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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 28 May 2008**

**Mercredi 28 mai 2008**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

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*The House met at 0900.*

*Prayers.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Hon. David Caplan:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding division of time for debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 80.

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** Thank you, Speaker. I move that the time available to 10:45 a.m. this morning be divided equally among the recognized parties for the debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 80, An Act to establish Algoma University and to dissolve Algoma University College, following which the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion for second reading of Bill 80 without further debate or amendment.

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

*Agreed to.*

**ALGOMA UNIVERSITY ACT, 2008**

**LOI DE 2008 SUR L'UNIVERSITÉ ALGOMA**

Mr. Milloy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to establish Algoma University and to dissolve Algoma University College / Projet de loi 80, Loi portant création de l'Université Algoma et dissolution de l'Algoma University College.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate? Mr. Milloy.

**Hon. John Milloy:** It's a pleasure to be addressing Bill 80, to be opening up the debate on this today. At the outset I want to say that I'll be sharing my time this morning with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill, and also my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin will be speaking on the issue.

As a relatively new minister here in this government, it's a great pleasure that this is actually the first piece of legislation that I'm bringing forward, a piece of legislation which deals with the important issue of post-secondary education in our province. I've been very hon-

oured and privileged to be associated with a government which has made post-secondary education and training one of the centrepieces of its time in office.

As members are aware, several years ago, as a result of important work that was undertaken through the Reaching Higher study, we introduced the \$6.2-billion plan for higher education in the province. That has been supplemented with a series of investments, most recently in the March budget, a \$1.5-billion skills to jobs action plan.

The thrust of all this has been a recognition that in the province of Ontario, for us to succeed, for us to prosper, for us to compete with the giants of Brazil, India and China, we need to invest in our people; we need to invest in the education and skills of our people. I've been very proud of the results of the plan. Right now we have 100,000 more students involved in post-secondary education in Ontario than there were when we took office. Some 60% of 25- to 64-year-olds have completed a post-secondary education certificate, diploma or university degree program in Ontario, making it one of the highest rates in the OECD.

The thrust, the goal, of our policy when it comes to post-secondary education, has of course been excellence. We want to make sure that Ontario maintains one of the best systems in the world, and we've seen increasing investments in the operating funds of our colleges and universities as well as the infrastructure. It's been about accessibility. We've had the privilege of seeing about \$1.5 billion invested in student assistance over the past several years. We've seen increases in OSAP, increases in special funds aimed at first-generation students, aboriginal students, disabled students and francophone students, who are not always as well represented in our post-secondary education cohort.

We've also tried to have a system which is responsive and flexible, which takes a look at what the needs are in our province, what the needs are in particular regions of the province and respond to them. This third point, in fact, is what we're talking about this morning: We're talking about the transformation of Algoma University College, which right now is an affiliate of Laurentian University, into an independent university. If this legislation passes, it sets out the groundwork for this new university and would establish such an institution in Sault Ste. Marie.

Just to give a little bit of background of the history of this wonderful institution to those in the Legislature and those who might be watching us, it opened its doors in

1964 and has been serving the residents of Sault Ste. Marie ever since. As it's an affiliate of Laurentian University, students are able to go to Algoma and receive a degree from Laurentian University. Over the years it has developed a tradition of excellence. Enrolment at the moment is around 1,000 students. It has developed into a first-class institution where students can choose from over 30 undergraduate programs in areas ranging from finance and economics to fine arts and information technology.

I think it's important to note that Algoma University College provides an important centre in the north for those students who wish to access post-secondary education. Several months ago, the Premier had the honour of announcing an initiative that had been brought forward by our government in terms of distance education. It was additional supports for students from rural and northern areas who have to travel long distances to attend post-secondary education, either by commuting or by travelling there. The one interesting note that I discovered, in helping to prepare that announcement and that program, is the fact that distance can be an impediment for students. Especially in areas like northern Ontario, students don't necessarily want to travel long distances to receive their post-secondary education, and studies have shown that it is an obstacle. So by having an institution like Algoma University College, as it presently is, or, if this bill passes, an independent university, it would provide the ability for these students to access post-secondary education closer to home.

Another interesting aspect of the current institution is its close links with the local aboriginal community and with First Nations education in general. More than 20% of Algoma University College's students are First Nations. It's the only institution I'm aware of that offers a bachelor of arts in the Ojibway language, and it has created close links with the aboriginal communities in the area. Algoma's students, faculty and staff I think recognize the uniqueness of this institution, the fact that it serves such an important role in northern Ontario and the fact that it has a special relationship with the First Nations community and for many years has been working to see it take the next step, to become independent. I think the government recognized this a year ago; the Premier made an announcement, as well as my predecessor, Christopher Bentley, who is now the Attorney General, that we wanted to take this next step, that we wanted to take Algoma University College and turn it into an independent institution.

#### 0910

What will this do? What will this mean? First of all, as an independent university, we're going to be creating more opportunities for students, particularly in the north. As I mentioned, distance can often create a great barrier to students who want to pursue post-secondary education. Although Algoma University will be open to students from across the province—indeed, from throughout the world—it's going to have a special role in terms of

attracting students from northern Ontario and making sure that they have a first-class undergraduate education.

The other thing is its relationship with First Nations. By establishing an independent university, Algoma will be able to offer excellence in education to First Nations communities in that area and throughout northern Ontario. I've been very proud of the work that our government has done in terms of the First Nations file. It's been one of engagement, it's been one of partnership, and most of all it's been one of creating opportunities. I want to single out, of course, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for his leadership in this regard, leadership that has come from the Premier. Part of creating opportunities is creating ways for people to receive the education and the upgrading of skills that they need. Algoma already serves that purpose, and as an independent university we're going to be strengthening and enhancing its role in allowing First Nations individuals to pursue their education there. If you talk to anyone in the First Nations community, if you talk to the many people, thoughtful people, who have looked at many of the profound challenges facing First Nations people, at the core of the solutions to overcoming these challenges, to overcoming these obstacles, has been the whole issue of education. The creation of an independent university, with one of these being its special mission, will, I think, add a great deal to this government's agenda when it comes to creating opportunity and will strengthen the First Nations communities in northern Ontario, particularly in the Sault Ste. Marie area.

The other spin-off of this, of course, is for the community of Sault Ste. Marie itself. The creation of an independent university will do much to attract more jobs and opportunities to the north. I had the pleasure of speaking at a press conference—which I want to talk about in a minute—a day or two ago, when we introduced the legislation, and certainly we made clear our government's commitment to make sure that Algoma will have, if this legislation is passed, the resources that it needs to operate as an effective, independent university—again, with these special missions about education in the north and First Nations, and making sure that it has the resources. That, in turn, is going to further strengthen the community of Sault Ste. Marie and is going to create an institution which I know everyone's going to be very, very proud to call their own, there.

I want to conclude today by thanking the many, many people who were involved in getting to this point, and hopefully it's going to result in the passage of this legislation. I have to thank the faculty, staff and administration of Algoma University College, the chair of the board, Bud Wildman, and the president, Celia Ross. I also want to acknowledge the support of the local MPPs. I had a chance the other day, when introducing this legislation, to speak about the important role that has been played by David Oraziotti, the MPP for Sault Ste. Marie, who is a strong advocate for his community and a strong advocate for this institution. I understand that the member actually sat on the board of governors before

entering politics and was involved in some of the early discussions about giving independence.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague the member from Algoma–Manitoulin—the area just outside of Sault Ste. Marie—who's been another strong advocate for this institution and for this area. I know that he welcomes and has been a voice calling for this independence, because he knows the benefit that it's going to bring to his community and to the north.

I also want to talk about the northern caucus in general and the support that they've brought forward throughout this process of reaching this decision point. They've recognized some of the unique challenges in the north and that the presence of a fourth university through the establishment of Algoma University is going to be of great benefit for people in the north. It's going to continue to bring jobs and prosperity to it and it's going to allow young people who want to stay in the north to pursue their education and to establish roots there.

Finally, I want to talk just for a second about the people of Sault Ste. Marie. As I mentioned, following the introduction of the bill the other day in ministers' statements, I had the privilege of participating in a press conference down in the press gallery, where I was linked by video to Algoma University College. They had taken over one of the large classroom areas there. They had about 200 people there: the mayor, civic leaders and members of the press were there. As well, we had a huge delegation here in the gallery. Together, we made a presentation about the new legislation, what it would mean if it was passed, and offered some advice and some comments that came forward. I think what struck me was how close-knit this community is, how much this community believes in this institution and wants to see it proceed to the next step and become an independent university.

If you'll permit me, I'd like to quote the local newspaper, the Sault Star—what they had to say the next day. They said, "The bill's introduction drew smiles and repeated applause as a full lecture theatre at AUC watched on large video screens while the event took place in the Legislature in Toronto." I think it's a credit to the people of Sault Ste. Marie that literally hundreds would come out to watch on a video screen the introduction of a bill. I think it signifies and symbolizes the importance of this piece of legislation for a very important part of this province, which in turn is going to benefit the north, which in turn is going to benefit the province in general.

We need to have the most dynamic and the most excellent, first-rate post-secondary education system in the world if we're going to continue to compete. I'm proud of what we've done thus far, and I think the passage of this bill is going to add to the excellence in post-secondary education which exists in this province.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure for me to rise in this House in support of our Honourable Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and to speak on Bill 80. Today we are considering legislation that would, if

passed, make a significant difference to the development of one of Ontario's great communities, Sault Ste. Marie.

The Soo, as most of us know it, has long been an important economic cornerstone of the north. Since long before European exploration and settlement, the local Ojibway knew the area as Baawitigong, meaning a great place to fish. I hear that it still is, by the way. But since the first European settlement in 1668, it has been much more than that.

The earliest French explorers used the St. Marys River as a gateway to the west. It remains a key gateway between eastern and western Canada for grain, iron and many more products using the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. Economically, Sault Ste. Marie has long been known for its steel mill and for forestry across the region.

As a government, we know we must take steps to ensure the stability of our communities like the Soo, the future competitiveness of our economy and the prosperity of our people. In today's world, a factory can be built anywhere in the world. Distance and borders are no longer obstacles to companies investing wherever in the world they choose. What draws new investment in today's economy is the availability of skills, dynamism and the productivity of communities. What keeps Ontario businesses competitive in the world is the ability to turn ideas into products and services that the world needs. We can foster these conditions by encouraging and helping our people to reach their full potential. In a world where learning and skills are what make us competitive, that means investing in education. Sault Ste. Marie's people have the potential to keep their great city vibrant and strong and to help bring its economy forward and growing into the new millennium.

Our government is proposing to grant Algoma University College independent university status. This will be a major milestone in the long history of this historic community and will help establish a new course for the people and economy of this important region.

#### 0920

Algoma University College, of course, has a long history in Sault Ste. Marie. First established in 1964, Algoma has been providing high-quality education for over four decades. It has been doing this as an affiliate college of Laurentian University in Sudbury.

This legislation would open the door to new paths for the new, independent university, which would become the fourth independent university in northern Ontario. It would give the college the independence to expand programming in the future in ways that would best suit the Sault Ste. Marie region. It would allow Algoma to expand its outreach, recruiting more students and offering greater opportunities to students across the north.

For current students, our legislation would ensure that they are able to complete their current course of studies without interruption. For future students, it means more opportunities for post-secondary education in the north. This is also very important for aboriginal students, particularly for the Anishnawbe, or Ojibway, people across

Ontario and the American Midwest, and for all aboriginal students across the north as well.

Algoma has long recognized the important education needs of aboriginal people in the north and has worked hard with community organizations, leaders and students to help improve their access to post-secondary education. Their focus has been on empowerment, working with this important community to help them take control of their future by developing post-secondary programming and services that meet their needs and address cultural considerations. They also offer some unique programs in Ojibway history, culture and language, not available anywhere else in the world. Algoma offers the only BA degree in the Ojibway language, a program of vital importance to the Ojibway people on both sides of the border.

The benefits of an independent Algoma University would cast a ripple effect, beyond its students, across northern Ontario. Sault Ste. Marie has been a strong part of the north's economy for a very long time. But like other Ontario communities, if Sault Ste. Marie is to continue to grow as a community, it must be able to grow its economy and keep up with the rapidly changing demands of globalization.

Having a strong, independent Algoma University would provide an important resource for Sault Ste. Marie. It would help ensure a well-trained workforce with the skills needed to keep local industry competitive and help attract new investment. It would be able to work closely with local businesses and government leaders on shared goals for economic development. It would provide a strong sense of local civic pride, contributing to the dynamism and ingenuity of a community with a strong sense of history, pride in its achievements and confidence in its future. It would help produce some of the new community and business leaders who will keep Sault Ste. Marie and Ontario strong for years to come.

Our government knows how important post-secondary education is to Ontario's future. Ontario remains one of the key driving forces in North America for new ideas, new innovations and new products and services. Oil may be fuelling our vehicles, but it is Ontario's ideas that are helping build the International Space Station, sending BlackBerry messages around the globe in an instant and creating the most productive automobile plants year after year. It is that ingenuity that will guarantee our future.

Last year our economic growth outpaced expectations, despite some significant challenges. In our recent budget, our government outlined an ambitious plan to keep Ontario strong and growing and to ensure a bright future for Ontarians. One of the key priorities that we identified was the continued reinvestment in Ontario's post-secondary institutions. We recognize the important role our universities, colleges and training partners play in helping to ensure that every Ontarian is able to reach their goals. We are committed to ensuring a strong and dynamic post-secondary system for all Ontario students, regardless of where they live or what their socioeconomic background is.

Our students are our future. They are the innovators who will turn exciting new ideas into things that have the power to change our lives. They are our future business executives and company leaders. Some of them will be sitting in this Legislature some day and building on the foundation that we provide for them today.

For Sault Ste. Marie, an independent Algoma University would bring a cornerstone for that community's foundation. Algoma's high-quality programs and commitment to the community have produced great results. Since 1997, Algoma's enrolment has grown by over 42%. That represents many more local students getting their education locally, making them more likely to remain in the community post graduation. This is important in the north, where many young people go to university or college in the south and do not return. It represents more aboriginal students getting a post-secondary education for personal growth and helping their communities grow and prosper.

We believe it is now time for the next stage of Algoma's development: full university status. It is the next logical step in the long history for the development of Sault Ste. Marie. It will be an important part of ensuring that our government's \$6.2-billion Reaching Higher plan is able to reach all of Ontario. After all, our people are our greatest asset. Our government remains committed to developing Ontario's post-secondary education system into truly the envy of the world. Accomplishing this will ensure Ontario's place in the future. Creating a new Algoma University is just one step in our government's plan.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the member for Durham.

As the Progressive Conservative critic for Training, Colleges and Universities, I'm pleased to say a few words on behalf of John Tory and our caucus on what is an important step forward for education in northern Ontario and a very exciting time for Algoma University, Sault Ste. Marie and the communities along Highway 17, from Wawa to Blind River and beyond.

What we're debating here today is something that I know the president, Celia Ross, the chair of the board of governors, Mr. Bud Wildman, and all of the faculty, the students, the board, the administration and the community at large have been working on long and hard for many, many years.

The power to confer degrees, after a long affiliation with Laurentian University in Sudbury, recognizes Algoma University College's more than 40 years of exceptional higher education, fiscal management and academic excellence. These degree-granting powers aren't just thrown around. In fact, it happens quite rarely. During my 18 years in the House, the last degree-granting institution we saw established was the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, which Mr. O'Toole, my colleague, will be speaking about shortly; I recall Ryerson University in the early 1990s; and of course in 1992, Nipissing University was established, and that was the first time in 20 years that a university had been estab-

lished in this province. So this is a rare and historic occasion.

### 0930

In this day and age, to have a university in your city—and Sault Ste. Marie is the third-largest city in northern Ontario—is a real accomplishment. It's an extremely beneficial component to the economic and cultural welfare of the community. As I said in my remarks yesterday when the bill was introduced, I served on the board of governors at the University of Toronto, and one of my first elected positions was as a member of the student council there. This makes me think of how difficult it must be for Algoma University College right now, under the current arrangement with Laurentian University, to have loyal alumni and to attract loyal alumni, because even if you spend your entire three or four years getting that degree at Algoma University College, the diploma you actually get for the wall says "Laurentian University."

I was under the same arrangement when I went to the University of St. Michael's College. My degree says "University of Toronto," which I'm quite proud of—as I served on the student council there and on its board of governors—but when I write a cheque every year, I'm split between, "Do I send it to St. Michael's College or to the University of Toronto?"

This way, it will be clear that graduates who spent their three or four years—and soon, graduate studies—at what will soon be called Algoma U can be loyal to the one institution, even though the 40-year arrangement with Laurentian University, as I understood when I met with Bud Wildman and Celia Ross a couple weeks ago, has worked very, very well. Laurentian University has certainly given its blessing to this new step forward for Algoma University College to become its own full-fledged university today.

I mentioned already that Algoma University College has operated for more than 40 years. I think it's important that some of the history of the college be put on record at this time, because we're now taking the next step forward in the next chapter for Algoma University College and we should all know where it began. I want to quote briefly from this historical outline that is on the college's website:

"The desire to establish an undergraduate liberal arts college in Sault Ste. Marie originated as a broad citizens' movement in the 1950s. In October 1964, the Algoma College Association was incorporated by letters patent of the province of Ontario. One year later, Algoma College was established as a non-sectarian institution affiliated with Laurentian University.

"In September 1967, Algoma College opened its doors to its first students. Its program for full-time students was limited to the first year of the B.A. and B.Sc. degrees. In part-time studies, the college was permitted to offer the full B.A. program. In the early years, part-time enrolment expanded rapidly to over 1,000 students by 1969-70.

"The strong community support that led to the founding of the college continued during the early years of its

development. The citizens of Sault Ste Marie, through their municipal government, provided major assistance to the college in the form of capital and operating funds. In addition, local industries, businesses, service clubs and individuals established a scholarship program for students attending the college.

"The year 1971 marked a significant turning point in the college's history in respect to both program and facilities. In recognition of the rapid maturation of the college, the department of university affairs authorized the expansion of full-time in arts to the full three years. The second year was added in September 1971 and third year in 1972. In addition, in September 1971, the college was relocated to its own campus. The college acquired by lease Shingwauk Hall and the Shingwauk site, including 53 acres of land fronting on the St. Marys River. Extensive renovations were completed to Shingwauk Hall, and temporary buildings were constructed to provide a science laboratory, music conservatory, language laboratory, office and classroom facilities.

"In 1973, construction of a library wing was completed. In 1975, with the assistance of a grant from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, the college purchased Shingwauk Hall and 37 acres of land surrounding the buildings. In 1989, the Arthur A. Wishart Library was opened and other renovations completed. In 1992, the George Leach Centre was opened for athletics and recreation. A student residence was completed and occupied in September 1995 with a new addition available in September 2001. With the completion of this construction, Algoma's facilities are as modern as any in the province."

It goes on to say, "The university is sensitive to the educational needs of the community, and responds to those needs. Algoma University College serves the community in a wide variety of fields apart from its role in delivering university courses. The Arthur A. Wishart Library is accessible to public use. The George Leach Centre is available for community use as an athletics and recreation centre. Other facilities are frequently used for meetings and presentations by community organizations. Many students, faculty and staff lend their knowledge and actively support many community organizations, from government and research to cultural and social agencies.

"From the beginning, Algoma University College has seen itself as an innovative institution, specializing in undergraduate education. To this end, the college intends to remain a relatively small institution where students and faculty can study and learn in a personal environment. Courses are offered both day and evening."

That's the end of what was on the website in terms of the history of the college, but then there's also this. It's written as an introduction for students who may want to attend the college. It's written by Arthur Perlini, who is the academic dean and associate professor of psychology at Algoma University College, soon of course to be called Algoma U or Algoma University.

“Our history harkens back to the 1830s, when a visionary leader sought to establish a place of learning in a community created some 200 years earlier, in the 1630s. The history and tradition of our origins is one in which we maintain a steadfast commitment: to educate men and women to find truth in thought, in engagement, in dialogue. And to do so in a community of scholars, teachers and students.

“You are undoubtedly facing one of the most exciting times of your life, where intellectual exploration and adventure is paramount. While your purpose for doing so will earn you advantage, we are intent on inspiring you to develop leadership and responsibility to the generations that follow you. What we offer you is a depth, breadth and engagement of learning that invites you to the process of learning; we do this in an intimate, innovative and energetic climate. This is our mission. Your promise is unfolding and one that we invite you to share with us so that we may help create the leaders of tomorrow.

“It takes both will and opportunity to succeed; learning is the means by which success is achieved. We hold dear the trust you place in us in this process, as it is you who will shape the world of tomorrow, and beyond.”

That’s the end of the quote from the dean—rather inspiring words. It certainly typifies what Dr. Ross and Bud Wildman explained to me when I met with them recently, when they spoke of the personal and intimate learning environment. With just 1,300 students and an average class size of 25, it’s a very valuable offer they have in terms of more direct and personal interaction with your professors and peers.

When I went to the University of Toronto, my international relations class, poli 208, had 1,100 students in it. We had to have the class, with Professor Janice Stein, at Convocation Hall. That continues today. So when I hear the government bragging about all the money they put into universities, they sure haven’t brought down class sizes. According to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, we need to hire 5,500 full-time professors right now just to keep up with the increased student enrolment that we’ve seen under this government—but we also saw it under the previous Mike Harris government.

I just want to conclude by saying that some of the programs the college currently offers, with 30 degree options, range from computer science to fine arts, business administration, community and economic and social development. I know once this legislation is adopted, this list will grow even larger.

I want to conclude by saying to the board, staff, administration, alumni and to the local municipal council and Mayor John Rowswell, who I know well from my days as the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, you have the support of John Tory and the Progressive Conservative caucus. We’re prepared to allow speedy passage of this bill because we agree with it, and we agree with you and know that this is good news for northern Ontario and for Sault Ste. Marie. We commend everyone who has been involved at the local level for

their persistence and strong resolve to see this initiative become reality. Congratulations.

**0940**

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s a pleasure to join this morning with my colleague and the critic for the ministry, Mr. Wilson. I appreciate his remarks. My remarks will be very much the same. I think all of us are willing to celebrate good-news events and certainly, for Algoma U, this is a good-news event. In fact, it reminds me of the time, going back some years ago, when, in a similar situation, the community I represent—at that time, part of my riding of Durham included Oshawa. In fact, it included the part of Oshawa where Durham College was. Durham College, like Algoma, was the main educational institution in Oshawa, but it did have partnerships with Trent University, because I had taken courses there, as well as, I believe, some with York University. So there were a couple of universities that offered courses at the college over the years. Your degree, as my colleague Mr. Wilson said, would be from the university that had the charter. The loyalties and those things sometimes get lost, and the history and the romance, if you will, of that experience of going to college or university is often affiliated with your alumnus, with where you actually went physically, but your degree will say something quite different.

I think it’s important to look at Bill 80’s explanatory notes in the brief time that we have here. It says, “The bill dissolves Algoma University College (hereinafter referred to as the ‘college’) and re-establishes the institution as a university to be known as Algoma University.” So it is transformative.

In the case of Durham College, it remains an independent institution, and there is the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, which is a fully recognized, degree-granting university, but they share a campus and they share many resources. They did try something quite innovative at that time. My colleague from Simcoe–Grey tells me that the experience, back when they had the double cohort—you may recall the elimination of the fifth year of high school, then called grade 13. That was eliminated, I guess, in around 1999 or 2000, or somewhere in there. That created a dilemma where students who were in their transitional period, in grade 12—it took about five years to sort of ramp up the content of the curriculum, so that there were really two years graduating at once: those in grade 13, the last group, and those finishing their high school with grade 12.

The double cohort was in all the media and all the press, and lots of criticism rendered toward Mike Harris, but those were transformative times. They actually expanded the capacity and the number of seats and grants to the universities, and at that time, created the new University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I go on to say that because I think we created 20,000 new spaces in universities. That was a huge change. That dilemma of the double cohort virtually disappeared; it never really materialized. Why I say that is that the great outrage was

that they expected that everyone would go automatically from grade 12.

How relevant is this is? This is just the ongoing part of the pursuit of higher education. We know that we are all in a knowledge-based economy. Not just for Sault Ste. Marie, but for the students and those who will attend, it's more convenient if that is located in their community. About half the cost of university—having had five children, my wife and I had three in university for three or four years. Some of them went beyond and took more than the four-year course. The point being that the living accommodations, if you're living away from home, cost as much as the university itself. So that part of it is good.

More and more young people are attending post-secondary today, and many of them choose—because of pressures, I suppose, or prestige—a university. Many of those students—I can tell you that almost all of our five children—all of them have a degree, but almost all of them went either to a postgraduate degree or to a college degree to sort of get some real-life skills and experience.

It means so much in Durham's case that that university, UOIT, which is a bit of an awkward name in a way—they wanted to call it DUC, like Duke University. They wanted to call it Durham University Centre. That was the original name that the community wanted and it probably would have been more comfortably pronounceable, as opposed to UOIT. Algoma University—AU—is an extremely comfortable name. It brings so much to a community beyond the institutional names, for the students, the community and the academic infrastructure. Even the saleability of the community in a marketing sense is improved. There is no negative aspect that I can see. It attracts another level of society—I don't want to be snobbish about this—and everyone in the community benefits.

I'm going to try to relate my experience in watching the growth of a new university. I had a very small, insignificant role, unlike perhaps David Oraziatti. It seems he had a very important role. I wouldn't want to criticize that; I think you should be very proud of that. The university has grown. In fact, I know one person who is very heavily involved. I think he's on the academic side, in the sports program. They have a rowing team, quite a good rowing team. They have an Olympic-level coach for the rowing team. For young people, the rowing opportunity beyond academics is invaluable.

There is another wonderful partnership that was just agreed to by the Oshawa Durham Symphony Orchestra. You may not have heard of it. I was at the symphony a few weeks ago. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology and its president, Ron Bordessa, were on the stage with another gentleman who is the president of the board of the symphony. They formed a partnership, and the symphony is now going to have its home at the university and, as such, is going to be building an appropriate facility on the campus over time.

Those partnerships may not have a direct relationship to Algoma, but I see Sault Ste. Marie as a similar kind of place. It's an area I've been to many times. I will speak a

little bit about that. It's those kinds of partnerships that make the community richer for everyone: those who enjoy classical music, those who enjoy the research aspect, the connectivity with intelligent discussions, debates and dialogue. It's enriching. They will have visiting lecturers, and all sorts of themes will go through the community, talking about economic opportunities, educational opportunities etc. A university does bring a lot to a community.

Again, I did talk about the fact that the perspective here should always be, most importantly, the students and the opportunities for them and their future, and that's been brought out in this discussion on Bill 80. The programs that will be offered there, as well as addressing the needs of First Nations—in my notes here it says that Algoma University College was established in 1964 and has been affiliated with Laurentian University in Sudbury. Today, Algoma U offers undergraduate degrees, including bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, computer science, business administration, fine arts, law and justice, community economics and social development, and biology, among others. It's also the North American home of the renowned University of Abertay Dundee master's degree in computer game technologies, an M.Sc. (CGT) degree. So there it is, a university in Sault Ste. Marie offering high technology.

#### 0950

This brings me to a whole other level of discussion. I have, as I said, five children, and I'll just give you one example of how global universities and education really are. My youngest daughter has a degree from Windsor, a Bachelor of Commerce, I believe, and is pursuing her master's degree in—I think it's Edinburgh. Anyway, it's in the British Isles. She lives in the Isle of Man. It's not an executive M.B.A.; she has been working on her M.B.A. for three years. She was in London, because her sister is a high school teacher in London, England, and took courses at the London University.

My daughter Rochelle's fiancée is a securities lawyer. David Oraziatti may even know him because he's from Sault Ste. Marie. He's a very smart young guy too. He actually has an M.B.A. law degree from Dalhousie. I'm not sure—I believe he got his undergraduate degree in the Soo; it may be from Laurentian. And he played pretty competitive hockey. His name is Jason Trainor. I say that to David because, as I mentioned, they live in the Isle of Man now and he practises law for a firm—because it's a tax haven location. This is how important education is. He's actually pursuing further studies online at a virtual university through the law firm that he works for out of London, England. Many courses today, especially MBA-type courses, specialized courses, are almost like virtual sites online.

I personally took M.B.A.-level courses when I was at General Motors. The program was out of Northwestern University. We went there once but most of the courses were online.

The beauty of a destination location is that the physical university plant is probably more important for the community than one could really imagine. As I said, one

of the courses they're quite famous for is computer gaming technology, this M.Sc. in CGT, gaming technology. I can imagine that those courses in gaming technology probably could be offered online. Why would you need a physical location? I'm sure some of the things now in gaming technology and gaming generally—I'm not a big fan of these things, casinos and things, but it's all tied to what's being talked about here. The basis for that kind of course material is the use of computers, as well as mathematics. Most of those things are probability things, about how much money the government will make. That's the problem with it.

I would say that people pursuing these courses could be doing it online. They could be paying tuition to Algoma. The community could be benefiting from somebody living in Arizona—or as I said before, with my children, in other places—doing it online and learning how to become more proficient in some advanced skill.

I think it is wonderful. I've covered a broad range. First of all, the most important thing is for the community, whether they're First Nations or just young people who live in Algoma and don't have all the money in the world to go to the University of Toronto or Queen's University or the University of Western Ontario or the University of Waterloo.

I became very engaged in the importance of post-secondary education, because I did most of my degree work on a part-time basis. I did go full-time, but I did most of the degree work part-time at about three universities. I was hired by GM, and I had one year of university. It's quite interesting—more of a personal story here, Jim—how valuable this is. The lesson here is that Algoma now is a destination for people who may not otherwise have gone to Sault Ste. Marie for some specific course. That person can become a benefactor, eventually, to that community and to that institution.

I took courses at Sir George Williams University because I was transferred to Sainte-Thérèse, Québec, with General Motors, and it was the only university in Canada that offered night-time courses in an undergraduate program. I was there when they had the big computer revolt. I was taking computer science. They just about destroyed the university. They threw all the computers out the window—it was right downtown in Montreal. Some people may recall that. It was a huge event in 1968 or 1969, somewhere in there. So it goes back a bit of time. That university eventually was transformed. It's not Sir George Williams now; it's Concordia.

I took some courses at McGill, which began to offer courses in a business program at night—evening programs. My wife was going to McGill at the time. So we were living in a student residence. I took about eight courses from McGill. So I had all these different courses, but they were all from different universities.

Then I worked a bit of time in other locations, but I was transferred back to Ontario and ended up at Atkinson College, part of York University, which was the first to offer night-time courses, and I went to York. I think I

took three or four courses there. Then the University of Toronto offered courses. I knew people who were going there who worked for the Ministry of Education—a good friend of mine still to this day, Mavis Carleton. We drove together. Eventually I found out that to get a degree you had to have 10 courses from the university. I had eight or nine courses from three or four universities. I had something like 30 credits, but I didn't have a degree per se, so I had to finish 10 courses at the University of Toronto, and that's where my degree is from. I had 36 credits or something, but you only need 20 for an undergraduate degree. It's quite a thing. But I still feel, as I've just described, over those 20 or so years, an affiliation for each of those universities. I'm sure that the students in the future who will attend Algoma will have great stories and history to tell.

How important is that whole thing of the alumnus? I can tell you, I get letters from them all, I think, because as I said before, I had taken other courses, but my wife is an alumnus as well. In the news this morning is an example of what it means to be an alumnus of a school. This was an article in the Globe and Mail this morning. It says, "Developer Gives U of T a \$14-Million Gift." It's quite a remarkable story. It says:

"Mr. Daniels, 81, returned the favour yesterday, with a \$14-million gift to his former faculty. The donation includes \$5 million for scholarships, with preference going to budding architects who, like Mr. Daniels, are the first in their family to go to university." So it transformed his life. In fact, it must have been an amazing family, because he says in this article that he had difficulty meeting his tuition and other expenses and the university gave him a hand so he could complete his studies. So it's a great investment the university made in him, both in knowledge as well as opportunity, and it certainly paid a handsome dividend. He goes on to say as well in the article:

"Mr. Daniels, who graduated in 1950, spent his first year in architecture at a makeshift campus in a munitions plant in Ajax, Ontario"—in fact, that's quite a famous story. The University of Toronto architecture program was offered in Ajax, which is in Durham region. It's such an interesting story. This is one story that was in the clip-pings today—it's not something I'm making up—about how important universities are, and their history, and the people as well as the facilities themselves. It says:

"Mr. Daniels said he decided to make the gift now while he is able to enjoy it and because he saw the need. His nephew"—this is Mr. Daniels's nephew, and this is interesting too—"former U of T law school dean, Ron Daniels—"

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** That's right. Ron Daniels is a profoundly respected gentleman himself, a nephew of Mr. Daniels, and was instrumental in initiating the gift to the university. It's transformative, and I think that's the best thing we can say about this today.

**1000**

Some of the current presidents of the universities—Paul Davenport, I think, from the University of Western Ontario, the head of COU, the Council of Ontario Universities—I don't think, are ever really happy when there's a new university; these are my concluding remarks, and probably the only critical thing I'll say. It's another mouth at the table, another plate at the table. Unless more money is put into the post-secondary process, they'll all be a little bit poorer in terms of operating revenue.

If you look at how important this whole process of funding a knowledge-based—and, more importantly, a technically based—economy is, there's a very famous report from about 1998, called the Smith report. Smith was president of Queen's University and wrote a report on the funding of universities. It's a report you should have a look at, because even today, when we've had the Bob Rae study, issued about a year and a half or two years ago, saying they were going to give \$6 billion, the university students were here two months ago complaining that there's not enough money and tuitions are too high—higher in Ontario than in any other province. So there is a lot of work to be done here. It's wonderful news, but if this is really a serious commitment to post-secondary education and opportunities for our youth—in fact, an opportunity for our economy and a really important investment—then I want to see the money.

As part of this debate, I challenge the minister, as well as the Minister of Finance, to show me the money. At the end of the day, all the sentimental comments that are being made are just that if there's no money to make this a success. I say to you myself that UOIT, a very innovative university, a strong university with a great academic team as well as lots of pressures in the community and opportunities as well, with General Motors, Ontario Power Generation and the first nuclear program, does need money. They need money for facilities and expansion, and to replace technology that's being outdated. So there is work to be done here.

This is good news. We would be supportive of it. Mr. Wilson, our critic, and myself are here to say that John Tory and our team are in support of this. We are in support of a knowledge-based economy for the right reasons: It's opportunities for young people and indeed for Ontario's future.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm also very happy to rise in the House this morning to talk about Bill 80, the Algoma University Act. This bill is about the possibility of a promising new post-secondary education opportunity in this province. I am, of course, talking about the process of establishing Algoma University College, currently an affiliate of the respected Laurentian University, as a university on its own, Algoma University—it sounds good, doesn't it?—a university of distinction here in Ontario, and across Canada and the globe.

To begin, I want to particularly commend the hard work of Bud Wildman, the chair of Algoma University College, and their dean, Mrs. Celia Ross, for their efforts

in moving forward this long-standing aspiration of a stand-alone Algoma University as a beneficial addition to the educational landscape of the north.

I also want to highlight the co-operation of Mrs. Judith Woodsworth, presently the president of Laurentian University, and everybody at Laurentian University for their assistance during the transition. I know that Mr. Robert Bourgeois, who will become the interim president of Laurentian University on August 1, will continue the good work to make sure that the transition on the ground happens smoothly.

Il me fait plaisir de participer au débat du projet de loi 80. Ce projet de loi ouvre la porte envers la création d'un établissement d'enseignement postsecondaire dans notre province. Je parle, bien entendu, du collège universitaire d'Algoma. Le collège universitaire d'Algoma est présentement un des collèges affiliés de l'Université Laurentienne. Avec ce projet de loi, on en fait une université indépendante, l'Université Algoma. Il me semble que ça sonne bien. Ce sera ici en Ontario et pour tout le Canada.

Je veux commencer par souligner et remercier M. Bud Wildman, qui est le président de l'Université Algoma, et la doyenne, M<sup>me</sup> Celia Ross. Grâce à leurs efforts et leur vision, ce projet important s'est matérialisé. L'Université Algoma sera une université indépendante, une addition importante pour le nord de l'Ontario et tous les gens qui y résident, ainsi que pour l'Ontario, le Canada et le monde.

Si—vraiment, je devrais dire « quand »—ce projet de loi sera mis en œuvre, Algoma sera la quatrième université indépendante dans le nord de l'Ontario. Le nord a besoin des ces institutions. Les institutions d'enseignement sont tellement importantes pour tout le monde, mais spécifiquement pour les gens du nord.

J'aimerais partager avec vous quelques exemples dans mon comté de Nickel Belt. Parce que nous avons l'Université Laurentienne à Sudbury, les gens et les agences de mon comté en ont bénéficié beaucoup. J'aimerais vous donner l'exemple de D<sup>re</sup> Marie-Luce Garceau, qui est professeure au département de travail social de l'Université Laurentienne. D<sup>re</sup> Garceau était sur le conseil d'administration du Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury, où je travaillais. Elle a décidé de se joindre à notre comité de développement de la qualité continue.

Grâce à ses efforts et à ses connaissances, elle a révisé notre questionnaire de satisfaction de la clientèle. Ceci nous a permis d'aller chercher des commentaires de notre clientèle qu'on n'aurait jamais pu obtenir si on n'avait pas fait les révisions qu'elles nous a suggérées, et parce que la clientèle a été capable de dire spécifiquement comment on pouvait mieux répondre à leurs besoins, nous avons fait des changements significatifs à la façon dont on offre les services de soins primaires.

Parce que nous avons une université et parce que nous avons eu son expertise, les changements concrets ont eu lieu sur le terrain, et qui ont mené à des meilleurs soins pour les gens de Sudbury. Ça aussi va arriver à Algoma lorsque l'université sera pleinement en fonction.

J'aimerais également mentionner les efforts de M<sup>me</sup> Anita Pelletier. D<sup>re</sup> Pelletier travaille au département de nursing de l'Université Laurentienne. Elle aussi a participé à démontrer comment l'enseignement du nursing aux gens qui sont dans ce programme met l'accent sur la promotion de la santé et la prévention de la maladie, pas seulement sur le traitement. Elle a aidé la communauté à mieux comprendre le rôle de l'infirmière, un rôle qui est beaucoup plus vaste que de soigner les malades. Ce ne sont pas des gardes-malades, comme je dis souvent à mes collègues; ce sont des infirmières qui ont des connaissances en promotion de la santé, en développement communautaire, en prévention de maladies, et ça, parce que nous avons une école de nursing à Sudbury, c'est un message qu'ils ont été capables de véhiculer.

Les jeunes du nord qui choisissent d'étudier à Laurentienne ont beaucoup plus tendance à demeurer dans le nord. Je ne connais pas les statistiques par cœur, mais elles parlent vraiment fort. Parce que nous avons l'Université Laurentienne, il y a eu des collaborations qui se sont faites avec le programme de nursing du Collège Boréale, ainsi que celui du Collège Cambrian, ce qui veut dire que les infirmiers et infirmières qui ont fait leurs cours au collège peuvent faire la transition vers l'université de façon beaucoup plus facile. Ça rend l'accès à l'enseignement du nursing beaucoup plus accessible à tous les gens du nord, et ça rend également le recrutement des infirmières plus facile.

#### 1010

L'autre programme qui rend le recrutement plus facile, c'est le programme de sage-femme. Parce que nous avons un programme d'enseignement, le cours de sage-femme, dans le nord de l'Ontario à l'Université Laurentienne, ça nous a permis, entre autres, à Sudbury, d'ouvrir deux cliniques de sage-femme.

Et, bien entendu, un modèle qui est unique en son genre en Ontario, c'est le modèle de la clinique d'infirmières praticiennes. Ça, c'est directement lié au fait que, parce que nous avons une maison d'enseignement, l'Université Laurentienne, qui enseigne le cours d'infirmière praticienne aux gens du nord, nous avons des infirmières praticiennes dans le nord de l'Ontario et nous avons la seule et unique clinique d'infirmières praticiennes.

Ce sont des bénéfices concrets pour les gens de Nickel Belt, de mon comté, parce que nous avons une université.

Maintenant, les gens d'Algoma, de Sault-Sainte-Marie, Wawa, Dubreuilville, White River—tout le monde dans Algoma pourra bénéficier des mêmes avantages à cause de la création de l'Université Algoma.

If—and really I should say “when”—the bill is called, Algoma will become the fourth independent university in the north. Educational institutions in the north are so important, not only to the people living in northern Ontario, but for all of Ontario.

I know from experience in my own riding that because we have the Laurentian University campus located in Sudbury, it has changed the city. I'd like to give you an

example with Dr. Marie-Luce Garceau. She was a member of the board of directors of the community health centre where I worked. Dr. Garceau sat on our continuous quality improvement committee and reviewed the satisfaction questionnaire we had for clients. Because of her work in changing the questionnaires, we were able to get some feedback from our clients that we had never been able to get before. Because of their feedback, we made some very specific changes to the way we offered services to the people of Nickel Belt, Sudbury and the surrounding areas where we offered services. Because of this, the services improved, the quality of services improved, and the satisfaction, from the clients' perspective, with those services improved.

The link was so direct because Dr. Garceau happens to work for the school of social work, and because we have a school of social work in Sudbury, we have professors who get involved in their community and we were able to directly impact the quality of care of the people receiving care in Sudbury. Many, many researchers affiliated with Laurentian University do research that is very pertinent to the people living in the north, and living specifically in Sudbury. In the mining industry, there are all sorts of students, professors and teachers that do research.

I'd also like to give another example from a field I know better, which is health care, of Anita Pelletier, who is a professor in the school of nursing at Laurentian University. Madame Pelletier was able to educate the public as a whole as to the role of nurses. Nurses are not only there to treat people once they are sick. Through their training, they learn about health promotion, community development, and disease prevention. Through the work of Mrs. Anita Pelletier and the talks that she's given throughout her community, people better understand the roles of nurses in the health care system and how they are important in keeping people well. I credit this to the fact that we have a faculty of nursing in the north at Laurentian University.

There are three other examples that I'd like to talk about.

There's a partnership that exists between Laurentian University and Collège Boréal, as well as Cambrian College. This partnership allows nurses who have trained at the college level to do a smooth transition toward university. This has helped a lot of nurses get bachelor of nursing degrees, as well as making sure that we had a good workforce of nurses for the people of the north.

Another one is the school of midwives. We have a school of midwives in the north. In Sudbury alone, we have two independent clinics that offer midwifery services to the people of the north; here again, directly linked to the fact that we have a teaching institution in the north for those professionals.

Of course, I have to talk about nurse practitioners. Sudbury is the only community in all of Ontario that has a nurse practitioner-led clinic—the only one. Here again, the link is direct. Because we have a school of nursing in Sudbury, because those professionals are able to stay in the north to take their training, we were able to have the

first and only—so far—nurse practitioner-led clinic. But I know there will be more because it is such a great idea and it's making such a big difference in access to primary care for the people of Sudbury and surrounding area.

All of those benefits will also be available to the people of Algoma. The fact that they will have a stand-alone university in their own community will change forever the lives of the people of Algoma.

I'd also like to talk a bit about what happened in Sudbury when Collège Boréal was first introduced. Collège Boréal celebrated its 10th anniversary. It is a French college based out of Sudbury with campuses all over. It has changed the face of Sudbury. You hear French being spoken way more downtown. It is an active participant in all of the social fabric of our community and has really helped francophone students become educated. The number of francophone students going on to post-secondary education has increased greatly because they have access to a French college in Sudbury and through their campuses. I am sure the same thing will happen in Algoma because as Algoma University grows and prospers, there will be more people from Algoma, from northern Ontario and from all of Ontario who will choose to pursue post-secondary education. They are great opportunities for the north.

Schools in the north are not necessarily the same as other schools in the province. Very often, they provide unique programming and learning opportunities not found elsewhere, often in a very personal and community-focused way, in settings that are, to be honest, breathtaking.

I had the opportunity to study at Laurentian University. Because it was in my community, I was able to keep working as a physiotherapist and attend MBA courses at night at Laurentian University and to graduate. Those opportunities will also be offered to the people of Algoma, who will be able to take training on-site or off-campus and through continuing and online education.

In the case of Algoma, it seems that it is in keeping with this approach. Members of the administration and faculty, with the support of students at Algoma, have been approaching this as an opportunity to highlight and incorporate the community into the educational institution, looking at this as an opportunity for enrichment for both students who will be attending, hopefully, from all geographic areas, and those who live in the immediate vicinity.

They have worked hard to establish partnerships in local subject areas, the first one being in forestry. God knows that the forestry sector is having a hard enough time right now. A little bit of help from the university is certainly welcome. They've also established a partnership with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. Particularly, they've established a very strong partnership with the First Nations.

It has been a heartening process in bringing answers to questions about how to respect First Nations' interests and to work side by side, with consultation, on how to make the proposed university work. Consultation with

the First Nations is a theme that we hear lots about in this House—consultation as to mining exploration—and it's not always done well. In the case of Algoma, they put in the time, effort and energy to make sure that the consultation was well done. It has been an approach that has resulted in a healthy dialogue and a plan that sees First Nations and non-First Nations programs exist alongside each other with no barriers on campus—quite an achievement. Most of all, it respects First Nations governance, which is so important. This is particularly unique to Algoma relative to other First Nations programming. I realize there is First Nations programming that is available in a number of post-secondary institutions in Ontario but Algoma is the only one that has developed the governance piece which is so crucial to success. With its partner, Shingwauk Education Trust, Algoma has signed a sacred covenant and has agreed to a statement of common understanding in fulfilling the vision of Chief Shingwauk in the creation of a post-secondary education program called Shingwauk Kinomaage Gamig. Together, they are developing an educational environment of international merit. This mutual understanding manifests itself in the key application that the approved courses at Shingwauk Kinomaage Gamig will be delivered by renowned and respected Anishnaabe educators.

#### 1020

This is an important achievement, one that has been questioned by some—there may have been tension, and others didn't like this possibility. Regardless, the outcome has been positive. But, here again, it has required a lot of respect, a lot of consultation and a lot of hard work. Further details are naturally still being worked out, but worked out together, so that the entire community can benefit and grow. What a plus for the people of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma. This is an example that this government will do well to look at when it comes to matters in relation to education, and specifically in matters of First Nations. Consultation and respect for their rights and governance as a nation are crucial to any success. Algoma was able to do it. They serve as a model for others to follow.

For a small school, Algoma is looking to grow, hoping to expand its 1,200-student campus. This requires independence and the legitimacy that is being sought. The hope for Algoma is that they can begin spreading the message of their institution and recruiting students over the summer—an essential part of success as they embark on the university path. It is a campus that is known to be a friendly, welcoming and personal place, and the intention is for it to stay a small, high-quality teaching institution, one that is open to students from the north, of course, but also to students from across Ontario, Canada and internationally as well, because of the high-quality education and specialized programs they have been able to put in place.

In drawing support, Algoma has looked to provincial, federal and private community partnerships that provide high-quality, specialized learning opportunities and

unique programming. In order to achieve success in the most complete and promising way, Algoma University will require a great deal more financial assistance than it has been receiving. I think some of my colleagues have already alluded to this today. We call on this government to ensure that this is received and that there is adequate investment in what certainly promises to be a boon for the north, for education as a whole and for the entire province.

Algoma is an example of an institution which is negotiating its growing place in the community, having a dialogue on the process and opening its doors far and wide, wanting to continue to be a welcoming community.

As New Democrats, we want the best opportunities and education for our future generations, but we also acknowledge the reality in this province, where the cost of education is becoming increasingly prohibitive. There is huge student debt, which compromises the future success of our graduates, and cash-strapped institutions that struggle to cover costs and maintain the high quality we expect from every school in Ontario.

Ontario is at the bottom, dead last in per capita spending for education in Canada. These detrimental trends must be reversed. In this province, we have to realize that the phrase “education is a right”—it’s not a privilege; it is a right—commit to it and make it a reality.

We hope, as Algoma goes through the challenging yet rewarding process of developing, that there will be mindfulness of accessibility to higher education and that it can be a strong voice for advocacy. In doing so, we will support this bill and wish success for the future Algoma University.

Les néo-démocrates vont continuer d’encourager le développement des opportunités éducationnelles dans notre province, comme la création de l’Université Algoma, pour tous ceux qui pourront en bénéficier. Nous allons continuer de revendiquer l’accès à l’éducation postsecondaire pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Félicitations à l’Université Algoma. Je veux vous assurer que vous avez l’appui du parti néo-démocrate.

New Democrats look forward to the prospect of future opportunities for educational enrichment in this province for institutions like Algoma and most of all for the benefit of the great minds of the future, learning and flourishing here in Ontario. We will continue to fight for high-quality post-secondary education accessible to all Ontarians.

Congratulations to Algoma University. I can guarantee that you have the support of the New Democrats. Merci. Thank you. Meegwetch.

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

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I usually enjoy having a seatmate here beside me, but this morning he’s otherwise occupied.

I come to speak to this from a very proud legacy. This is a proud day for the district of Algoma, a proud day for northern Ontario and particularly a proud day for Sault Ste. Marie. I represent the constituency, as most of you

know, of Algoma–Manitoulin; 86,000 square kilometres and four districts are involved. Confederation College in Thunder Bay: I have many students from the Thunder Bay district of my constituency who go there. Many people go to Sault College who might be from the Algoma district. Many people go to Canadore in North Bay or Cambrian in Sudbury.

Many northern students in the college system go to northern colleges that are in my particular constituency. I’m proud that I have close association with Laurentian University. and with Algoma. I want to say how important and significant it is today to be able to stand here and know that the government is fulfilling a long-standing promise to Algoma which was made—it’s not that long-standing—last June by the Premier, who has shown an amazing commitment to northern issues, to northern people and particularly to the Algoma region. Over a period of time, he and the then Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mr. Bentley, and my very good colleague from Sault Ste. Marie, David Oraziatti, who has worked on this file very, very hard for years—he was a member of the board of governors before coming to this place. He has worked very hard on this file, and I think in many ways the credit here is to David Oraziatti for making sure that this bill is before the Legislature today.

I want to thank my colleagues in the other two parties who have supported this legislation and I know are helping us get this done over the next two days. I think it’s important when we recognize that in this place we can all come together on issues to make sure that certain things happen.

I want to also recognize my friend the member from Vaughan, Mr. Sorbara. When he was the Minister of Colleges and Universities way back in the Peterson government of 1985 to 1987, he made significant progress working with Algoma University College to make sure that this institution was on a sound financial footing and that it moved forward so this day would eventually come. I know that Mr. Sorbara is thought of very highly in the Soo by those people who worked with him back in those days and then as the Minister of Finance, as he was in the last government. So I wanted to thank Mr. Sorbara for that.

**1030**

I want to say that many people have mentioned it, including my friend from Richmond Hill today, who talked about the knowledge economy and how important it is for all of Ontario, but especially northern Ontario, to be participating in making sure that the brightest minds have the equipment and the opportunity to reach their potential in terms of making an economy work for us. I think in northern Ontario that is particularly significant today. I want to commend those folks at Algoma University College—soon to be Algoma University—for all the hard work that they’ve done to make sure this has happened.

Many people won’t know, but Sault Ste. Marie is unique. It is a northern city. It is the heart and the centre

of Algoma district. My constituency completely surrounds it. But it is also a border community. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan is just on the other side of the St. Mary's River. One of the things that both Sault College and Algoma University College have done over many years is build bridges to the American institutions on the other side of the St. Mary's River. They've worked with Sault College to make sure that we got great synergy out of the educational system in Sault Ste. Marie, and that has benefited us all. I think the creativity extends to the fact that they have a partnership now with a Scottish university, Abertay, in which they're providing a master's program today. This is an institution that has matured and has shown its ability to move forward.

In many ways today is a proud day for my family, for the Brown family. I was thinking about this when I was coming over to speak. As many of you know, I have four daughters. Number three daughter, Michelle, went to Laurentian University. She studied there. But my fourth daughter, Paula, who is in my good friend from London—Fanshawe's riding, studied at Sault College and then went to Algoma University College. I remember the day that Paula graduated. I stood there, as any proud father would; my wife and I stood with Dr. Judith Woodsworth, who is presently the president of Laurentian University, who actually granted the degree. I stood with Bud Wildman, the chair of the board of Algoma University College, and I stood with Dr. Celia Ross, whom I've known very well and worked with for quite a long time. We stood and we got our pictures taken together, outside. In doing so, Dr. Woodsworth spoke of how Laurentian University was so proud to have worked with—she knew this day was coming. The relationship between the mother university, if you would have it that way, and Algoma was to the point of being matured, and she was supportive of having Algoma University College become an independent facility. I thought, "You know, that's pretty amazing: four daughters—two have gone off to university in southern Ontario, two at northern universities." But more amazing is that one of my daughters had the good sense to marry a fellow from Scarborough. Do you know where he went to school? He went to school at Lakehead. He went to school to become a teacher at Lakehead. I think, more than anything, we, as northerners, have to understand that when we do things that are as good as or better than others, we will attract people, not just from southern Ontario but from around the world. For Anthony, who went from Scarborough to Lakehead University, to another northern Ontario university, I am so pleased.

In many ways, my family kind of represents what we wanted to do with our post-secondary education. Our children have pretty much gone across the province to school; some have gone outside of the province. One has a degree from an Australian university. But it is what we need to engender in a world that is more competitive. It is truly a global village. It is truly a place where children or young people need to understand that we can compete, and will compete, on the basis of knowledge in Ontario.

That is how we're going to compete, and we have to make sure that the institutions are available for them to do that through all of this province, including northern Ontario. That's 90% of the land mass with only a small percentage of the people, but we are a critical part of this province. We supply much of the wealth. We certainly supply a great deal of the expertise and knowledge. Today, when we pass this bill—actually tomorrow—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** If.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Yes, correct. If the Legislature passes this bill tomorrow, then we will have done something of significance not only to the entire province but to northern Ontario, to Sault Ste. Marie and particularly to all those young people—the reason that most of us are here today.

I look at our pages out here. I know we have a few from northern Ontario, at least a couple, I think. They will have the opportunity, many of them, to go to school in northern Ontario if they so choose. More importantly, maybe they will meet in their community students from around the world who will choose to come to our universities to be educated. I think it is hugely important that we can do that.

Today I would just thank all members for endorsing and working hard to make sure that this particular piece of legislation comes to fruition in the near future—hopefully tomorrow—and that we can move on to the increased partnerships, the great potential of an Algoma University that truly reflects northern Ontario, our First Nations communities and the people of all Ontario in a way that I know we'll all be very proud of.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mr. Milloy has moved second reading of Bill 80. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

**Hon. David Caplan:** Speaker, I seek consent for the House to recess until 10:45.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The deputy House leader has asked that we recess until 10:45. Agreed? Agreed.

*The House recessed from 1038 to 1045.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to welcome some guests to the chamber today.

On behalf of the member from Hamilton Centre: in the west public gallery, Julie Craven and John Craven, the mother and grandfather of Jared, the subject of the member's Bill 81.

In the west members' gallery: on behalf of the member from Mississauga South, Lily Ainsley.

On behalf of the member from Welland: in the west members' gallery, Jason Gwartz, a former page from 2005 from St. Catharines. And Gabrielle Grant, whom

I've just met, is going to be a page in the House of Commons this fall.

On behalf of the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek: Mr. Joe Krmpotich, the recording secretary of United Steelworkers Local 2251.

On behalf of the member from Oak Ridges–Markham: in the west members' gallery, Shaista Ali, Raafia Ali and Imtiyaz Patel.

On behalf of the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock: in the west members' gallery, Beverly Roy, her constituency assistant; and Jiliana Davies, a co-op student who is working for the member and attending high school in Lindsay.

On behalf of page Alie Crump, in the east members' gallery: Erin Burke, her cousin; Linda Burke, her grandmother; and Anne Wilson, her aunt.

On behalf of page Damian Ewing: Michelle Ewing, his mother; Berry Hadley, his grandfather; and Beverley Hadley, his grandmother. They are in the west members' gallery.

To all of our guests today, welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question today is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, you repeatedly told this House and the press that you had no idea as to how many deaths had been caused by *C. difficile* in Ontario. That is difficult to believe, since the January 2007 coroner's report into those deaths in Sault Ste. Marie said that it was the responsibility of the infection control practitioner in each hospital to track the cases and their outcomes. So, Minister, if the hospitals have the numbers, why will you not release them? Why are you failing to protect the public?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to thank the honourable member for her question about reporting information related to *C. difficile* and, indeed, to a wider range of patient safety indicators in the province of Ontario. I've been very privileged this morning to make evident to all the people of Ontario by way of a press release that it's our government's intention to move forward with a very substantial initiative with respect to the reporting of these patient safety indicators, starting with *C. difficile*. The information that the honourable member mentions will, as of September 30 this year, be available to all the people of Ontario by way of consistent reporting to a single website. This initiative on the government's behalf will be led by the physician-in-chief of the University Health Network, a noted expert in the area of patient safety, Dr. Michael Baker.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's evident that the minister is in full damage control. But I ask the minister: Do you really expect the public to believe that you don't know the number of people who have died in hospitals from *C.*

*difficile*? This government knows how many eggs are laid each year in Ontario. They know how many bear sightings there are each year. The press was able to get the figures from at least seven hospitals. If you take a look and you extrapolate, it means maybe there was a total of 5,000 or more. Minister, were there 5,000 deaths? Were there 6,000? How many people have died and what are you covering up?

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I have ruled on that phrase in the past and I just ask the member to withdraw that comment, please.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, I would then say, "what are you keeping secret?"

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please withdraw the comment that you had initially made.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Would you prefer "keep it under wraps"?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just ask that you not challenge the Chair. I just ask that you withdraw the comment that you made.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I withdraw the comment.

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

**Hon. George Smitherman:** There has been no mechanism to date established in the province of Ontario which brings to one place all of the information with respect to this wide variety of patient safety indicators. That's why the initiative to dramatically enhance the transparency associated with the operations of our hospitals is an important step forward.

The honourable member will know from her time as Minister of Health that Ontario now has 157 unique hospital corporations, each of which will have an enhanced obligation to make this information public in a consistent way, which would be made available in one spot, on the same day, beginning on September 30 with *C. difficile*, and over the course of the following 12 months or so a dramatic expansion to eight patient safety indicators, which will give all of us a much better one-stop shopping glance at the patient safety indicators that are occurring with Ontario's hospitals. This initiative will see us in a prominent spot in the land in terms of this enhanced transparency.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** We have indicated—and we certainly have widespread public support. I continue to get emails from families whose loved ones have died from this preventable disease, *C. difficile*. They are saying an immediate public inquiry is needed. You say you don't need one; you have all the information. Then I ask you again, how many deaths have there been, how could they have been prevented, and how many are we going to be able to prevent in the future as a result of an inquiry? So I say to you today, are you prepared to embark and order a full public inquiry in order that more people are not going to die between now and September 30 and later?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It's the honourable member's use of the word "immediate" in association with the words "public inquiry" where things break

down. From all of our experience around here, we know that those are costly and that they take a lot of time. Instead, because the coroner has investigated quite recently into the circumstances related to C. difficile in Sault Ste. Marie and because of the advice that's available from doctors like Baker and Gardam, we feel very confident that the best interests of patients is served—not by asking lawyers to work for a period of time in review of this or that, but instead to have medical professionals deployed proactively to be providing information. We know transparency can be a powerful aid to patient safety in the circumstances. We agree that there are lessons that need to be learned and applied, but we feel very confident that the advice that is available to us allows us to act with undue haste, with a view towards patient safety. That's why the approach is informed that way.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question's to the Premier. It deals with the city of Brantford, a community his Liberal government has left high and dry. Recently, Brantford city council passed two bylaws, one to prohibit protests at three specific development sites and another to stop HDI's extortion demands for development fees. Premier, do you and your colleagues support the steps that Brantford's municipal leaders have been forced to take as a result of your government's lack of support?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to say—in the supplementary I'll refer to my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs—at the outset that I know that the community of Brantford has been working hard on this, that they have brought a great deal of patience and goodwill to the table. They're building on a foundation of goodwill that's been in place for over 100 years in that community. We want to continue to work with the community and the First Nations community involved to ensure that we maintain this peaceful co-existence, grounded in a progressive, positive relationship.

I know things have not been easy there. We've heard time and time again from my colleague Dave Levac on this score, who has presented us with some of the concerns. He's played an instrumental role in terms of keeping the temperature down, bringing the parties together and trying to resolve those standing issues in a peaceful manner. I know that it's challenging and I know that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will be able to speak to some of the details connected with this.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I think that response will be cold comfort to the community, because as the Premier well knows, policing and property rights are strictly provincial matters. They have nothing to do with the federal government, which they frequently lob this off to.

Brantford has asked the Premier for help with increasing policing costs, lost tax revenues and to see the law enforced. They see investors who brought jobs and prosperity to Brantford being chased away by your

refusal to protect property rights and to enforce the rule of law evenly. Calls for assistance are ignored and your government continues to throw up its hands and say that you can't do anything. The mayor says, "We realize we're very much on our own in this. We're not getting the help we need."

Premier, it's your inaction, your lack of leadership that's forced Brantford to take these measures. No one disputes that there's a role for the feds on this issue, but there is for your government as well. Why don't you roll up your sleeves and get the job done, or are you just not up to it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I've certainly spoken to the mayor and council and developers in that region on several occasions. The province is absolutely dedicated to rolling up their sleeves and finding every avenue of assistance to that fantastic part of Ontario.

I have to just say what my colleague the member for Brant said. As he said, efforts that are made to increase the tensions are not positive and anything that decreases the tensions is positive. We try and work with council, with the community and with the leadership of the member for Brant, Mr. Levac. We will continue to do that.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The reality is, Brantford has been forced to bring in these bylaws because this Liberal government has washed its hands of any responsibility for property rights, development fees, policing and the administration of justice. These are not federal matters; they're strictly provincial responsibilities.

Brantford's lawyers describe the situation as a critical problem that threatens the life of their city, yet you and your government sit by. Your silent MPP for that riding sits by. You sit on your hands and force the city to seek a court injunction to enforce those bylaws. You're forcing them to go it alone in dealing with lawlessness. I ask the minister, and through him to the Premier, when is the Premier going to stop the excