation, than in any 18-month period in the history of the province. That will allow us to proceed to our next one-third reduction in coal in 2011 and to completely eliminate it in 2014.

I'll just say to the public, in spite of the language you may hear, that we are leading North America in the elimination of coal-fired production of electricity. I'm very proud of that. Our plan, which we are proceeding with aggressively, will allow us to do that. I think the public should feel confident that in 2014, we will be completely out of the use of coal.

CONTRÔLE DES MALADIES INFECTIEUSES

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Les Ontariens et Ontariennes viennent d'apprendre que 76 patients à un hôpital de Burlington sont décédés à la suite d'une infection clostridium difficile durant une période de 20 mois. Pendant des années, les néo-démocrates ont demandé au gouvernement que le bureau de l'Ombudsman puisse recevoir les plaintes des hôpitaux, mais les libéraux ont refusé.

Combien d'autres crises de ce genre est-ce que les Ontariens devront endurer avant que le ministre de la Santé oblige les hôpitaux à démontrer plus de transparence et d'imputabilité ?

Hon. George Smitherman: Merci beaucoup. I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I had a chance to say in the earlier answer, the challenges associated with C. difficile have been extraordinarily well known, but obviously the transparency associated with the investigation at Jo Brant hospital has proved very, very startling evidence.

As I had a chance to say, we're moving forward with a regime that builds on earlier actions that we've taken to enhance the number of people who work in the area of infection and trying to curtail the spread of infection in the hospital environment with mandatory reporting, which will dramatically enhance the transparency for Ontarians. That will be only one measure that we will be adding to a much more transparent model that we think can help to drive outcomes and enhance patient safety.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I don't think the minister quite understood my question. I'm going to try again.

On a daily basis, my office hears from Ontarians who want our hospitals to be held accountable for their actions. They're asking our hospitals to be more transparent. When disease outbreaks occur, infection rates should be made readily available to the public. Even though the minister promised public reporting would be in place by April 1, this has not happened. Instead of telling Ontarians that maybe next year public reporting will be improved, why doesn't the minister agree to an Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals today?

1140

Hon. George Smitherman: I very much agree with part of the thrust of the honourable member's question related to transparency, and that's why, as I've had a chance to say three or four times already in this House this morning, we're working with the Ontario Hospital Association on bringing in a regime that would implement mandatory public reporting of hospital-acquired infections.

We do believe fundamentally that transparency is crucial. Just as an example, in recent months we had new information about mortality rates in hospitals. That presents challenging information, but at the same time, a very strong impetus on the part of those who run the hospitals to achieve better outcomes. That's why I appreciate very much the honourable member's encouragement and support for the implementation of mandatory reporting, and I look forward to an opportunity soon to better inform Ontarians and the members of the House about the exact details and implementation dates.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Ontario has a wealth of individuals with the skill and the drive to shape their own economic success by starting their own businesses. Small and medium-sized businesses in my riding of Willowdale tell me that in today's global economy it is crucial for them to explore opportunities all over the globe. Helping companies connect to the global economy helps to solidify Ontario's reputation as an international leader.

Will the minister tell us what his ministry is doing to help Ontario's small and medium-sized entrepreneurs grow to the next level of success in the global economy?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I really want to thank my colleague from Willowdale for asking this question. I also want to thank him for his support and advocacy on behalf of small businesses.

I am very proud of our small business community. They add enormously to the prosperity of our province. Almost \$230-billion worth of activity is generated by small business, and 99% of all businesses in Ontario are small. They create more than 50% of all employment in this province. That's why it is important for us to make sure that the innovative products and services they provide are showcased in the world markets.

In our last budget, we provided \$5 million—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Answer.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: —we put aside and gave it to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce so that they can take their products globally and they can highlight the kind of—

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

Mr. David Zimmer: In my riding of Willowdale, many small business owners are planning to retire over the next few years. Many of these business owners plan

to transfer or sell their businesses to a family member, mostly to their children. Youth are the entrepreneurs of the future. We need to equip Ontario's youth with the business skills to ensure that these family-owned businesses continue to grow to the next level of success in the global economy.

Would the minister tell us how his ministry is providing Ontario's youth with the knowledge and skills it takes to be successful in the global marketplace, so that these family-owned small businesses can continue to succeed in the global economy?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member again for asking this question. It's really important for us to create a culture of entrepreneurship in this province, especially among our youth, so we have a couple of programs at the secondary school level. We have a business plan competition that encourages youth to get involved in entrepreneurship activities. We also have a very successful summer company program and we are accepting applications for that program right now.

In addition to that, last year we started a global education program that provides our youth the opportunity to work with multinationals, not just in Canada but abroad as well, so they can acquire the skills needed to be successful in managing the transition in the family business and create a culture of entrepreneurship in this province.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. A month ago you and I met with resort owners who are losing thousands of dollars in reservations and are not hiring summer students due to your red tape and your pan fish regulations. On that day, you made a 48-hour commitment to resolve this problem. Obviously you care more about fish than people. The problem is still there. Minister, who is driving the MNR ship—you or your unseen bureaucracy? Why have you not acted?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: To the member: He's absolutely right. As the Minister of Natural Resources, the fish do make a difference to me. Part of my responsibility is to look after the natural resources of this province.

As a matter of fact, we did meet, and I did indicate that I would be in touch. I was, virtually the next day, in touch with the individual and said that that I would put my staff to work on finding a way to resolve this issue. There are questions because we have a council that is up and going in an adjacent area and an imposed limit in another. I'm trying to find a way to deal with the issue of pan fish that's fair and equitable. I spoke, as a matter of fact, to the individual yesterday. I've had some—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, you told resort owners that the pan fish limits are not needed for conservation, that they were made without consultation and they are not based on science. Now you're finding a way to slough it off to another zone. Our economy lags, our

American tourists are spending money elsewhere, and students are getting pink slips. Minister, your answer reminds me a little bit of a slippery, slimy fish tail I once tried to grab a hold of, and you seem to be in over your head. Is it your lack of respect for your commitments and to the people of Ontario? Is this due to your incompetence, uncaring or just another Liberal—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: As I said to the member, he doesn't need to shout and huff and puff. We actually are sitting down, working to try to find a resolution to what is a very difficult situation, trying to find a way that's fair and equitable dealing with both jurisdictions. I have been in constant contact. I've had some 15 to 20 different e-mails. I've had telephone conversations. I recognize that the same challenges we face here are the reason why those folks who come from the United States come here: because their states have imposed 50-fish limits for the same commercialization reason. We're trying to work to find a resolution and we will find a resolution, but I want one that is sustainable, that deals not only with looking at the economy, the fish, which is the environment, and also dealing with the societal issues that are there. That's the whole concept of a sustainable solution, and work it through, we will. We—

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

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Transportation; Jim, it's your turn. You'll know that the dump truck industry is under severe cost pressures with high fuel costs and other issues, and you'll know that one of the things they're doing in order to offset those costs is to increase the loads on individual trucks to put them over the legal limit. My question to you is this: What are you going to do to make sure that we enforce the legal limit so that those trucks are not running dangerously on our highways?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's a very good question, and the member would know, first of all, that they are extremely concerned about the price of fuel because that affects the bottom line for them when they're working. Also, the amount of money they're getting paid by those they contract with has not gone up significantly, if at all, in the last few years. So they're very justifiably concerned about that.

In relation to the other question the member asks, it's a very good question. No one in the province is entitled to have a load which is above the regulations specified by the province of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation. Police services, particularly the Ontario Provincial Police and other police services in the province, take appropriate action.

I'll listen to his supplementary and provide some more information.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, we all accept that at the end, the ministry has to do its job and ensure that the trucks are not run over those legal limits as far as weight. But the base of the problem is cost. What are you going to do to assist the dump truck industry in order to deal with some of those cost issues so that they can become more viable and not have to run overweight?

1150

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would like to have the magic solution to costs, and I don't, but about the safety, I think we do.

As you know, the Ministry of Transportation conducts blitzes from time to time. All former ministers here would have been part of those blitzes, where vehicles are pulled over to the side and there's a complete safety check. In the case of weights, they must go into the weigh stations. If they're over at that time, they can be fined. The fine can be up to \$20,000. The fine can be applied to the driver, to the truck company itself or to those who are loading. So it's totally unacceptable for anybody to be over the limit. We have officers out there conducting blitzes. We even have some mobile units that are able to go to different parts of the province to do the weighing.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What are you going to do about the cost issue?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The cost issue is not within the purview of the Minister of Transportation, but perhaps on another day you could direct that to yet another minister in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Ms. Laurie Scott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Health, in a response to my earlier question, made a statement about the official opposition's support of Bill 171. I just wanted to tell the minister that we did in fact support Bill 171, and I'd ask him to please correct his record.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind the member that you can't correct another member's record.

Hon. George Smitherman: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would acknowledge the honourable member's helpful intervention, acknowledge my error and apologize for it.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I note today that we have seven ministers absent from the Legislature. I want the government to know that the opposition is quite agreeable, if the ministers can't get here this early in the morning, to going to a later question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the member that we're not to make references to absences of members.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I need to remind members—and I've offered some leniency this week—that the new standing orders, as written, are clear that introductions of guests needs to be in my hands, in my office, one hour prior to question period, which would mean 9:45 in the morning. I will oblige these introductions that have arrived after that, but next week I will be applying the standing order rules, which say one hour prior to question period.

On behalf of the member from Oakville, in the east members' gallery, we'd like to welcome Charles Mulli, Esther Mulli and Michael Crane, the directors of the Mully Children's Family HIV/AIDS orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya. Welcome today to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Brampton-Springdale, in the west public gallery, we'd also like to welcome the ESL students from Central Peel Secondary School.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from daily proceedings in the Ontario Legislature; and

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and send it to the table with Thomas.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a 10,400-name petition to the Ontario government that goes like this:

"Whereas understaffing in Ontario's nursing homes is a serious problem resulting in inadequate care for residents and unsafe conditions for staff;

"Whereas after the Harris government removed the regulations providing minimum care levels in 1995, hours of care dropped below the previous 2.25 hour/day minimum;

“Whereas the recent improvements in hours of care are not adequate, vary widely and are not held to accountable standards;

“Whereas there is currently nothing in legislation to protect residents and staff from renewed cuts to care levels by future governments; and

“Whereas care needs have measurably increased with aging and the movement of people with more complex health needs from hospitals into long-term-care homes;”

They ask the government to:

“Immediately enact and fund an average care standard of 3.5 hours per resident per day in the regulations under the new Long-Term Care Homes Act.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it through the very strong page Cali.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I have a petition 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, the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

I will sign this petition and give it to page Vanessa.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank the members of Wasaga Beach United Church for sending me this petition.

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I’ve signed it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and I’d like to thank the many people who showed up yesterday for the relaunch of the Credit Valley Current for having signed it. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jasdeep to carry it for me.

LORD’S PRAYER

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message 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 affix my name and give it to page Peter.

1200

MARY FIX PARK

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today for the rehabilitation of Mary Fix Park in Mississauga.

“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 Pine-tree 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 agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: Mr. Speaker, with your permission: I’m sure somebody will look at me and see that I’m all sliced up. It was not an accident. I was intentionally sliced at the hospital and re-stitched to remove some cysts. So thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

I do wish to present 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, the 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 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 sign that and pass that to Jack.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mike Colle: This is a petition from the people on Livingstone Avenue.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m in solidarity with Ontario workers and I affix my name to the petition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: It’s a welcome opportunity to get a second chance for a very important petition for those of us who live in western Mississauga. I’d like to thank Pat Cissell of Meadowvale for having sent it to me. It’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I thank those who signed the petition. I'm going to sign and support it myself, and ask page Naomi to carry it for me.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: This is the second petition in reference to the Ajax-Pickering hospital.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Central East Local Health Integration Network board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System's deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

"Whereas it is important to ensure that the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, a \$20-million expansion that will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum (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 ... 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 name to that and pass it to Peter.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition in support of Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not been updated since 1919;

"Whereas Bill 50 would require all veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, protecting veterinarians from liability;

"Whereas it would allow the OSPCA to inspect and investigate places where animals are kept;

"Whereas the bill would prohibit the training of animals to fight;

"Whereas Bill 50 would allow the OSPCA to inspect roadside zoos;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 50, entitled the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008, to protect our animal friends."

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

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to present this petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It was sent to me by Marian Galuszka of Mississauga, and it actually speaks in favour of an initiative of my colleague for Newmarket-Aurora. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition and once again to ask page Jasdeep to carry it for me.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for petitions has expired. This House stands recessed until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mrs. Julia Munro: This morning, just in front of Queen's Park, I met with Stefan Marinoiu. Since Sunday, he has been on a hunger strike demanding that this government take action on autism. Stefan is out in front of this building because he has an autistic son and he wants his son to receive the treatment he needs.

Yesterday, to her credit, the Minister of Children and Youth Services came out and met with Stefan. Now it is

up to her to talk to the Premier and the Minister of Finance and find the money to meet the needs of autistic children like Stefan's son.

I asked Mr. Marinoiu twice to give up his hunger strike, but both times he said no. It is not good for his health, but he is out there today because of his love for his son and because the government will not help him.

No one would go on a hunger strike unless they were desperate. Families whose autistic children have been left to linger on waiting lists are desperate. They need your help, and it is time for you to do something.

RAHIMULLAH AND NAZIFA SHAHGHASY

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I rise before my colleagues today in respect of a recent most tragic event that has occurred in my community. On Wednesday of last week, my constituents in Brampton were shocked to learn of the brutal deaths of Rahimullah and Nazifa Shahghasy.

The media has reported that Mr. and Mrs. Shahghasy were simply going about their normal lives when their lives were cut tragically short. What is perhaps less widely known is that this brave couple had years ago left their homeland, Afghanistan, for India, only to be forced again to abandon their home in search of a new life where they could pursue a dream we all share, a dream of a prosperous future for our families. That search brought them here to Canada as refugees.

I knew Rahimullah and Nazifa personally—I was their physician and a friend—and I know that their children, their family, and indeed our entire community is devastated by their deaths. I join in grieving their loss and offer my sincere and heartfelt condolences to their children, their family and all who loved them and were touched by their lives. I'm certain that all members of this House join me in expressing our sympathies for the family. May we keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise today to speak for the 52 families who recently learned that their lives are on hold after yet another shutdown in the forestry sector. These families in the great town of Mattawa are left to wonder how many jobs have to be lost before the McGuinty government decides that the economy and forestry in northern Ontario are in trouble.

Unfortunately, this government has made it perfectly clear that they are unwilling to stand up for the forestry sector and the north. Liberal cabinet ministers routinely say things like forestry has "turned the corner," and the province has gotten off "scot-free" from the forestry crisis, but despite these assessments, Mattawa and the north are still struggling.

We simply do not hear from this government anymore when it comes to the forestry sector, nor do we hear from the local member, the Minister of Revenue, when her riding is being hammered by job losses. Last month it

was Dyno Nobel in North Bay which, according to the North Bay Nugget, "slashed its workforce, leaving only 14 employees on the payroll." This month it is Tembec, a huge employer in the north, laying 52 people off in Mattawa.

It's time that the local member stood up for her riding and it's time her government took real action to help our forestry and manufacturing sectors. It's clear to everyone but this government that they simply do not have a plan for Ontario's struggling economy. Cut red tape, lower taxes and put in place a real energy plan. That is what Ontarians and families in the north and Mattawa deserve.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Energy policy in McGuinty's Ontario is designed to increase profits for energy companies, undermine manufacturing and increase poverty. In April, the McGuinty cabinet backed an Ontario Energy Board decision to deregulate natural gas storage in this province.

According to Michael Janigan, at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Union Gas consumers are expected to make up the annual revenue credits of \$100 million in rates, and Enbridge customers have to pay \$40 million more. This money will go to Spectra Energy, in Texas, and will be lost to Ontario's economy.

The amount of loss per Union Gas customer is between \$72 and \$115 per year. This is a substantial transfer of wealth out of this province—wealth that could be used to improve people's standard of living; money that could be used to invest in energy efficiency.

Instead, because Mike Harris's legacy of deregulation has not been repudiated by the McGuinty government, we are suffering gravely from money going out of this province. It is a mistake to hold on to Mike Harris's policies. It is a direction that was rejected by the people of this province and one that this government should abandon and take up the direction of protecting the people of this province on energy issues.

JAMES FOSTER

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to an inspirational member of the Brampton fire service. Firefighter James Foster, a member of station 206, will be departing for Vancouver on June 2, on a 7,600-kilometre bike ride ending 19 days later in Halifax. He'll be part of a team of cyclists riding to raise funds to improve the lives of children living with cancer.

Firefighter Foster has seen family members and friends who have been touched by cancer. He says, "If you have even had any exposure to kids with cancer, there is a feeling of utter devastation—so this is something I can do to help." Every dollar raised on this trip goes directly to benefit a child with cancer. The foundation sponsors camps for kids and helps families with renovations that help ease daily living for families living with this devastating diagnosis.

James isn't alone on this tour. His captain, Bill Archdekin, will be using his vacation time to accompany James. Captain Archdekin will be driving a van that has been loaned to them by the Brampton fire service. As well, a parent of a 16-year-old brain cancer survivor will be travelling as a volunteer nurse.

James is grateful for the support of his community, his co-workers at the Brampton fire service, Chief Andy MacDonald and the city of Brampton. James's original goal was to raise \$15,000. As of yesterday, he had raised \$45,000.

Please join me in congratulating James Foster, an extraordinary Brampton firefighter. We're proud of him, and we wish him well on his ride.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise in the House today to question the sincerity of the Liberal government's commitment to Ontarians with disabilities. The government purports to be interested in making Ontario accessible to people with disabilities. The facts tell a much different story.

One example is in my riding, at Hyland Heights Elementary School in Shelburne. Over the years, requests by staff, parents and administration for the installation of a handicapped-accessible door have fallen on unsympathetic ears. This year, a grade eight student will not be able to graduate on the stage with her classmates because the lift that allows her to accept her graduation certificate has been broken for many years and she can't get to the stage. Even after renovations were completed one year ago at Hyland Heights school, no handicapped-accessible doors exist for students or staff.

I call on the government today to examine its priorities regarding physically disabled individuals and stop the meaningless announcements if they won't make a difference at schools such as Hyland Heights Elementary in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon. Action is what is needed, not more meaningless announcements.

YOUNG SINGERS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise today to draw attention to a very special event that took place in my riding of Ajax-Pickering, on April 24. At Deer Creek Golf Clubs, there was an exciting performance, an evening with Robert Pilon, in support of the Young Singers. One of Canada's most respected and sought-after vocalists, he introduced the Young Singers, Durham region's winning youth choir, to a gala audience.

1310

Young Singers is a dynamic community youth choral program in Durham region. Under the direction of founder Anna Lynn Murphy and accompanist Lois Craig, the artistic creativity in these talented young people has been fostered for the past 16 years as they discover the joy of singing.

Joining them in organizing the event in April were the unsung volunteers of Tracy Patterson, Maureen Dowhaniuk, Katie Cronin-Wood and Cynthia Feltrin.

There are over 120 youth currently singing in the Young Singers program, and these talented singers have performed throughout Ontario and abroad. The Young Singers have taken the stage with Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with Donny Osmond and Don Harron and the internationally acclaimed North Metro Chorus. They continue to be performing guests with artists like Robert Pilon of Phantom of the Opera and Les Misérables fame, with mutually benefiting reciprocal arrangements.

These young singers will be travelling to Ottawa in May to appear at the national MusicFest and are looking forward to performing at the Young Singers annual spring concert on June 8 at 2 p.m. at Forest Brook Community Church in Ajax on Bayly Street, just prior to Lakeridge Road.

ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: On behalf of Premier McGuinty and my colleagues, I rise for the purpose of recognizing an historic event that took place 60 years ago: the establishment of the state of Israel. It is the fulfillment of prophecies, prayers and dreams. On this festive occasion, we all join in the hopes and prayers of Jewish people here and in Israel that the day may not be far off when the people of Israel and the nations of the world lay down their arms, turn their swords into ploughshares and realize the beautiful word of peace, "shalom."

Israel may be a small dot on the map of the world, but it is a giant model of democracy—indeed, the great symbol. In spite of economic hardship, wars and threats of war, Israel has not lost its sense of purpose: to shine as a beacon of freedom, democracy and fulfillment of the promise of the ancient Hebrew prophets.

I wish to recognize the presence of the diplomatic corps of the state of Israel, including the consul general of Israel, Amir Gissin; Alan Weiner from the UJA of greater Toronto; Dr. Leon Genesoux from B'nai Brith Canada; Frank Bialystok from the Canadian Jewish Congress; and a good friend of Israel, Mr. Charles McVety. We want to welcome them here. As we have raised the Israeli flag outside a few minutes ago, I wish to say to them, shalom and congratulations.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Ms. Helena Jaczek: On April 25 of this year, I attended an event hosted by the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to celebrate its grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The event took place on the Oak Ridges moraine trail where it runs through the beautiful campus of Seneca College in King township in my riding.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust is dedicated to encouraging a greater understanding and awareness of

the natural environment and heritage of the Oak Ridges moraine. It serves to locate significant natural or agricultural land and then works with the landowners to ensure that the land is conserved in perpetuity.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust will receive \$155,500 over a three-year period to increase its capacity to improve volunteer resources, fundraising and marketing. These enhancements will support expanded land-securing initiatives across the Oak Ridges moraine.

The moraine is my constituency's defining physical feature, with steep, forested ridges studded with granite boulders left by the glaciers interspersed with deep kettle lakes and wetlands. It is the source of the headwaters of the rivers and streams that flow into both Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe, which provide drinking water to millions of Ontarians.

Protection of the moraine as part of the greenbelt plan will help clean our air and our water and provide green fields to grow our food. I thank our government and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for its foresight in recognizing the importance of the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to all Ontarians.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO KNOW ACT (DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS AND POLLUTANTS), 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE DROIT DU PUBLIC D'ÊTRE INFORMÉ (DIVULGATION DES TOXINES ET DES POLLUANTS)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, the Environmental Protection Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act / Projet de loi 76, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur, la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement et la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I will read the explanatory note, Speaker:

"The bill adds a provision to the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 that prohibits prescribed suppliers from supplying a consumer with goods or services that expose the consumer to certain toxic chemicals unless the supplier has first warned the consumer of the possible exposure. It is an offence under the act to contravene the provision.

"The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act to require the Minister of the Environment to establish a pollutant inventory containing a variety of information relating to the release of pollutants into the environment and the environmental and health effects of such pollutants.

"The bill amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to require employers to provide to the local fire department all material safety data sheets required by part IV of the act and to maintain an inventory of all hazardous materials in the workplace. In addition, the bill prohibits the use of hazardous materials in a workplace where it is reasonably practicable to substitute a material that is not hazardous."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PROVINCIAL PARKS AND MAJOR PROVINCIAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS SIGN ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR L'ÉRECTION DE PANNEAUX DANS LES PARCS PROVINCIAUX ET À L'EMPLACEMENT D'IMPORTANTES ATTRACTIONS TOURISTIQUES PROVINCIALES

Mr. Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions / Projet de loi 21, Loi exigeant l'érection de panneaux bilingues dans les parcs provinciaux, dans les parcs sous le contrôle de la Commission des parcs du Niagara et à l'emplacement d'importantes attractions touristiques provinciales.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Lalonde.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je suis très fier de débattre ce projet de loi aujourd'hui, car je crois que c'est un geste de courtoisie vis-à-vis des francophones qui viennent visiter notre belle province.

I am delighted to debate this bill today because I believe that this is a simple way to be courteous to the francophone tourists who come and visit our beautiful province. As I mentioned when introducing this bill, I was inspired to do so when, in 2006, a delegation of francophone parliamentarians from all corners of the globe came to participate in a meeting of l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie here at Queen's Park. While they were here in Ontario, they visited Niagara Falls, one of the seven wonders of the world. They were amazed that the tourism signs in Niagara Falls were in English only. Quite frankly, so was I.

Le tourisme est une partie importante de l'économie de l'Ontario. L'année dernière, l'industrie a employé plus de 185 000 travailleurs à travers la province, représentant 2,8 % du total des emplois de l'Ontario. Entre 2006 et 2007, les emplois dans le secteur du tourisme en Ontario ont augmenté par 9 %, comparé à seulement 5,2 % dans le reste du Canada.

Tourism is an important component of Ontario's economy. Last year, tourism employed 185,000 workers across the province, representing 2.8% of total employment in Ontario. From 2006 to 2007, employment in Ontario's tourism sector rose by 9%, compared to only 5.2% in the rest of Canada. Tourism is Ontario's seventh-largest generator of foreign exchange.

Direct entries of visitors to Ontario from overseas countries increased by 4% in January 2008 over the same period in 2007. In 2008, research shows a decline in US travel to Ontario by 8.6%, while overseas travel will be down by just 1.6%. We need to take this opportunity to share Ontario's culture with the world. In 2008, overseas entries to Ontario and Quebec are growing faster than in the rest of Canada. This is why something had to be done to continue to attract tourists to Ontario.

Tourism contributed more than \$20.4 billion to the province's GDP in 2004. For every dollar spent by tourists in Ontario in 2004, the three levels of government received 27 cents in direct tax revenue. That is for every dollar spent by tourists in Ontario. The federal government received 14.9 cents, the provincial government received 11.2 cents, and municipal government received one cent.

La contribution totale du tourisme aux recettes fiscales des trois niveaux de gouvernement s'est élevée à 9,2 \$ milliards en 2004.

Yes, tourism's total contribution to tax revenues for all three levels of government amounted to \$9.2 billion in 2004. Clearly, tourism is a very important source of revenue for this province.

Given that a great deal of our tourists come from overseas and from the rest of Canada, why not show simple courtesy to the francophones among them by gradually replacing our signs in provincial parks in both official languages?

En 2006, la France à elle seule—je dis bien la France à elle seule—comptait 130 000 visites à notre belle province, représentant 17 % des visites totales des étrangers cette année-là. De plus, pendant les deux dernières années, 1,8 million de résidents de la province de Québec ont pris des vacances, dont 54,8 % ont visité l'Ontario. Il faut augmenter ce pourcentage.

France alone accounted for 130,000 visits to our great province in 2006, representing 17% of total overseas visits that year. Furthermore, during the past two years, residents of the province of Quebec took 1.8 million pleasure trips, and 54.8% of them visited Ontario. In a bilingual country such as ours, we should encourage francophones to visit our beautiful province and welcome these tourists by providing French signage in provincial parks and tourist attractions.

Je suggère donc que ce serait la moindre des choses que de rendre nos affiches touristiques bilingues dans tous nos parcs provinciaux afin de bien accueillir nos touristes francophones qui nous rendent visite d'année en année, et surtout que ça ne coûte aucuns frais additionnels à la province, puisque je propose que ces affiches deviennent bilingues seulement au moment nécessaire de les remplacer ou lors d'une nouvelle installation.

This initiative will cost the province no extra money, as I propose that signs become bilingual if and only when it is necessary or practical to do so. This bill proposes that existing English signs be replaced by bilingual ones in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and other prescribed provincial tourist attractions in Ontario as it becomes necessary to replace them.

Comme décrit dans le projet de loi, le projet a pour objet de faire remplacer les panneaux unilingues, au fur et à mesure qu'il devienne nécessaire de le faire, par des panneaux bilingues dans les parcs provinciaux, dans les parcs sous le contrôle de la Commission des parcs du Niagara, et à l'emplacement d'autres attractions touristiques provinciales prescrites en Ontario. Je ne peux imaginer une meilleure façon de souhaiter la bienvenue à nos touristes francophones lors de leur séjour parmi nous.

I can't imagine a better way to welcome the francophone tourists who come to visit our great province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Just to remind members, under the new rules, each party has up to 12 minutes to participate in the debate.

Debate? The honourable member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I will be sharing my time with the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

I'm pleased to rise to participate in the debate on Bill 21, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions.

Je me lève aujourd'hui pour faire quelques commentaires au sujet du projet de loi 21 introduit par mon ami de la circonscription de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. Ce projet de loi est très simple et entièrement normal, à mon avis. C'est essentiellement un effort d'adresser l'utilisation de la langue française dans certains parcs provinciaux et dans ou près de nos attractions touristiques majeures en Ontario. Je serai totalement « supportive » de ce projet de loi. En fait, notre caucus progressiste-conservateur le soutiendra.

Il me semble que chaque membre de cette Chambre peut et doit le supporter actuellement. Pour moi, c'était une surprise quand j'ai reçu l'information en dedans. C'est une idée gratuite pour les citoyens et extrêmement facile à adopter.

I rise today to talk about the private member's bill introduced by the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Bill 21, the Provincial Parks and Major Provincial Tourist Attractions Sign Act. I will be supporting this bill, as I've said in French. In fact, the entire Progressive Conservative caucus will be supporting this

bill. Why not? I would be very surprised if every member in this House didn't rise to show their support for a bill such as this. This bill requires that signs be bilingual in all provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission, and provincial tourist attractions generally, major ones. It also allows parks to phase in the change in signage so the change will happen during the normal maintenance of the signs, which means simply that there is no cost to the citizens of Ontario.

I have to ask myself this question: Why is the Legislature talking about a bill like this in the first place? We are here to deal with the major business of Ontarians. A bill like this is so straightforward and so simple that it should already have happened. Yet day after day we are here representing the people of Ontario, but we are not dealing with the issues that Ontarians care about the most.

We have talked about Bill 11, for example, which bans smoking in cars with kids in them. The nanny state mentality of this government has been to legislate that morons can't be morons. We are talking about Bill 12, which is designed to fix the problems created the first time the government stuck its nose into adoption records. Bill 12 fails to properly address those issues. There is Bill 35, which legitimizes the end-of-year slush funds that the Premier has become so fond of. There is Bill 50, which undermines many local humane societies. Of course, there is Bill 55, which legislated the splitting of TFO from TVO, which of course already happened a year ago.

1330

On top of that, the government is now debating in the public forum whether the Lord's Prayer should be said in the House, and I bet that 99% of Ontarians didn't know or care about that before the Premier played politics with that issue.

Nous passons beaucoup de temps à parler des problèmes qui ont très peu d'importance pour la plupart des Ontariens. Le gouvernement ne parle pas du seul problème qui fait la plus grande inquiétude pour pratiquement tous les Ontariens, et ce problème est l'économie. Quand les économies de la Colombie-Britannique, de l'Alberta, de la Saskatchewan, du Québec, de la Nouvelle-Écosse et de Terre-Neuve expérimentent tous la croissance étendue, le gouvernement McGuinty n'a pas pris assez d'action pour combattre la récession exclusive à la province de l'Ontario.

We are spending a lot of time talking about issues that are of little or no importance to most Ontarians. What the government isn't doing is talking about the one issue that is the greatest concern to virtually all Ontarians, and that issue is the economy. The tourists are going to come here anyway. At a time when the economies of BC and Alberta and Saskatchewan and Quebec and Nova Scotia—

Mr. Bob Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In either official language, the member must address the bill under discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I was listening to what the honourable member said, and he was expressing his opinion about the bill. Go forward.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll address the bill very directly. What difference does the language on the signs make if the people of Ontario don't have the money to travel to them? That's the bottom line.

I applaud the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his efforts here today. I know he's well-intentioned. It is, however, long past due that the government start working on the single most important issue to Ontarians, and that is the economy. That's how the relationship between what I've been saying and the member's bill comes together.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think that the content of this bill is probably fairly useful. Everyone in this chamber and, I would think, the overwhelming majority of people in Ontario would think that having bilingual signs in our parks is something that should have happened ages ago. In fact, that's one of the things that puzzles me about this bill: that it wasn't dealt with in the ministry as a regulation. It's quite extraordinary.

There's no question that in this country, but in this province in particular, the identity of Canadians, the identity of Ontarians, is one that has the French fact interwoven into its reality. When I'm here, I know that I'm not in Pennsylvania or Ohio because I do encounter French on products and on signs, and frankly, that's a wonderful part of this country. What is extraordinary to me is that a private member's bill has to be brought forward and debated here and is not simply implemented by the government of the day. It's a mystery to me.

I agree with the member that for francophone tourists who come to Ontario, they must find it somewhat disorienting that the signs are not already bilingual. There is no question that in this province, the whole issue of how we provide ourselves with a living, how we provide ourselves with a healthy economy, is a central question. Making it easier, more comfortable, more at home for people to come here from Quebec, from other parts of la francophonie, is a very useful thing. But again I say to the member, who is acting in good faith: Why is it that this simply has not already been done as a regulation? I find it extraordinary that that's the state of things.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission is already covered under the French Language Services Act since the act applies to government agencies, which include commissions whose members or directors are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. So it could simply be done to just say, "Government agencies: Where you operate parks, make sure that those signs are bilingual."

So again, I think that the member deserves credit for bringing it here, but I think it's extraordinary that it has to go through this process when, in fact, that could be done far more quickly through regulation. I'm not normally one who fights for regulation, but I know that we've gone through first reading, this will be second reading, there may or may not be third reading. As you well know, many, many—in fact, almost all—private members' bills that come through here are subject to debate that is sometimes perfunctory, sometimes in-depth, but very rarely do they go on to be legislation.

I would say to the Premier and the cabinet, take this bill and simply direct that your staff write the regulations within the powers that you already have and proceed with implementation. There's no need to wait for the tourist season of 2009 or 2010. It could be started right now. There's no need for us to wait for third reading, for proclamation. It's all there and it's all something that should be done now. Clearly, the money exists in this province. Last year, we went through the whole slushgate affair. There was money that was shoved out the door at an incredible rate, so apparently cash is available. Signs are not the most expensive things in the world to replace. The funds are available; the need is clearly demonstrated. The reality of the culture of this province, the reality of the roots—les racines—of this province are there for everyone to see.

We have to ask, will this McGuinty government look beyond the signs? Will it look to the other elements of promoting bilingualism in this province? Will it look to other steps—and I hope that it does—to strengthen the francophone reality in Ontario and, in doing that, strengthen our identity as Canadians? There's no reason that this government could not expand further services in French.

Again, I appreciate the actions of the member. I just think that we, the province as a whole, would be more quickly served if this government took its responsibilities, enacted regulations and moved this forward.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to rise in this House today and speak in support of Bill 21, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions.

Ontario is one of the most popular travel destinations in the world and it is home to some of the largest and most unique parks known to man. It is these parks, among countless other sightseeing opportunities, that make Ontario an attractive tourist destination.

Ontario's tourism is a fast-growing industry and it is reputable for providing everyone, from within and abroad, the best experience possible. We have an outstanding transportation system to make the going easy; we can provide accommodations to suit everyone's needs, desires and means. Most importantly, we are known to offer the best recreational and entertainment activities possible to both Ontarians and foreigners travelling and exploring our great province of Ontario.

Ontario has so many attractive attributes that I can go on and on about, but I can proudly say that the most attractive feature of Ontario that attracts tourism is its culture-rich society. In Ontario, you can find a European feel, and we owe this to our multicultural society and, of course, to our French community. The French culture and their beautiful language, which is Canada's second official language, brings so much to this great country and, of course, our province. Together, we are a family of one, united for eternity to serve and live in peace.

1340

The government of Ontario has long recognized the importance of the province's wilderness and recreational

areas, such as Niagara parks, for tourism. I believe it's time that we further recognize the importance of supporting and encouraging francophone tourism from Canada and abroad.

One such thing that we may do out of courtesy and honour to francophone tourists is to facilitate their journey by placing bilingual signs in provincial parks and attractions. This will be yet another addition to the many great things that Ontario does to assist in the journeys of our tourists. Might I add that this proposal brought forward by Bill 21 would be of no extra cost to the province, as existing signs would be simply replaced by bilingual signs only as required. In my opinion, we cannot get any better than that.

I support this bill, which is being presented by my colleague the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and hope that everyone can see that, by passing this bill, we only continue to grow and improve and prosper our great province of Ontario.

There is a bonus: It's free of cost. This great initiative will ensure that Ontario's tourism industry remains competitive in both the Canadian and global markets. But more importantly, it will help people from all around the world to realize that Ontario is truly theirs to discover, for there is no place like Ontario. *Merci beaucoup.*

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased this afternoon to speak to the private member's bill presented by the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell: Bill 21, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions.

I appreciate the opportunity to follow up on the comments made by other colleagues in the Legislature today and by my colleague from Thornhill. We support what the legislation proposes to do. Most of you know that I represent the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, which in my opinion is the most beautiful area in Ontario: outstanding scenery that encompasses the Canadian Shield, farmland and many lakes, and we have many designated provincial parks in the riding. I'll list a few because there are many: Balsam Lake Provincial Park; Emily Provincial Park; Algonquin Provincial Park—we're very close to Algonquin Provincial Park; Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park; Indian Point Provincial Park; Kawartha Highlands—the signature site—Provincial Park; and Petroglyphs Provincial Park, which I know is very close to my neighbour riding of Peterborough, and I know that the member from Peterborough wants me to put that in there.

We also have part of the Trent-Severn Waterway. The Kirkfield lift lock last year celebrated its 100th anniversary. It is the second-oldest lock in North America, the first of course being Peterborough lift lock, which celebrated its anniversary not too long ago too.

Mr. Jeff Leal: In 2004.

Ms. Laurie Scott: "In 2004," I hear from the member from Peterborough. You can find some of the most scenic outdoor locations in Ontario and Canada right in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

I want to point out some history of provincial parks that the previous PC government accomplished with the Ministry of Natural Resources. For example, Ontario's Living Legacy was announced in 1999. In terms of parklands and protected areas, it's world-renowned. It's an innovative strategy that included the biggest increase in the history of Ontario's system of parks and protected areas, as well as measures to help improve the business climate for northern communities, forestry, mining, and resource-based tourism and to enhance the opportunities for all of us to enjoy outdoor recreation in the province of Ontario.

It's safe to say that there's a need for a lot of signage to help identify those parks that have been established through the Living Legacy program, which created 378 new parks and protected areas that represent some 2.4 million hectares. It increased the area covered by parks and protected areas in Ontario by one quarter—the largest single expansion of parks, under the PC government, anywhere.

So out of this Living Legacy there were nine signature sites created. They contain significant natural and cultural heritage values that warrant special protection and promotion.

I mentioned the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site in my riding. It's the largest protected area south of Algonquin park. It's an immense area which includes the wetlands, lakes, rivers, streams, forest and clearing. So it's certainly a landmark in my riding. Certainly we can always do with more signage to attract people and let them know what beautiful spots we have in our riding.

The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell indicated in the legislation that the unilingual signs be replaced by bilingual signs as needed. I appreciate that fact. It's not just quickly done; it's on an as-needed basis. Very conservative of you.

Some members have certainly questioned the need for legislation: "Why couldn't this be done in regulation?" But we are here with a private member's bill, and if this is the way we must go to get this accomplished, this is the way we must go. We hope that the government that the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is a part of will move forward on this, maybe not like some of the other private members' bills we see.

Certainly my riding thrives on tourism. It's a huge aspect of our economic stability. There are some areas in my riding that more than triple in population during the summer season. I know many members in the Legislature who are cottagers in my riding. I say to them, thank you for the part-time constituents.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The Minister of Energy.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The Minister of Energy does, for sure. The former Minister of Finance does. I'm sure there are several more. That's great; we're happy to share our part of the world with you. It is beautiful.

We also have people from other provinces, such as Quebec, and visitors from south of our border who come up and enjoy our wonderful scenery. Sometimes it's just in the summertime. With the snow we had this year,

maybe there will be more in the wintertime to enjoy the snowmobiling and that white gold that we have.

It does make sense that some signs need to be replaced and be bilingual. We welcome everyone to our area to share that.

I brought up the Trent-Severn Waterway earlier. Just this past week, I was honoured to be asked to be part of the caucus to oversee the implementation or review of the Trent-Severn Waterway, undertaken by the federal Minister of the Environment a year ago. Many volunteers sat on that committee on the areas affected by the Trent-Severn Waterway. The member for Peterborough is going to co-chair along with my federal counterpart, Barry Devolin, on this Trent-Severn Waterway panel.

It's a non-partisan caucus forming this co-operative effort to implement the report, with members at the federal and provincial levels representing those communities. I know we want to work with the municipalities. For those of you who haven't read the report yet, it's a great report, and it will do a great deal to enhance the cultural heritage significance of the Trent-Severn Waterway.

But signage is going to certainly be part of that. We want to attract more and more people to our area to enjoy it. I just invite everyone who's watching, and everyone in the Legislature who has not travelled to my riding or the Trent-Severn Waterway, to please come down and enjoy the seasons with us.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure, as always, to rise in this House. I want to say at the outset that this, of course, in the New Democratic Party, like many private members' bills, will not be what's called a whipped vote, so there's not a party line on Bill 21. Having said that, I certainly plan on supporting this bill, as does my benchmate here from Toronto–Danforth.

I commend the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for bringing it forward. I assume it's his family, or some members of his family, sitting in the gallery, so I welcome them as well. I hope they've enjoyed their trip down here and don't find this too strange.

I also echo what has been said before, which is that, as my French teacher would say, "C'est bizarre." It's strange that this has to come forward as a private member's bill and couldn't have just been dealt with as a regulation. This is just common sense, that when a sign wears out, you replace the sign with a bilingual sign. We're a bilingual country; we're a bilingual province.

This is so commonsensical—if I can use such a word—that one wonders why the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell needs to bring it forth as a private member's bill. I certainly can express the hope that it's not going to be like other backbench Liberal private members' bills. Just the other day, a member from Niagara Falls brought forward a private member's bill for the third time, a bill of apparent merit, allowing grandparents to have access to their grandchildren in the case of divorce. Again, he had to bring it forward three times. I certainly hope that's not going to be the case with this bill. I hope that the cabinet, the sanctum sanctorum of the

McGuinty government, will actually move quickly on this and pass it so that we hear the last of it, so that this just becomes law and is put into place.

1350

I also listened with great interest to my friend over here from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I, as a child, had a cottage on Lake Koshlong—or my family did—and I used to go to spend many wonderful summers up there. It is in fact a beautiful park. I wouldn't want to get into a discussion about what's more beautiful, Peterborough or Kawartha Lakes; in fact we travelled to both as a Haliburton cottage family. I think it would enhance the experience of our provincial parks to have signs that everyone can read—and that's really what we're talking about here: transparency and accessibility, so that when francophone members of the province travel to what is everyone's, our provincial parks, they can read the signs as easily as someone who is not a francophone—who is an anglophone. Again, it's simply common sense.

For those watching at home who wonder what we're speaking about at this point, it's Bill 21. It's a bill that's going to replace unilingual signs with bilingual signs. There's no taxpayer cost to this, hence it's a private member's bill, because they'll simply be replaced as they wear out.

Again, this makes sense. We shouldn't have to spend 50 minutes of government time on this, in this House on a Thursday afternoon, when we could be travelling to Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes or Peterborough. We should have seen this come in as a regulation under current laws. I suppose it speaks to the lack of depth of legislation left to this House to look at that we have to take up time for something that should be obvious.

Just to conclude—and I won't join the fray by talking about how beautiful downtown, west-end Parkdale–High Park is at this time of year—I invite everyone to come to High Park, the jewel of my riding. I hope when you do that the signs are replaced by bilingual signs so that, whether you're francophone or anglophone, you can find your way around. You can actually get lost in High Park; it's a big place—a beautiful place. By all means, after you've travelled to the scenic Kawarthas, Haliburton and Peterborough, please come and visit beautiful High Park in downtown Toronto, the jewel of the Parkdale–High Park riding.

Interjection.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: No. My friend over here asks if we do have bilingual signs, and to my knowledge, we do not. Clearly, it's a necessary step.

I would just tell the members opposite that we don't have to see this come back for a third reading. Surely something as simple, as straightforward, as commonsensical as this bill can be passed without taking more of everyone's time here. It would have allowed the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's family to travel to High Park while they were here in Toronto for the day and enjoy themselves.

Thank you very much. I will be supporting this bill.

M^{me} Laurel C. Broten: Je suis très fière de donner mon appui au projet de loi 21, projet qui a pour objet de faire remplacer les panneaux unilingues au fur et à mesure qu'il devienne nécessaire de le faire par des panneaux bilingues dans les parcs provinciaux, dans les parcs qui sont sous contrôle de la Commission des parcs du Niagara et à l'emplacement d'autres attractions touristiques provinciales prescrites en Ontario.

En tant que quelqu'un qui vient d'une famille à demi francophone, je suis très fière de donner mon appui aujourd'hui. C'est certain que depuis 350 ans, il y a une présence francophone ici en Ontario. On a aussi plus d'un million de francophones en Ontario, et il y en a certains qui demeurent dans ma circonscription d'Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Le bilinguisme contribue à la prospérité de notre province, et le fait que l'on travaille chaque jour pour donner des services publics en français fait de nous un exemple peut-être, dans notre pays et dans le monde, d'une région qui accueille ceux qui viennent de partout, et pour qui faire l'accueil à bras ouverts dans le domaine touristique est très important. Ceux qui viennent ici, soit des touristes canadiens ou internationaux, vont être très bien accueillis s'ils trouvent leur langue primaire, qu'est le français, sur des pancartes qui leur montrent où aller ou voyager.

On a plus de 300 parcs provinciaux et 290 régions de conservation en Ontario. Ici à Toronto il y a 1 500 parcs qui comprennent trois millions d'arbres. Alors, il est certain que c'est quelque chose de très important. On est si fiers de nos parcs provinciaux, et dans ces parcs chaque année on a plus de neuf millions de visites annuelles.

Je donne mon appui à mon collègue et je suis très fière de lui. C'est certain que mon collègue de la circonscription de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell est depuis plusieurs années dans cette Législature un champion de la communauté francophone. Quand on accueille ceux qui viennent de partout dans le monde, on va les accueillir avec des pancartes bilingues pour les rassurer de pouvoir admirer nos parcs, voyager dans nos parcs et savoir que l'on a une histoire bilingue ici.

C'est certain, comme l'a dit mon collègue, que le tourisme est une grande industrie. Les gens viennent de chaque coin du monde, et on veut encourager ceux qui sont francophones à venir ici, à voyager ici. Alors, je dis à mon collègue de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell que je lui donne mon appui. Tu championnes la cause de la francophonie ici en Ontario. Bravo, et merci.

M. Mike Colle: Je voudrais appuyer le projet de loi 22 de mon collègue Jean-Marc Lalonde, de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Ce projet de loi est très important parce qu'il a été proposé par le membre de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I just find it a bit difficult to understand—although I agree with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and I think she said it right. This is private members' hour. It's not about demeaning the bill and whether the bill is going to take up 10 hours of govern-

ment time; this is a private member's bill. It's something that he or she believes in. In this House, for generations we've had bills that individual members thought were important. It's not what the government thinks is important; it's what the member thinks is important. So for members to stand up and diminish the importance of this bill is quite unbecoming to the members. It is the member's decision. It is something he feels is important to him and his constituents, something he believes in strongly. It's not a matter of just some of the members presenting a bill and then the government will pass it. Private members' bills are opportunities for all of us to be advocates and champions of something we believe in. We may present it once, twice; some of us have presented bills 20 times. But it's something we advocate for.

In some cases, they become law. I've had success, with the help, in fact, of my colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, with one bill that was made into law, the red-light camera legislation. He had the courage and the strength to go around the province with me to pass red-light cameras.

When I first introduced the bill, they all said, "Oh, this is crazy. This shouldn't be on the docket of the government." Well, the law was eventually passed by the government of the day. It was made into law. Now, red light cameras are saving lives all across this province, and this is why private members like this deserve people's attention.

1400

This is why this very important bill to the member should be looked upon as something that might be helpful. I'm sure, given his track record of determination, of hard work, that he will go to different communities, he will have petitions for this bill, and he will explain the importance of it. I'm sure that if it's viable and reasonable, this will come to fruition. That is how private members' bills influence public policy and get passed into law. It's not a matter of just introducing something and saying, "Well, this should be law." You have to work for it. You have to explain it, as he's done today, because it is an oversight. There's some technicality, some oversight with visiting our parks and not finding bilingual signs.

He has started this crusade on something he feels—he not only works on this, and it's not to say that we as members just work on what we have as private members' bills. Members work on all kinds of issues, but nothing is changed unless you work hard at it, unless you get other people to understand it and support it. As I said, this member will sure do that. All you have to do is go to Alfred, go to Hawkesbury, go to Plantagenet, go to Cumberland and see the reputation this member has of incredible hard work and dedication to his people.

So I'm sure that this bill that he is proposing will one day make a change that will benefit people. That's why I encourage you all to think about this private member's bill, not what the government wants but what this private member is advocating. I think it's a very good thing he's championing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Lalonde, you have up to two minutes for your reply.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I have to say that I really appreciate the support that the three parties have shown on this private member's bill.

I also want to tell you that with me in the members' gallery today, I have two ladies that were chosen, really, at a draw of the Club de l'Âge d'or, Joie de Vivre. There was a draw to attend the debate today. They come from Embrun, Ontario, their seniors' club. They came up by train to attend the debate today, and I'm very pleased to have them with us.

Also in the gallery are my staff, who worked very hard to prepare this private member's bill.

This bill will enhance the economy by welcoming francophones in our province. We need to take this opportunity to share Ontario's great culture with the other five continents.

When I look at what happened here in the past, the NDP, when they were in power, passed a bill, a regulation, that all signage within the Legislature has to be bilingual. But on our provincial parks, we don't have that. This is why I brought that up. It is very important.

My riding borders the province of Quebec. There's not a single week that goes by without me being told, "You speak French in Ontario?" When they come into eastern Ontario, they recognize that we do have signage in French and English, but when they go down to one of the seven wonders of the world, there is no bilingual signage. This is why I thought of coming up with this bill to show the people of this province and also the other provinces like Quebec and the Maritimes, and any of the Asian countries where French is one of the working languages, that they could be served in French right here in Ontario.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DE L'HOLODOMOR

Mr. Levac moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day/ Projet de loi 61, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 97, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Dave Levac: Dobryden. I am honoured to speak today on my private member's bill, Bill 61, the Holodomor Memorial Day Act.

First, I wish to thank and acknowledge my intern, Matt Thornton; my LA, Susan Ho; and my EA, Chris Yaccato, for their support, dedication and hard work on presenting this bill.

This act, if passed, will create an annual commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor within Ontario. It will proclaim the fourth Saturday in November of each

year in the province of Ontario as Holodomor Memorial Day.

I want to begin by welcoming—unfortunately, they haven't arrived yet, but these great guests will be joining us soon in the legislature: Mr. Orest Steciw, member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians; Mr. Olexander Danyleiko, the consul general of Ukraine; Mr. Andrew Gregorovich, member of the Ukrainian National Federation; Mr. Volodymyr Paslavskyi of the League of Ukrainian Canadians; and Ms. Anna Kasyanchuk, from the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women. I would like to thank them for all of their assistance in bringing the depth of this issue to my attention and knowledge.

For many here today, in particular the Holodomor survivors, there is no need to state this bill's significance. We know that the survivors will have many bitter memories, many recollections of personal tragedy. You will recall people you knew, family and friends who died and who now, across the years, come back to you and make your grief fresh and sadly vivid again. Today, and every day, we pay tribute to those survivors and to those who died.

The second reading of this bill is important for those who experienced the famine. It's a tribute to those who died and a tribute to the survivors. It is also enormously important for those too young to understand and feel its significance.

A great many Ontarians have no personal experience of forced, man-made famine or tyranny; no way of knowing the anguish and chaos that plagued a dictator's time in power. Unfortunately, some Ontarians have. Many of us cannot comprehend the loss that occurred in Ukraine from 1932-33. For that reason, amongst others, it's important for all Ontarians to commemorate Holodomor and the Ukrainian community that bore its burden.

For some of my colleagues and many who are watching at home, the Holodomor is unfamiliar as a human tragedy. Many have heard of Joseph Stalin and his tyrannical time in power, but few will have learned about the Ukrainian experience under his reign. In particular, few have all but passing knowledge of those terrible years from 1932-33. Roughly translated, Holodomor means "to inflict death by hunger." For the Ukrainian community, it has become synonymous with one of the darkest periods in the history of that proud nation.

From 1932-33, across the "breadbasket of Europe," as many as 10 million Ukrainians perished under the rule of Stalin as he forcibly collectivized the farms, confiscating food and leaving Ukrainian farmers with nothing. Any adult—man or woman—caught taking grain from the collective was shot on sight. Children were taken away and never heard from again. It is incredible to think that a child as young as four years old who might hold a handful of grain so small that it wouldn't fill a shot glass would simply disappear, yet the treatment continued for almost two years, with almost 25,000 people dying daily at the height of the famine's peak.

As I began my research into the Holodomor, perhaps the greatest impact on me during this insanity was the

plight of the children. I've seen many photos of children with finger-thin legs, bloated stomachs and gaunt faces. Children died in their homes with their families. There were situations where children outlived their parents and were left alone to fend for themselves. With no other option, many would leave their home and later be found lying somewhere in a ditch, lying alone, forgotten and dead. There were cases where parents in despair would send their children out to search the countryside for food. Then the mother would leave their home with the last child alive, only to succumb later in a ditch, alone, forgotten and dead. As sad and insane as these stories are, this tragedy truly came into focus for me when I had the honour of meeting Holodomor survivors and activists in my own riding of Brant.

1410

I would like to take a moment to pay tribute in particular to two remarkable women in the Ukrainian community in my riding. It is a strong, vibrant and proud community, one that has helped build the foundations of our city itself and one that continues to make the riding of Brant one of the best places to live in this province. It is a community that only 35 years ago commemorated the Holodomor by having a mock funeral at the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist on Terrace Hill Street.

As I mentioned, it's a community that is home to a number of Holodomor survivors, like Zena Semywolos of Brantford. Zena grew up just outside of Kiev. She was 10 years old when this man-made famine hit in 1932. Living with just her mother and two sisters, Zena considers herself lucky. Lucky, you say? Lucky because her mother was a teacher and was given half a kilo of flour per child and a kilo for herself per week to eat. With this flour, the Semywoloses were able to make enough soup and bread to sustain themselves during those perilous times.

Many of her friends in her community of 31,000 were not so lucky. Many sold everything they had to buy food, and many lost their lives because they ran out of stuff to sell to buy food. But amid the suffering, as always happens, the spirit of human compassion was evident. Zena's mother often shared her ration of flour with her neighbours, although it barely fed her and her children.

Commemorating the sacrifice by Zena and all Ukrainians is another resident of my riding, Mrs. Marsha Skrypuch, of Brantford. Marsha has written two award-winning books on the Holodomor—a children's folk tale called *Enough*, about a young girl's attempt to save her village from starvation; and a short story, *The Rings*—which have been praised by critics and colleagues alike for their ability to explore the Holodomor in a sensitive, accessible and acceptable manner for children and adults alike, so much so that Marsha has been recognized for her work by the Ukrainian government and will receive the Order of Princess Olha from Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko on May 25 this year. I must extend my heartfelt congratulations to Marsha and her courageous work on the Holodomor. It serves as an invaluable resource on this historic tragedy for younger generations.

I must also extend a tremendous thank-you to her father-in-law, Dr. John Skrypuch, of Brantford, for his tireless work in mobilizing the local Ukrainian community in Brant around this issue and his continuing support and lifelong dedication to his people, in particular his loving wife, Lidia Skrypuch, who passed away just recently. I dedicate this speech to her.

From Brant, from all over Ontario and Canada, and most of all, from Ukraine itself, support for this bill is widespread. After I introduced the Holodomor Memorial Day Act, I had the pleasure of meeting with Yuri Kostenko, the deputy foreign minister of Ukraine, and Oleksander Danyleiko, consul general of Ukraine here in Toronto. They expressed their sincere thanks to this Legislature for considering this bill and carrying it on first reading. They informed me of the support it has back in Ukraine from the president, who will visit Ontario at the end of May this year. I can think of no better way of strengthening our relationship with this proud eastern European country than by educating Ontarians about this tragic but important date in Ukraine's history.

Ontario is not the only jurisdiction to consider condemning the Holodomor. The United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, UNESCO, the United Nations General Assembly and over 40 other jurisdictions around the world have officially condemned the Holodomor.

But while the world condemns, here in Ontario we have an opportunity to go just one step further. Through the creation of Holodomor Memorial Day, we will become the first province in Canada and the first outside Ukraine to commemorate this sinister period in humanity's history as a memorial day. In Ontario, we pride ourselves on acceptance, on human rights and on multiculturalism. For these reasons, I can think of no better opportunity to continue to show the true spirit of the province that recognizes the heritage of newcomers, welcoming them with open arms, and then to commemorate our Ukrainian community with this bill.

In closing, "Never again" has often been used as a rallying cry of outrage with crimes against humanity. That is why commemorating Holodomor through the efforts of the League of Ukrainian Canadians, the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada, through the novels of my constituent Marsha Skrypuch, and through acts of Parliament is so important. For the 1.5 million Ukrainians in Canada, Ukrainians all over the world and all of the victims of tyranny and oppression, I ask for your support today to send this bill to committee, so that we can truly proclaim: "Never again."

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I am pleased to rise today to support Bill 61, introduced by my friend the member from Brant, the riding next to me. This bill, if passed, will create Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday in November and honour the memory of the victims of the Holodomor.

They were victims of a forced, planned starvation. "The world must know about this tragedy." That was the statement that the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yushchenko, made at the opening of an exhibition dedicated to the victims of the famine. Through efforts like this legislation, across the world, people are learning and remembering what occurred in the Ukraine in the early 1930s. The UN has recognized the tragedy, as have numerous countries around the world.

I want to commend the League of Ukrainian Canadians and the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women for all their work here in Ontario to ensure that the suffering of those who perished in this tragedy is remembered. I know that both of these groups met with many members of this House to ensure that everyone was aware of the terrible events of 1932 and 1933. It cannot have been easy for them to share the personal stories of suffering, and I want to commend them all for doing so, to ensure that the people understand what happened. I want to thank Lily and Grant Hopcroft of London for meeting with me and sharing their own family stories. It is clear that many years later, the effects of this suffering are still felt and remembered by Ukrainians around the world.

I want to tell you that until that presentation, I was not aware of what had occurred. Many times in my life, I'd heard about the famine in the Ukraine, but I had never heard that it was a forced famine, that in fact it could have been, and should have been, avoided. I'm pleased that through this bill, we will be able to demonstrate that we too remember and that we want to honour the millions of people who died terrible deaths during that time.

This devastation was made worse by the fact that it was not an act of nature. There was no drought or bad harvest. This was the deliberate act of evil and greed. It was a deliberate attempt to exterminate Ukrainian peasants.

In 1932, the USSR exported 1.6 million tons of grain, and in 1933, that increased to 2.1 million tons of grain. State distilleries were operating at full capacity turning grain into alcohol, and the USSR was maintaining a strategic reserve with over one million tons of grain. Yet, in the Ukraine, there was no food. Holodomor was the forced starvation of a nation.

In 1932 and 1933, Stalin imposed vicious laws that were designed to starve Ukrainians and crush their national spirit. By early 1932, three quarters of the Ukrainian farmers were collectivized. Stalin imposed high grain quotas on the farms in order to achieve his goal of financing his plans with the revenue from grain exports. All Ukrainian grain was seized, and when farms failed to meet the impossibly high quotas, they were punished with fines in kind that allowed confiscation of any other food the soldiers could find.

As further punishment, farms and villages that failed to meet their quotas could be banned from buying kerosene, matches and other necessities. Villages had all their food confiscated and were then surrounded by armed forces who used force to stop any goods from entering the village and to stop people from escaping.

1420

Stalin imposed severe penalties on people taking anything from the collective farms, which now belonged to the state. Taking food from the farms they once owned was punishable by a long prison sentence or even death. The grain harvests were gone, other foods were confiscated and the Ukrainian people were left to starve. When people left their homes desperately searching for food, Stalin forced them back with armed force and used those forces to isolate the Ukrainian people.

We can only imagine the hunger, fear and desperation of the people. We can only imagine a situation where there were so many deaths that it was beyond counting. It is beyond comprehension that anyone could be so cruel as to inflict this type of torture and suffering. Yet, in that tragedy, there were stories of the strength of the people and their own historic sacrifices: stories of parents who risked their lives to sneak their children through military lines to try to save them; people who risked their own lives to tell the world about the genocide.

These people must be remembered and honoured. Last November marked the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor. In that time, Ukrainians have rebuilt their lives and communities. Many came to Ontario and have made significant contributions to our province. But although they are moving forward, they have not forgotten what they, their ancestors and their relatives experienced.

In Ukraine, the fourth Saturday of November has been established as a day to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor. I'm pleased that through this legislation Ontario will also be able to take this day to ensure that the people who were lost in this tragedy are not forgotten. Through this day of recognition, I hope that we can educate people about their suffering and, in doing so, prevent future tragedies.

I want to thank you for allowing me to say a few words on this, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank our visitors in the galleries for being here to witness this today.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise today particularly in honour of a friend of mine and an activist in the Parkdale–High Park community who passed away in her 90s not too long ago. She was someone I would characterize as a true Christian, a member of our congregation who came from Ukraine just after the Second World War.

One day, while sitting at her kitchen table over about the fourth cup of tea, she introduced me to the term Holodomor. I'll call her Anya, because Anya would want to be remembered as she was in totality, and not just for this experience. Anya was a social activist. She was active in the Parkdale–High Park New Democratic Party riding association and, like many of the other Ukrainians, was active in a number of social service missions as part of my church congregation.

Anya told me, sitting at her kitchen table, about what it was like to be a young girl during the years 1932 and 1933, when forced collectivization, the Stalinist pogroms and the Stalinist forced famine, which is the Holodomor, killed 25,000 people a day. They say 10 million in total:

seven million Ukrainians, of which three million were children.

She said her job every day for her household was to go out and collect grass and leaves—anything they could make soup out of—that they would boil. She said that one day she came home and to her horror—it was late at night—saw her mother cutting up human flesh in the kitchen.

She said to me—I will never forget these words—“I survived because I ate the flesh of dead bodies. Will God ever forgive me?” I'm standing here today to say there was nothing she needed to be forgiven for, but there is certainly something that the western powers, the Soviet Union and all of those who subscribed to the Stalinist terror need to be forgiven for.

If we cast our minds back to this time, what is so horrendous is the silence. What is so horrendous about the Holodomor is that people don't know about it. They don't know how many died; they don't know the atrocities that were committed against the Ukrainian people.

You know, this is an incredible people. In 1917, as the Czarist monarchy fell, that was the time when they began to assert their independence and for four long years fought the Germans, the Poles, the Red Russians, the White Russians—fought just for independence. That is all that Ukrainians have ever wanted.

There was a wonderful movement that flourished in the 1920s, even after Lenin invaded the country and took it as part of the USSR. It was a wonderful movement of intellectuals, artists and writers, culled away from Russia, which tried desperately to assert a new kind of nationalism, even under Communism. They brought this interesting movement that, again, sought to get some territory back, even after Stalin had taken over the Politburo and murdered just about everybody else who stood in his way. So I also rise for all of those intellectuals, all of those nationalists, all of those who fought for a free Ukraine, because, after all, that's why the famine was imposed upon them. It was to break the back of Ukrainian nationalism.

My friend Anya was called a kulak. That's what they called any peasants who had any land. Her house was stolen from her. Her father was shipped off and she never saw him again. The house was taken away from her family, and she and her family, like so many others, were forced into collectivized farming, which of course was a horror.

I want to recognize that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was also a target of Stalin's terror; that priests were rounded up, deported and executed; that the metropolitan of the time was never heard from again; that bells were pulled down, spires were destroyed and icons were smashed in front of the folk who worshipped there. That's what it was to live in the Ukraine during the Holodomor.

Three quarters of all farms were collectivized, and 80% of all the farmers and peasants who worked on those collectivized farms were not paid. They were slave

labour. My friend Anya talked about her brother, who was a young Communist activist at one point. She said that after he saw the massive starvation, he said to her, “I wish I could eat my words; I would, because there’s nothing else left to eat.” She also talked about the fact that the horses were fed at night so that the peasants wouldn’t steal the fodder from the horses to eat themselves. They needed the horses to be at least well enough to drag away the corpses, the bodies. As I’ve said, they were dying at the rate of about 25,000 people a day. The farmers, as you’ve heard, were not allowed to work anywhere else and they were not allowed to leave the country.

I have to say here that the western world knew what was going on. They knew enough to raise relief in many countries but the relief couldn’t get through because Stalin wouldn’t admit to the famine and wouldn’t open the borders to let the relief through. Stalin, in fact, said something which I think rings with what his regime was about. He said, “The kulak wants with his boney hand to strangle the neck of the revolution. With this famine, we will turn the boney hand of the kulak against himself.” By the year 1933, a thousand per hour were starving to death.

It’s interesting that when Hitler invaded Ukraine in 1941, it was Hitler who uncovered the mass graves in Ukraine, and he did it, of course, in part, to divert international attention away from his own mass graves. A lot of the footage that we get, a lot of the photographs that Anya shared with me, that I’ve seen, come from that period of time when these mass graves were uncovered. And they look just like any other genocide: thousands upon thousands of bodies.

It’s interesting; I was on the Avi Lewis show after having this conversation with Anya and after learning what I could about the Holodomor—and I should say, absolutely, that the Ukrainian social services on Bloor Street, an incredible organization, one of the first to whom I donated my pay increase last year, does amazing work, and much of their work is with survivors of that period of time. I was on the Avi Lewis show debating a well-known atheist author named Richard Dawkins. Richard Dawkins’ whole point was that religion, particularly Christianity, was responsible for much of the killing that has gone on in history. I was proud to rise—and I wasn’t alone—to say that in fact the major genocides of the 20th century were not done in the name of faith; they were done by those who were avowed atheists. They were done by Stalin, Pol Pot, Hitler and Mao. So when you look at the sum total of death, you look at death that really is a slap in the face of God, that is at the feet of God, that is not, and never pretended to be, of God.

1430

What’s missing, and what this bill will do, is to make us all aware of what we should all be aware of, and that is of this horrendous blight in history, which is the harvest of suffering. What it should do is be taught in our schools. So that’s one thing that I would ask: that I hope

that somewhere the Minister of Education is listening to this, listening to these words. Certainly there should be studies in our schools that focus on genocide, and this should be part of those studies.

Again, hopefully it won’t just be a day, but it will be a day of real remembrance, a day when our schools remember, a day when children of all backgrounds are taught what it looks like when people do not stand up against terror or when they cannot stand up against terror. The one thing I will say for the Ukrainians is that they always resisted, and the more they resisted, the more the heavy hand of Stalin came down upon them. All along, they withdrew their labour, they fought back, they did what they could, and all along, this heavy hand came down upon their lives.

As I stand here, I’m very aware that we are not alone in this chamber. There are not many of us here—I wish there were more to hear about the Holodomor—but what we do have in this chamber is a cloud of witnesses. I think of the seven million who perished; I think of the three million children; I think that their spirits are somewhere in this House as we talk about this day of commemoration, and that those spirits, those clouds of witnesses, will always be around when we honour those who died and weren’t honoured, who often died without a name attached and in mass graves.

Just to sum up: My friend Anya, when she passed away in her 90s—this amazing woman had this wonderful smile on her face and never complained; an amazing, hardworking, beautiful woman. She said to me, “I tried to live so that God would forgive me.” She never got that horrendous scene out of her head, the scene replicated around her town, which was just outside of Kiev, because when you’re starving and your children are starving, you will do anything—anything—to feed them. I’d like to think that this day, as we stand in this House, this day that we remember those 10 million who were lost and haven’t been remembered adequately, there’s no question that this day we will start to rectify that.

My friend across the aisle from Brant mentioned that this has already been recognized by the American government. It has already been recognized in the United Nations too. It has been recognized in the Canadian Senate, and I thought it had been recognized in Alberta, but correct me if I’m wrong.

Interjection.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: No? That was part of the information that we were given. Certainly, we should be the first in Canada as a jurisdiction to recognize this, and we should recognize it with all the import that it deserves.

Again, let’s not just have a day; let’s have a day of true remembrance, when those who don’t know will know, those who haven’t heard will hear, those who have forgotten will remember, and those who have been silenced will be allowed to speak through us.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: Dobryden. I’m very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 61, and to support my colleague the member from Brant, who has brought forward An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day.

As we stand in the House, I don't think that we can truly comprehend the tragedy and loss that occurred when as many as 10 million Ukrainians perished from 1932-33 as victims of a man-made famine in Ukraine, named Holodomor, under Joseph Stalin's regime, with 25,000 dying each day at the peak of the famine.

As has been said, the government of Ukraine, the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, the Senate of Canada, UNESCO, the United Nations and a number of other jurisdictions around the world have officially condemned Holodomor and recognized it as a genocide.

By joining today, I believe that by annually remembering the victims of the Holodomor through the passage of this bill, we will ensure that the story of a great tragedy is transferred from generation to generation. It will allow us to learn more from it and raise awareness to prevent similar occurrences around the world. Through passage of this bill, we will encourage communities and educators to teach, remember and honour the memory of those who suffered most in a battle where food was used as a weapon.

As colleagues before me have spoken about the children, I have turned my mind to my grandmother, who raised 10 children through some very, very difficult times. One thing she said was that she didn't have much, but she was so proud of the fact that, through her hard work, she was always able to feed those children. As a mother of two young children, I cannot imagine the anguish and horror you would feel as a parent when you are unable to feed your children—unable to look after their most basic need—and know that those actions and that deprivation are being forced upon you, your family and your children by government action and the decision of a horrific leader who is seeking to undertake those horrible acts.

Ukrainian communities around the world commemorate Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday of November each and every year. If this act is passed, I look forward to the opportunity when we in Ontario will be able to stand along with those from the Ukrainian community and others who care about this significant and important issue, to turn our minds to the tragedy, to move one step forward in bringing some light on these tragic circumstances and to raise awareness about what transpired in Ukraine.

As MPP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I want to pay tribute to the Ukrainian community in my riding, which is strong and vibrant, and which has welcomed me with open arms. I want to acknowledge the work undertaken in raising this issue by the League of Ukrainian Canadians, the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and Ukrainian-Canadian communities across Ontario, including so many individual Ukrainians who have told their stories or their families' stories with the goal of helping us ensure that such a tragedy would never occur again. To my colleague from Brant, I say thank you. Dyakuju.

Mr. Frank Klees: I am pleased to participate in this debate, and thank my colleague the member for Brant for

bringing forward this bill. It is a bill I am pleased to support. As the member knows, on December 5, 2006, I made a statement in this House in recognition of this important event, and I want to want to read into the record some context for the Holodomor.

Before I do, I want to welcome to the Legislature our special guests representing the Ukrainian community, and to thank you for the work you have done on behalf of all of us to ensure that we do not forget.

Applause.

Mr. Frank Klees: I also want to take the opportunity to bring to the attention of members of the House this book, entitled *Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s*. It has been very helpful. I want to thank those who were involved in producing this very much. The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory acknowledged the many contributors to this booklet. I urge members, if they don't have a copy, to have it available. It should be in every school in the province of Ontario.

From November 2007 to November 2008, Ukrainians around the world will be commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Ukrainian famine genocide called the Holodomor. On November 28, 2006, the Ukrainian Parliament recognized the famine as a genocide, and many parliamentary bodies in various countries around the world have done the same.

1440

As many as 10 million Ukrainians died in Soviet Ukraine from hunger and accompanying diseases during the great famine of 1932-33. Ironically, there was no drought or floods, and the crops were good; the destruction of human life was man-made, conscious, and it was deliberate. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of ethnic Ukrainians also died in the adjacent regions of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, especially the Kuban province of the northern Caucasus region. Ukrainians have appropriately named this catastrophe the Holodomor, or "extermination by hunger," and today it is rightfully considered a genocide against the Ukrainian people as such.

Ukrainians suffered three major famines under the communist regime: in 1921 to 1923, 1932-33, and again 1946-47. But it was the second tragedy, the most costly in terms of human life and the one which threatened the very survival of the Ukrainian nation, that is now considered the main component of the Ukrainian genocide.

The Ukrainian rural population, which at that time was made up of over 80% of Ukraine's inhabitants and constituted the backbone of the Ukrainian nation, was the main target of the regime's ire, which led to starvation. However, the Ukrainian genocide extended to the whole of the Ukrainian nation, for, concurrently with the destruction of the Ukrainian farmers, Stalin's regime decimated the Ukrainian cultural, social and political elite. Even Ukrainian communists were not trusted, and many of them were persecuted and eliminated. The Ukrainian nation was crippled and stunted in all spheres of its collective life.

Half a million people died in Ukraine from famine in the winter of 1932. The summer brought some relief as

people scoured the countryside for berries, nuts, mushrooms and various surrogates. The famine returned in the fall, and the most intensive period was the winter and spring of 1933. Learning about the famine, the west offered to help the starving people, but this aid was cynically rejected by Moscow, and any mention of the famine was denounced as anti-Soviet propaganda. Dishonest western journalists such as Walter Duranty, intellectuals such as Bernard Shaw and politicians such as Edouard Herriot did not help when they parroted Moscow's lies and silenced the rare testimony of such honest journalists as Gareth Jones and Malcolm Muggeridge.

The genocide was to be for Ukrainians what the Holocaust was for the Jews and the genocide of 1915 was for the Armenians: a tragedy of unfathomable proportions that traumatized the nation, leaving it with deep, social, psychological, political and demographic scars that Ukraine bears to this very day. Stalin himself is reported to have said, "No one can deny that the total Ukrainian yield of grain in 1932 was larger than in 1931," and yet about 10 million Ukrainians died that year of a man-made famine as the communist state made its failed attempt to crush the freedom-loving Ukrainian people.

On behalf of the leader of the Ontario PC Party and on behalf of our entire caucus, I extend our sincere condolences to Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, whose own relatives were victims of that genocide, and I extend our deepest sympathies to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and to the worldwide Ukrainian community on this tragic anniversary. May the memory of the victims of the Holodomor be eternal.

Remarks in Ukrainian.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I am honoured to stand up and speak in support of the bill brought by my colleague from Brant, Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day.

I've been listening to many speakers in this House speaking about the importance of this initiative. They spoke eloquently, from the Conservatives to the NDP to our colleagues, about the tragedy the Ukrainian people faced.

I was reading a paper here that talks about the whole issue, when Stalin, on August 7, 1932, "authored a law with a sentence of death or 10 years' imprisonment for the misappropriation of collective farm property. This law led to mass arrests and executions. Even children caught picking handfuls of grain from fields were convicted." It became a genocide for many Ukrainians who lived in that era.

It's important to talk about these issues, to remember and to remind people around us that there is nothing better than democracy and freedom, and that we as a people on this earth should use our authority in a fair way. Remember the people who suffered before us, who got killed for no reason, just because they happened to be in the charge of a dictator who did not believe in anything except himself and his authority. That is what happened in 1932 to Stalin, who authored those laws, who

forced people to die, to starve, who tortured people just in the name of his authority and his ideology.

I want to welcome the people from the Ukrainian community who are with us today. I also want to tell you something very important. The Ukrainian community is a great community across the province of Ontario, especially in my riding of London-Fanshawe. It's vibrant and active. I had the chance to meet many of them, and they told me about the tragedy they faced in the Stalin era. They told me in detail about the horrible life they lived, and a few survivors living in London today are still speaking about it. They still remember it. They tell their children and the people around them about the tragedy they faced around that time.

I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Brant for bringing this issue forward to this House. Hopefully it will get the support from all the members because it's important to remember people and bring awareness to this House and our colleagues, to be an example and also to tell the story about the tragedies. Hopefully in the future, nobody will do it again against any community, against any ethnic group, against anyone living among us in this life because, as my colleague mentioned, God gave us the authority to understand and to comprehend and also to protect the vulnerable people among us. You have to remember: It doesn't matter how big we are; in the end, all of us are going to die. We have to remember to use our power wisely in order to protect the lives among us and around us.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm proud to stand here today and to be supportive of the member for Brant's bill recognizing the Holodomor. I do this as the member of this House representing Etobicoke Centre, especially so because I am of Ukrainian descent, but even more so because I am an individual who believes fundamentally that we must constantly remember the past in order to ensure that we do not replicate it in the future.

I've sat, I've listened, I've read and I've had the opportunity to view the video. I can't even begin to understand the kind of horror that people must have gone through. It's almost unfathomable to me when I live in such an extraordinary country surrounded with the kind of democracy that we do have. To think that people went through such extraordinary—I can't even think of another word other than "horror." As a mother—and I think my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore shares the same thing; I think we all do—how can you even consider that your child might eat grass for dinner to try to survive, or that you hold this dying child in your arms and it was totally preventable? It was simply because somebody in another area of Russia at the time determined that you should die. That is man's inhumanity to man, so extreme that, to me, I just have trouble fathoming it.

1450

But what is it I can do? What I can do is ensure that that memory isn't lost by recognizing this memorial day—Saskatchewan just did it yesterday—by adding our voice to 14 countries and 40 jurisdictions, the United

Nations and whomever. What we're able to do is, each and every time there's an opportunity—and it should never just be on one day a year—is to share, to ensure that children learn.

We learn in a variety of ways. It could be in school, without question, but a lot of sharing comes through parents at the dinner table, over breakfast, when you walk through a park and you see a memorial or when you experience a memorial day. Those are the kinds of learning that actually become ingrained in a child to ensure as they develop that never again will they allow such horror to occur.

That's why we have an opportunity within this House, by providing a commemorative day, to expand that knowledge base, and we can ensure that, in fact, it never happens again. But more importantly, we can teach the children why it happened in the first place and must never be repeated, and what responsibility they have to each other, as was determined by my friend from London–Fanshawe.

We live in a world together. We must find peace together. We must be able to work together. But the only way we're able to do this is if we constantly remember our past. We must never shed the past. We must always take the past into the future, and this is one of the ways we can do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Levac, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Dave Levac: I want to start by saying thank you to the members from Oxford, Parkdale–High Park, Newmarket–Aurora, Etobicoke Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore and London–Fanshawe for their very passionate and kind words about the issue.

All too often we're bombarded with reminders of the evils committed against humanity. I think all of us here would agree that while these events infuriate us, terrify us and make us weep, often we lack the knowledge to impart a successful course of action to prevent their repetition.

Every great achievement of mankind has come with the expression of knowledge, enlightenment, passion and, indeed, dare I say, love. This expression is all about helping us eradicate the ills of our communities. It helps spread democracy. It helped connect millions of people around the world. It did eradicate slavery, in a sense. The spread of knowledge will also one day stop examples that we're talking about today. That would be my hope and, I know, our dream.

Perhaps the best way to acquire knowledge is through commemoration. With the passing of the Holodomor Memorial Day Act, we will commemorate the Ukrainian community that lost so much just 75 years ago. Equally important, it will educate Ontarians, young and old, about the costs of oppression and cruelty. Through education and remembrance, Ontario can continue to be the beacon of hope, acceptance, freedom and peace.

Today, we have an opportunity to take one more step further in that cause. I urge my colleagues to join me and the Ukrainian community in supporting the bill, sending

it to committee so our friends can tell their story again, and reaffirming our solidarity against opposition, tyranny and persecution.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: It's my privilege to begin today's—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Qadri, excuse me; you have to move your motion. Read your motion, please.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you. Move second reading, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): You would say, "I move notice of motion," and then read your motion.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario use all avenues to help people learn about their vital, medically significant numbers, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, waist circumference, height, weight and body mass index.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Qadri moves private member's resolution number 33.

Pursuant to standing order 97, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thanks for the tolerance on the preliminaries. As I've mentioned, I'm privileged today, first of all, to move this particular private member's resolution, which I think will have, if adopted and if passed, some fairly significant impact on the health of Ontarians and possibly broadly. Before beginning, I'd like to thank, once again, my staff members, including David Shory; my executive assistant, Nick Nobile, at the constituency office; and my former executive assistant, Kosta Chialtas.

I'm also honoured, delighted and pleased that my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, my fellow physician parliamentarians—or MD MPPs—Dr. Kuldip Kular, the MPP for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, and Dr. Helena Jaczek, the MPP for Oak Ridges–Markham, will be joining me in supporting this particular resolution.

When a patient comes to a physician—let's say they're being assessed for cardiovascular disease, which, by the way, is fancy doctor talk or code for heart and blood vessels—cardiovascular—there are about 10, maybe 15 questions that run in our minds as a kind of subtext to that particular encounter, to actually assess whether this individual is due, destined, prone to and will eventually develop cardiovascular or heart and blood vessel disease. This is a group of diseases that I remind you, if present trends continue, something on the order of about 40% of Ontarians—40% of the people listening to me now—will eventually die of.

Those 10 or 15 questions are something like, "Does this individual have high cholesterol? Does this individual have high blood pressure? Does this individual have high sugar or sugar diabetes already? Are they obese or overweight? Do they have excess stress, poor

diet, excess salt, marital conflict?" There's a long, long list of factors that go into the production, manifestation and expression of these various diseases.

The thing to say, though, is that this group of conditions, cardiovascular diseases, which of course include things like angina, heart attacks and diabetes—because, by the way, diabetes is heart disease. It's many other things, but it is also heart disease. These are, unfortunately, reaching epidemic, explosion, levels.

We used to, for example, think and be taught as doctors that you had to be 40 or better before you would start actually manifesting a lot of these types of disease conditions. Before you were going to get blood pressure, sugar diabetes or a judicious combination, you had to be 40 or 45; you had to be middle-aged or better.

The problem with the super-sized generation, with the explosion of obesity, with the availability of fast food everywhere and of course many other reasons, is that we now are seeing individuals at younger and younger ages, not only even the 30s and 20s—having, by the way, bypass surgery—but even young kids in their teens, who are not only obese but are developing diabetes, even developing, for example, degenerative arthritis in the knees, crushing their knees because of their weight and lack of exercise.

This again, as my physician colleagues or physician parliamentarians will share with you, is something that's extremely alarming. It's really part of, by the way, one of these feelings or suppositions is that the generations that are now being born in Ontario may be among the very first generations that actually live for shorter periods of time—have less life expectancy—than their parents.

1500

So the intent of the resolution, as it says at the beginning, is that the government of Ontario use all avenues. Now, of course, I mean that quite specifically: things like print, Web, radio, television or newsletters, for example, that we might actually distribute in our householders and to our ridings. All of these types of venues are important for us to synergize so that we can get some of these messages across.

There are many opportunities, as I personally myself do work with a number of top-flight organizations. Whether it's industry or the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association or the Ontario Lung Association, all of these are important and intelligent and dedicated players in this particular domain. They, too, are doing their share to, for example, add to the curricula of schools, add to the awareness amongst the population and add to the Canadian conversation regarding heart disease and cardiovascular illness.

Along with this resolution and along with this deciphering or this instruction on the word "cardiovascular," I want to bring to the attention not only of this chamber and my colleagues but also, through you, Speaker, to the people of Ontario perhaps a term that we as physicians are becoming more and more familiar with but that may not be part of the usual currency amongst the general public, and that is what we call cardio-

metabolic syndrome. This is essentially a grab-bag, package label of a whole number of conditions that go into the making of heart disease and stroke, kidney failure and so much else. Essentially, it's about the evils of obesity and all the complications that that leads to. So the cardiometabolic syndrome is essentially the idea that heart disease may be triggered by diabetes—they may be self-reinforcing—and it's this idea of a negative, self-reinforcing, vicious circle/cycle that it is our intention of trying to bring some light upon in this resolution.

I remember, in the first or second caucus meeting in the first McGuinty mandate—of multiple mandates to follow, no doubt—in November 2003, getting up in caucus and saying that we should create, in addition to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, a ministry of preventive health. Eventually this was adopted, and it is now, as you will know, known as the Ministry of Health Promotion. But part of the thinking that I had when I suggested that particular initiative was that, if truth be told, the Ministry of Health is actually the ministry of disease care. Now, I have to compliment Minister Smitherman in that he too recognizes this and is now moving into the idea or the sphere of screening and monitoring and measuring before disease takes place, whether it's with prostate cancer or colorectal cancer or breast cancer and so on. But by and large, the Ministry of Health and its initiatives and programs were really about the ministry of disease care.

I think, as my physician colleagues in this chamber will tell you, that that is perhaps too late in the game to be actually offering therapy and education and treatment and monitoring. If we were able to use our resources here in the government of Ontario to measure the different parameters or encourage people to go and seek out measurements of all these key, vital, medically significant numbers—specifically, as I mentioned earlier, blood pressure, cholesterol level, blood sugar, waist circumference, and height-weight and any mismatch there may be, otherwise known as the body mass index—we would be much further ahead.

I must compliment the Minister of Health Promotion at the time, the Honourable Jim Watson, where we actually began this particular program. I'll just confidentially share with you, Speaker, that as we were in fact having support from the nurses' associations and the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the diabetes association, there were two members of this chamber who were diagnosed with diabetes on the spot. I think, as well, that a number of individuals who had been flagged for having pretty significant high blood pressure—no doubt in the service of their cabinet ministers—were also identified and obviously encouraged to seek appropriate therapies.

The other aspect that I wanted to share with you, because this is part of what I, as a physician who teaches, repeat again and again in different contexts, whether it's web, radio, print, television or lectures to physicians, is the numbers that we're dealing with, these treatment targets, these goals of therapy for all these different domains—blood pressure, cholesterol, sugar, height,

weight—are changing and there are particular nuances to them.

For example, we used to think—and all my physician colleagues will attest to this—that the number 140 over 90 was the official blood pressure; anything below that was okay. That was the treatment target ceiling. But we know now that that target was too lax. We have now a new speed limit in town. It is now 130 over 80. I remind myself and my colleagues and others that that is actually the upper ceiling of normal. Actual safe measures are even below that. Of course, that's an extraordinary challenge, because, as you'll know, two million Ontarians have diagnosable high blood pressure—hypertension—as I speak right now. One of the big problems is that only about half of them actually know it, only about half of them actually have it officially diagnosed—they know it—and only a subset of those are receiving appropriate therapies and so on. So these numbers are important; these numbers matter. Whether you're on this side or that side of these treatment targets, it affects your risk for heart attack, for stroke, for kidney failure and beyond.

Similar numbers can be repeated with regard to cholesterol. The numbers, again, are being tightened. The evil or bad or sticky or disease-causing cholesterol—the LDL cholesterol—for example, we as doctors are now treating to much lower levels. So if you are that multi-risk-factor patient—over 40, overweight, high blood pressure, with diabetes—we are obligated, as good therapeutic practitioners, to attempt to get you to much lower levels than we used to know before and that we used to treat. You'll appreciate that cholesterol, like sugar, can actually be measured by droplet blood testing. You don't always have to go to a medical doctor or a laboratory to get these measured.

Similar claims and opportunities exist in all these different areas: waist circumference, glucose. Ultimately, together, this is part of the package deal, a part of the various factors that go into the makeup of very important, explosive issues—the cardiometabolic syndrome and an individual's risk for heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Aren't statistics a wonderful thing? I want to congratulate my friend from Etobicoke North on bringing this forward. In a perfect world, we would all know these statistics. The first thing I'll tell you is, sadly, I know most of mine. Knowing blood pressure and knowing that it's low is a good thing; knowing cholesterol and knowing that it's high is a bad thing. Nobody can really argue with that. I think it's appropriate that everyone know the numbers that are connected with their medical condition.

Having said that, there are some numbers that we have to deal with in the province of Ontario that pertain to medical conditions that very much enter into this debate. One of them is that one million people in Ontario don't have access to physicians to get these numbers. I think that's a very salient point to bring into this debate. Of

those one million people, about 100,000 are children. So all of these people are without physicians. They can't know their blood pressure and they can't know their cholesterol and they can't know their blood sugar unless, perhaps, they go to the community clinic or they go to the hospital and get these taken as a matter of routine or maybe, even worse, during an emergency—numbers, as well, such as people, we've heard as recently as this morning, dying in long-term-care facilities because the government has not taken care of business in terms of giving them the time that's required, and, as mentioned again this morning, without the implementation of something as important as Bill 140, passed by the government last year but not fully implemented.

1510

No one can argue with the member's resolution. I support it. No one can argue with getting information that pertains to his health. But how do you know the numbers if you can't get to the source whence those numbers come?

The member has mentioned that he himself is a physician and that his colleague, our colleague, from Oak Ridges–Markham is a physician as well. Two physicians here in the Legislature—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Shurman:—another one as well; thank you for pointing that out—while this province, in the most recent estimates that I've read, demonstrates that it's lacking approximately 2,000 physicians to address the shortage that I've already outlined in terms of a million-plus people not being capable of going to see a doctor, having, in fact, when a doctor says, "I'm open to new patients," to go through an interview process in order to find out if they qualify.

Another number that has to be considered in this process is exemplified by my own community of Thornhill, which happens to have in its midst, amongst many other qualified communities, a community of Russian doctors who cannot practise in our environment—not because they haven't passed council exams; not because they aren't qualified.

I'll tell you two stories. These were people who visited me in my office and said, "What can I do?" In talking to HealthForceOntario and talking to the college of physicians and surgeons, I became familiar with the process. There's so much we could do and so much that we're not doing. Right now, it stands in the hands of the health ministry to make the appropriate changes.

I remember specific examples of a pediatrician, a wonderful woman probably in her 40s, who came from what was the former Soviet Union. She said to me, "Mr. Shurman, I would be prepared to give up being a pediatrician and practise general medicine anywhere in Ontario that I am sent. I will go to Thunder Bay and I'll be a regular family doctor. Please tell me how I do it." There's nothing to tell her, because what's missing is residency spots for people who have passed the council exams to go through, and an entire international medical graduate program that doesn't support the adherence of

new physicians and the ability to address this significant shortage.

Another example—and this one really weighed heavily on me; I can remember the details as I speak today—was another Russian-trained physician who by trade was a specialist in spinal surgery, something we could surely use in the province of Ontario, as well as operating in a military theatre, as well as operating in sparsely populated areas. Could we use that? Apparently not. He couldn't find a residency spot. So what did he do? He called the Canadian military and said, "I'm prepared to go to Afghanistan because I want to practise my craft. I want to practise my profession." "No, you can't go to Afghanistan. We only take Canadian physicians," was the answer he got. We're trying very hard to address this.

I know I'm straying a little bit from the nature of the resolution, but it all fits in because at the end of the day, if you don't give people access to physicians, you can't get the statistics that this resolution calls upon all people of Ontario to know.

The member from Etobicoke North is quite right: These are statistics that we really need to know so that we can adjust our lifestyles and make ourselves more healthy as a society. But we can't do that unless we do all of these other things, because that's how things fall into place.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Dr. Qaadri has moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario use all avenues to help people learn about their vital, medically significant numbers, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, waist circumference, height, weight and body mass index."

The frustration with this resolution is: Is there anyone here who will stand up and say, "I'm against good health"? "Am I against anyone not knowing what their vital health statistics are?"

It's like a number of other resolutions and private members' bills that come before us that are well-intentioned but frankly lack great substance or direction. Anyone who would be running the Ministry of Health Promotion would already be looking at something like this, would be talking to nurses and doctors about making sure that people were well educated.

I think it speaks very profoundly to the lack of activity on the part of this government, and frankly the lack of opportunities for people on the backbench of the Liberal Party to do things that are of interest and of consequence. If the member had brought forward a bill talking about a restructuring of the health care system, to dramatically increase the use of nurse practitioners, to address the whole question of determinants of health, to talk about the larger issues that have to be resolved if you want to have a functioning health care system, we would have far more to dine on and far more to discuss.

I should say that just like I am in favour of freedom and democracy and I would vote in favour of a resolution for freedom and democracy, then I will probably be supporting this motion as well. But I have to make a few

comments in the course of my few minutes, because I believe that you can look at all kinds of problems in a variety of ways. You can look at problems and resolve them in a way that actually, fundamentally, comes to grips with an issue or you can put a band-aid on. You can do something that is cosmetic; you can do something that's substantive.

The first thing I want to say about this resolution—if this goes forward and if the Ministry of Health Promotion and the minister take note of it—is that they don't use doctors for this. It's a good thing, but a doctor with years of training would be far better used doing more complex diagnosis than this. We have nurse practitioners and nurses who could go through this with people, or health promotion specialists who could talk about this and who are not trained to do complex diagnosis. The first thing is, if you're going to go ahead with this, that's where you should be allocating your resources.

We would do well, if we were to go forward with such a resolution, to see that our community health centres were properly funded and that we had far more of them, so that when people go for that sort of health service, they are dealing with a range of practitioners who have a range of training, so that they get the appropriate person talking to them. That makes sense to me.

Far more fundamental is the whole question of this resolution as opposed to taking on the determinants of health. A number of years ago I read a book by Laurie Garrett with a terrible title, *The Coming Plague*, but a very substantial book on public health issues in the 20th century and the control of communicable diseases, the spread of communicable diseases, the interaction between environmental factors—deforestation—and the emergence of new diseases in our society.

One of the things she touched on was the prevalence, the incidence of tuberculosis in South Africa. It was quite extraordinary, because any public health practitioner could say to you very quickly that the reason tuberculosis spread with such rapidity, such rapacity, was in part related to the housing crisis in South Africa. People were jammed into huts and shacks, jammed into barracks. They breathed each other's breath, every hour of the day. So in situations where people were not fed well, where they were under stress on a constant basis, where they were put together essentially as units for breeding tuberculosis bacillus, no one should be surprised that they had a raging tuberculosis problem.

When my colleague, the member from Parkdale-High Park, questions the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about the fact that the money has not gone into housing in this province, has not gone into housing for the poorest in this province, has not gone in in a situation where the waiting lists for affordable housing grow year after year, my colleague is speaking to a fundamental determinant of health and a fundamental barrier against the spread of communicable disease. That issue is not being addressed. If this resolution talked about that determinant of health, essentially pulling away the kindling so that the fire didn't get a chance to start, then

this would be a far more consequential resolution, but that determinant of health is not addressed.

1520

About two years ago, I went to Hellenic Home for the Aged. My colleague Sophie Aggelonitis from Hamilton Mountain is familiar with Hellenic Home for the Aged here in Toronto—a great institution, good people who have organized it. There's a doctor, Dr. Oreopoulos, who has been a central person in that whole process. I had the opportunity to walk with him two years ago as we went I don't know how many blocks—we went around a fair number—and we talked about diabetes and the rise in demand for dialysis, the impact on people of the obesity epidemic. He was very articulate and very worried because he saw this huge cohort of people affected by type 2 diabetes who were making these tremendous demands on the health care system. That kind of problem is not going to be solved by telling people about their body mass index.

A very simple public health measure, keeping swimming pools open in the schools in Toronto, and beyond that, putting funding into schools all over this province so more young people have more opportunities for physical education, would be of great consequence when it comes to early-onset obesity and all of the diseases that flow from that and all the expenses that flow from that.

When I was out in front of this Legislature a few weeks ago, there was a demonstration by parents and students asking for money for the pools. Those students and parents didn't understand the funding system. Somehow they thought the city of Toronto or the Toronto District School Board raised the taxes and made the spending decisions. In fact, the funding formula is set by the province. The envelopes are set out by the province setting out what can be spent, what is available for spending. Those powers in the hands of this government were ultimately the powers that determined whether the pools would be open or not, whether young people would have an opportunity or not to get fit. Those are the things that have to happen. The determinants of health have to be addressed. The opportunities for fitness have to be there, not just talked about. Talking about the indications of health at the end of the process is not adequate to keep a population healthy.

The next thing I want to talk about is the relationship between income and health. Just before this debate began, I took a look at Health Canada's website. They have a list of about 12 determinants of health. There are a variety of things that touch on your ability to be healthy, on the ability of a population to be healthy. But a key thing on their website, even in Stephen Harper's Canada, was the indication that where you have a relatively well-off population and greater income equality, you have greater health.

It's been interesting to me to follow the Toronto Star and academic commentators who have looked at the Statistics Canada material that's come out in the last while about the stagnation of incomes for middle-income Canadians and the dire reality for low-income Canadians.

It's quite correct what has been reported by academics and commented on by the Toronto Star, that in fact union certification and the decline of union certification has been damaging the middle class in this province and this country. There's no question that when people are unionized, when they are certified, they have the opportunity to negotiate with employers and increase their share of the wealth they generate. So if we want a healthy population, we need not only a wealthy society as a whole, but a society within which that wealth is shared equitably so that people can feed themselves well, clothe themselves well, house themselves well and, frankly, have greater control of their lives.

It was interesting, again, looking at the Health Canada stats and commentary, that one of the factors that's most predictive of ill health related to income is the inability to control stressful situations. So if you're poor and the stability of your housing is always in question, you are subject to fundamental stressors. If you're in a situation where you have an abusive employer and you don't have a method for addressing that, you are stressed. It affects your health. So when this government does not support union certification, card-based certification, when the Minister of Labour considers it far left—he even got a dart from the Toronto Star for that—you have to say this is a government that is not committed to the preservation of the middle class in this province. Because of that, it is also not committed to mass-based population health assurance, and it has to be. If we want to live good, healthy lives, then we only get that when all of us get to live good, healthy lives.

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I'm pleased and honoured to participate in the debate on the private member's resolution put forward by the esteemed colleague of ours, the honourable member from Etobicoke North. His resolution is, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario use all avenues to help people learn about their vital, medically significant numbers, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, waist circumference, height, weight and body mass index."

Why is it so important? Why is it so necessary to know these vital numbers? The member from Etobicoke North has already given the importance of knowing your blood pressure. I'm not going to talk about all those numbers, but I'm going to take some of them: why it's important to know your weight, why it's important to know your height and why it's important to know your waist circumference. If you know your weight, and if you know your height, that's how you will be able to find out what your body mass index is. When you use the body mass index, as well as waist circumference, that helps you to identify if you are at any increased risk of developing health problems, whether it's chronic diseases or diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, osteoporosis or certain kinds of cancer; that helps us to find out. If people are able to understand and able to remember and have the awareness of knowing these vital signs which are medically significant, they should be able to find out. For example,

your body mass index helps to categorize you, whether you are of normal weight, underweight, overweight or grossly obese. That's how it helps you.

I'm proud to say that under the leadership of our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, a lot of our budget goes into health care delivery. What he has been doing in the last three or four years with our health care delivery is transforming it from sick care to healthy care. Under his leadership, we have better accessibility to doctors and better accessibility to nurses. During the last budget, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care allocated to bring in more nurse practitioners.

1530

If the people of this province understand and remember these vital, medically significant numbers, they will be able to help the health care providers, whether it's a physician, a nurse practitioner, a dietitian or a nutritionist, who can be part of the teamwork. That's why more and more physicians are realizing that it's very important to practise preventive medicine. Therefore, knowing your vital and medically significant numbers is a way to actively involve people in their health care, and it makes it medically more proficient. It becomes teamwork. If people understand these numbers, they will be able to participate in their health care. To keep health care delivery sustainable budget-wise in this province, we have to change our way of looking at things. People have to start understanding how much it costs to look after their health. Once they start to know the numbers, it will be very important; everybody will be participating in the health care delivery for all Ontarians.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I appreciate the opportunity to offer a few comments with respect to the private member's resolution brought forward by the member from Etobicoke North. I share the frustration with several of the other speakers here this afternoon who've indicated, "Who wouldn't agree with a resolution that promotes good health? Who wouldn't agree with a resolution that's going to make sure that people are more aware of the elements of physical fitness: waist circumference, cholesterol, blood sugar and so on?" Of course we all agree with that.

I, along with many other members, was brought up in a household where that was very important. My father was at one point in his career a physical education teacher, so we were all brought up with an awareness of health and vitality and the importance of living a healthy, active lifestyle. Certainly I try to do that with my three sons as well, now that they're teenagers, keeping them involved in sports and keeping them out of other kinds of trouble too in the course of that. That certainly is very important. But I think when you start talking about building awareness of physical fitness and good health, you also have to be prepared to do something about it, to promote physical fitness.

I'd like to look at a couple of things, if I might, such as opportunities this government has had to promote physical fitness and good health and vitality, but has failed to do so. One example is delisting certain health

care treatments from OHIP, physiotherapy being one of them—helping people who have been injured to get back into good shape, to get back into their fitness routines and so on. That's something they could look at, they could deal with, but they've chosen not to.

Let's look at ODSP, Ontario disability support payments, to people who are disabled. Let's look at how much money these people receive per month. If you're not living in a rent-geared-to-income apartment or townhouse, you have very little money left at the end of the month to feed yourself properly. I think we've all had experiences where people have come into our community offices. I had one gentleman who came in to see me shortly after I was elected who was blind. He had a guide dog—his dog was his window to the outside world—and he told me that at the end of the month he actually had to go to a food bank to feed himself so he could buy food for his dog. That's just not right, not in the province of Ontario.

We also have a situation where people who are on ODSP, if they have a special need—if they are diabetic, for example, and need to have a special dietary allowance—are forced to file reams of applications and fight to get an extra \$10 or \$20 a month, whatever it is. It's a pittance, really. It's degrading, it's humiliating and it shouldn't happen here. We should be looking at situations where we can deal with this proactively. Let's look at it in a different way. Why don't we start taking a look at paying people a proper amount so they can eat properly and not subject them to this on a monthly basis; the same thing for people who are receiving social assistance.

Again, I had a woman who was very hard-working, who raised her four children on her own because her husband had serious mental health problems. She was the sole breadwinner in the family. She told me that she finally got herself to a place where she was actually able to buy fresh food for her children because she educated herself and got a job. What happened? They clawed back and quadrupled the amount of rent she had to pay every month. She was in tears. She said, "I can't get ahead because of the policies of this government."

It could be changed so easily. Just give people a little bit more time to get on their feet so they can get back on track. But they can't feed their children properly. They have to feed their children cheap, carbohydrate-based foods. They can't afford fresh fruits and vegetables. Those are the children who are suffering, who are having problems with obesity, diabetes and all the other health problems attendant with that.

The other area I have mentioned in this House before, and do want to mention again, is the whole issue of underfunding for health care in the GTA/905 areas and in particular in my own Durham region. We have raised—in fact, I have raised a private member's resolution about this in the past—that we need to ensure that all parts of Ontario are equally funded for health care, according to their needs. That's not happening in Durham. We're underfunded by over \$200 per person compared to the

provincial average in Ontario. I know that my colleagues the members for Thornhill, Halton and Newmarket–Aurora are in the same situation. We're all in the same situation. We are in rapidly growing areas, we have people who are in need who can't find family doctors, who don't have adequate medical facilities, not just in terms of hospital care but in terms of the other services that go along with it: children's treatment centres, mental health facilities.

We have a situation right now where we're seeing, because of the requirement to balance budgets, which I don't disagree with—in this particular case, they haven't taken a look at allocating funding for high-growth areas and are requiring cutbacks in mental health in-patient beds, which, in my view, would be unnecessary if the proper formula were applied so that, first of all, the area is funded up to the provincial average, using these dollars that have been allocated for high-growth areas, where it wouldn't be necessary to cut what I believe are core medical services in our areas in many people's view. That has certainly been borne out by some of the psychiatrists in our area, who are adamant that mental health care in our area is going to suffer if those in-patient beds are moved as a result of these changes.

In summary, there are lots of things that can be looked at by this government that would promote health, wellness and well-being and, with a few simple tweaks and not a huge amount of money, could improve health care for all Ontarians.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm sure it is no surprise that I rise to support my colleague from Etobicoke North's excellent resolution and to speak following another esteemed colleague, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. We are three physicians in this House, and we all support this resolution. We know that these vital numbers have great significance and, in fact, can be modified through things like physical activity, diet and maintaining appropriate body weight. We know that these factors are extremely important in terms of preventing cardiovascular disease, many other chronic diseases and even 30% to 40% of all cancers.

I see this resolution as a very useful adjunct to the work that is being done currently in the Ministry of Health Promotion: the type of public education, legislation such as the Smoke Free Ontario Act and, of course, all the great initiatives of this government. Some colleagues here have referred to the social determinants of health, so they must be extremely pleased, as I am, about our government's initiative in terms of a poverty reduction plan; there is no question that income does influence health. They must also be very pleased that we are expanding the number of community health centres.

1540

But this particular resolution is a way of personalizing all that healthy public policy. This morning, I went on the heart and stroke website. I'm sure the member for Toronto–Danforth will be very relieved to know that he will be able to do a risk assessment himself. This does not require a physician, and it does not require a nurse. It

is taking some personal responsibility to look at those risk factors that you may be able to modify yourself.

We know that with cardiovascular disease and diabetes there are many genetic factors that we cannot modify. However, there are many things we can change, such as smoking and diet, salt intake, intake of fatty fried foods, alcohol and the relationship of stress. So very simply—it takes about 10 minutes on the heart and stroke website—you can you assess your personal risk factors.

One of the things you can do extremely easily is measure your waist circumference. I hope that all members of this House will go and get their tape measures this evening. I recommend the cloth variety; I would not try the metallic one. The website actually shows you exactly how to measure your waist circumference so you don't cheat.

In fact, some very interesting numbers are shown on the website. If your waist circumference is over 32 inches, you are at high risk for cardiovascular disease if you are a Chinese or a South Asian woman. If your waist circumference is over 35 inches, you are at high risk if you are a woman or if you're a Chinese or South Asian male. Over 40 inches—and as I look around this chamber, I detect there may be some of the gentlemen in the crowd over 40 inches—everyone is at risk.

Obviously, on this website, there are also some very good tips as to how you can take some personal responsibility to modify your personal risk factors. There are ways of setting goals, realistic goals, that you'll be able to meet and a number of tips on how to make behaviour change easier.

As we all know, this is a challenge. In fact, members on this side of the House have often talked about going for a brisk walk around Queen's Park Circle whenever we are released from this place. Unfortunately, we have yet to actually achieve that. So we know that behaviour changes are difficult.

What this resolution does is bring public awareness to individuals about what they can do in terms of modifying their risk factors. Of course, it is simply one piece of a big puzzle, which is how to ensure that Ontarians are as healthy as possible. There's no reservation in my mind that we should all support this resolution. I congratulate my colleague for bringing it forth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Qadri, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Of course, I'd like to thank my colleagues, particularly my physician parliamentarian colleagues in my caucus, Dr. Kuldip Kular of Bramalea–Gore–Malton and Dr. Helena Jaczek, Oak Ridges–Markham, not only for their important support but also for taking some of these general principles and offering some personal remarks, particularly with reference to risk assessment, especially some of the ethnocultural overlay.

I'd also like to thank my colleague from the PC side, Mr. Shurman of Thornhill, for his thoughtful and substantive illustration of other important numbers. I'd like to thank my colleague from the NDP for his review of sociology and his just detectable support of this reso-

lution. I would humbly submit, sir, that initiatives that change the world often begin as ideas. I'd also like to thank my PC colleague for Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, for the important issues she raised in terms of delisting, the dignity for diabetics, as well as funding issues, of course things that we struggle with on an ongoing basis.

With reference to these particular numbers—of course, there's the humour that some individuals seem to self-attribute, whether we're chatting about waist circumference or weight measurements and so on—I just have to re-emphasize. These numbers are vitally significant. These numbers are deadly significant. These numbers are, for the largest part—probably the majority—of Ontarians unknown to them. We, of course, as physicians, inherit the complications, the consequences—the phone calls, by the way, to the surviving members of the family, because it is these types of numbers that are not broadly appreciated, acted upon and treated to target. The risk reduction of these aspects that I'm chatting about—cardiometabolic syndrome, cardiovascular risk factors, heart disease, stroke, angina and kidney failure—are generally unknown, underappreciated and under-managed.

I appreciate all the members of this House supporting this resolution, and certainly for it to be mobilized elsewhere in the corridors of this government.

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

We will deal with the first ballot item, number 19, standing in the name of Mr. Lalonde.

PROVINCIAL PARKS AND MAJOR
PROVINCIAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
SIGN ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008
SUR L'ÉRECTION DE PANNEAUX
DANS LES PARCS PROVINCIAUX
ET À L'EMPLACEMENT D'IMPORTANTES
ATTRACTIONS TOURISTIQUES
PROVINCIALES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 21, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to the standing orders, this bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have this bill referred to the general government standing committee.

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

We will now deal with ballot item number 20, standing in the name of Mr. Levac.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY
ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE JOUR
COMMÉMORATIF DE L'HOLODOMOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Levac has moved second reading of Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Dave Levac: Mr. Speaker, I wish that this bill would be sent to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, at the pleasure of the House.

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

We will now deal with the final ballot item, number 21.

HEALTH PROMOTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Qaadri has moved private member's resolution number 33. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I declare that the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Agreed to.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: On a point of order, Speaker: I'd—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It's not a bill. You won.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INVESTING IN ONTARIO ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 PERMETTANT
D'INVESTIR DANS L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2008, on the motion for third reading of Bill 35, An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make payments to eligible recipients out of money appropriated by the Legislature and to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, the Ministry of Treasury and Economics Act and the Treasury Board Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 35, Loi autorisant le ministre des Finances à faire des versements aux bénéficiaires admissibles sur les crédits affectés par la Législature et modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la transparence et la responsabilité financières, la Loi sur le ministère du Trésor et de l'Économie et la Loi de 1991 sur le Conseil du Trésor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Debate? The honourable member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I am standing here in—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: I ask the government's attention, if they want to listen to the bill, because what the government did, which I want to start with, was one of the most unfair practices I have ever seen since I have been a member in this House. The government did not move a bill of closure, which would have allowed each party an opportunity to speak to the bill; they moved a motion that we have two hours of debate. Then they went off and did one hour of debate themselves, the Conservatives took 45 minutes of the debate, there was some wrangling, and it left me with 10 minutes. I have to say that I find this an appalling, appalling practice—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: —I'm told that I've got nine now—and, in my view, an abuse of the process of this House. I cannot believe for a moment that that was the intent, but they went ahead and did it anyway, knowing full well that there would be no opportunity for me to debate this bill other than for some nine minutes.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: If somebody wants to move that, I wouldn't object.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I agree with the member's point that he's made. I think we should have had fulsome debate. If the member has something he wants to share with other members in the House here, I know that my colleagues in the official opposition—I'd like to move unanimous consent to give the member—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll deal with the point of order first, and I would say that it really wasn't a point of order. If you'd like to do something else, go ahead.

1550

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to move unanimous consent to give the member an additional 60 minutes of debate on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I hear noes.

The honourable member from Beaches—East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I expected to get that from the government bench. It shows the real idea they have around democracy and stifling debate, especially from the third party. I find it reprehensible. This bill is reprehensible. What this government is trying to do is reprehensible as well.

The Auditor General came before and wrote a letter to the Chair of the committee in which he said two things. I've only got nine minutes, so here they go:

"In conclusion, I believe section 4 and subsection 5(2) of Bill 35 should be deleted to avoid the potential for conflicting requirements in how a transaction is to be accounted for in the province's financial statements.

"I would be pleased to appear before the committee to discuss this and to answer any questions if the committee members feel this would be helpful in their review of Bill 35."

I moved a motion in committee to ask that the Auditor General come forward even for a few brief moments to describe why this bill might contravene his duty to this Legislature, and I was denied by the committee when every single Liberal member on the committee voted not to hear the Auditor General, who is a servant of this Legislature. Every single member said no to hearing why the bill may not be legal.

Then they went on, on this horrendous little bill, which they say is the transparency act, to be anything but transparent. In frustration, towards the end of the committee, I moved a motion to ask that the name of the bill be changed to the Slush Fund Protection Act, 2008, and, probably quite rightly, the Chair said that it was not. He quoted Montpetit and said it was frivolous and vexatious and designed to put the bill into disrepute. I have to agree with him. The bill deserves to be in disrepute. The bill ought not to be before this House. It ought not to be rammed through in the way that this government chooses to ram it through.

You know, we tried to move some motions to make sure that the bill did what the government claims. The government claims this is a municipal bill that's going to help municipalities. So I moved a little tiny motion. I still, for the life of me, can't believe the government voted it down, every single member. The motion was to include the word "municipality" within the body of the bill. You'd think that that was a radical thing. If it was supposed to be for municipalities, don't you think the bill should state so? Well, no. Every single member voted it down.

I suggested to the government, and I suggested before, if they really want to help municipalities, they have to end the download. They have to upload the download. They have to put some monies in the budget. They can't be budgeting at the end of the year, if there's a few dollars here left over, that, "Maybe we'll be able to do some finagling. We'll tell the auditor to turn a blind eye. We'll tell the auditor not to look at what is necessary. We'll tell the auditor that we're going to give it out and you're never going to have any audit control over it."

I said, if you're really serious, put the word "municipality" in it. If you're even more serious, put the money into the budget in the first place. There is a \$100-billion deficit in this province municipally, across the province, monies that the municipalities desperately need. This is a sop. This is a total sop, if and when this bill passes, because it's only valid for the first year of the bill that municipalities would even be eligible.

I moved a second amendment, and that was the amendment to insist that municipalities are the only groups that can receive the money, because, you see, next year anybody can get the money. Anybody the government chooses can get the money. Cricket clubs can get the money. All the things that happened in the last Parliament, handing out and doling out to your friends, is all going to be legal if this bill is passed.

The government sat there and voted for all of it and said, "That's fine," and they made all the provisions so

that the auditor can't even go in and investigate it. I can't believe what they did. And they all have the straight face, the temerity, the unmitigated gall, to stand here and say it's for municipalities. It isn't. It's to reward their friends and to ensure that the auditor can't even audit the books at the end of the year.

I moved another amendment. I thought, "My God, we've got to do something to stop this." I moved an amendment that the municipalities or the cricket clubs or whoever was getting the money had to make an application, because you remember last time that there were not even any applications. So I said, "If they're going to get some of this money, they have to be told how much there is in the pot, and they have to make an application."

But no, the five members on the committee voted that down so you don't even need to make an application. I was appalled. I'm shocked and appalled. I sat here during the last session, when they took up all the time talking about their wonderful bill, listening to what was really going on. Not one of them will admit that you don't even need to make an application to get this money, whether you're a municipality or a cricket club or a member of the Liberal Party hiding under the rubric, or some rug somewhere, trying to pretend you're really going to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much time I've got. I'm speaking as fast as I can.

We asked for an open process. We asked that if money is to be given out, if the taxpayers' money is to be used, then the taxpayers should have some way of watching where that money flows, that the auditor in his wisdom and in the wisdom of his staff can take a look at the money and make sure that there is an application process, make sure that it's going to a recognized municipality or other agency which is set out in the regulations—which is not done. We asked, in the end, to do exactly what the auditor said. The auditor said that he wanted section 4 and subsection 5(2) of Bill 35 deleted.

We moved, along with my colleague from the Conservative Party—I've got two minutes—that those sections be deleted. Of course, I was ruled out of order by the committee Chair: "If you don't like these, vote against it." Well, of course I voted against it. I did exactly what the servant to this Legislature said we

should do in order to protect the fiscal integrity of this House. Of course, five Liberal members voted to retain it.

In the end, I have to tell you, I was so extremely frustrated. From the inception of this bill, from the day that the minister paraded in Mayor McCallion and others to say the wonder of the bill, to the day we got the bill and found out it didn't do anything when he had promised municipal leaders, to the day that we started to debate this bill, to the closure that keeps the New Democrats out of the debate, all of this has been one horrendous experience.

It is a crying shame that Liberals are going to stand there one by one, mark my words, and vote for such a horrendous piece of legislation. I am ashamed for each and every one of them and for what they've done. I hope some day that the auditor is going to be able to come in and look at it in spite of your bill and call it for what it is: a legalized slush fund.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 22, 2008, I am now required to put the question.

On May 7, 2008, Mr. Caplan moved third reading of Bill 35, An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make payments to eligible recipients out of money appropriated by the Legislature and to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, the Ministry of Treasury and Economics Act and the Treasury Board Act, 1991.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

The division bells rang from 1558 to 1559.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), Mr. Duncan has requested the deferral of Bill 35. This bill is deferred until Monday, May 12, 2008.

Third reading vote deferred.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those in favour? Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock, Monday, May 12.

The House adjourned at 1600.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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

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

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

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

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

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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

Justice Policy / Justice

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

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

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

Public accounts / Comptes publics

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

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

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

Social Policy / Politique sociale

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

Continued from back cover

Hospital funding	
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	1772
Employment insurance	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	1772
Hospital funding	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	1772
Hospital funding	
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	1773
Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	1773
Pope John Paul II	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	1773

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Autism treatment	
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	1773
Rahimullah and Nazifa Shahghasy	
Mr. Kuldip Kular.....	1774
Forest industry	
Mr. Norm Miller.....	1774
Natural gas rates	
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	1774
James Foster	
Mrs. Linda Jeffrey.....	1774
Accessibility for the disabled	
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	1775
Young Singers	
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	1775
Anniversary of Israel	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	1775
Oak Ridges moraine	
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	1775

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Community Right to Know Act (Disclosure of Toxins and Pollutants), 2008, Bill 76, Mr. Tabuns / Loi de 2008 sur le droit du public d'être informé (divulgation des toxines et des polluants), projet de loi 76, M. Tabuns	
First reading agreed to.....	1776
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	1776

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Provincial Parks and Major Provincial Tourist Attractions Sign Act, 2008, Bill 21, Mr. Lalonde / Loi de 2008 sur l'érection de panneaux dans les parcs provinciaux et à l'emplacement d'importantes attractions touristiques provinciales, projet de loi 21, M. Lalonde	
M. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	1776
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	1777
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	1778
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	1779
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	1779
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	1780
Mme Laurel C. Broten.....	1781
M. Mike Colle.....	1781
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	1782

Holodomor Memorial Day Act, 2008, Bill 61, Mr. Levac / Loi de 2008 sur le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor, projet de loi 61, M. Levac	
Mr. Dave Levac.....	1782
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	1784
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	1785
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	1786
Mr. Frank Klees.....	1787
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	1788
Hon. Donna H. Cansfield.....	1788
Mr. Dave Levac.....	1789

Health promotion	
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	1789
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	1791
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	1792
Mr. Kuldip Kular.....	1793
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	1794
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	1795
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	1795

Provincial Parks and Major Provincial Tourist Attractions Sign Act, 2008, Bill 21, Mr. Lalonde / Loi de 2008 sur l'érection de panneaux dans les parcs provinciaux et à l'emplacement d'importantes attractions touristiques provinciales, projet de loi 21, M. Lalonde	
Second reading agreed to.....	1796
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	1796

**Holodomor Memorial Day Act, 2008, Bill 61,
Mr. Levac / Loi de 2008 sur le Jour
commémoratif de l'Holodomor, projet de loi 61,
M. Levac**

Second reading agreed to 1796

Mr. Dave Levac..... 1796

Health promotion

Agreed to..... 1796

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Investing in Ontario Act, 2008, Bill 35, Mr. Duncan
/ Loi de 2008 permettant d'investir dans
l'Ontario, projet de loi 35, M. Duncan**

Mr. Michael Prue 1797

Third reading vote deferred..... 1798

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 8 May 2008 / Jeudi 8 mai 2008

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Time allocation

Hon. John Milloy	1747
Mr. Khalil Ramal	1747
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	1749
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri	1751
Mr. Norman W. Sterling	1752
Mr. Michael Prue	1756
Debate deemed adjourned	1759

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)	1759
---------------------------------------	------

Parliamentary process

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)	1759
---------------------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Lord's Prayer

Mr. Robert W. Runciman	1760
Hon. Michael Bryant	1760

Infectious disease control

Ms. Laurie Scott	1761
Hon. George Smitherman	1761

Plant closures

Mr. Howard Hampton	1762
Hon. Brad Duguid	1762

Long-term care

Mr. Howard Hampton	1763
Hon. George Smitherman	1763

Long-term care

Mr. Peter Shurman	1764
Hon. George Smitherman	1764

Poverty

Mr. Michael Prue	1764
Hon. George Smitherman	1764

Pharmaceutical research

Mr. Jeff Leal	1765
Hon. John Wilkinson	1765

Adoption disclosure

Mr. Norman W. Sterling	1766
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	1766

Women's issues

Ms. Cheri DiNovo	1766
Hon. George Smitherman	1766

Agricultural research

Mrs. Liz Sandals	1766
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky	1767

Coal-fired generating stations

Mr. John Yakabuski	1767
Hon. Gerry Phillips	1767

Contrôle des maladies infectieuses / Infectious disease control

Mme France Gélinas	1768
Hon. George Smitherman	1768

Small business

Mr. David Zimmer	1768
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar	1768

Fish and wildlife management

Mr. Randy Hillier	1769
Hon. Donna H. Cansfield	1769

Trucking industry

Mr. Gilles Bisson	1769
Hon. James J. Bradley	1769

Infectious disease control

Ms. Laurie Scott	1770
Hon. George Smitherman	1770

Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)	1770
---------------------------------------	------

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Lord's Prayer

Mr. John Yakabuski	1770
--------------------------	------

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas	1770
--------------------------	------

Firearms control

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis	1771
------------------------------	------

Lord's Prayer

Mr. Jim Wilson	1771
----------------------	------

Hospital funding

Mr. Bob Delaney	1771
-----------------------	------

Lord's Prayer

Ms. Sylvia Jones	1771
------------------------	------

Mary Fix Park

Mr. Jeff Leal	1771
---------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover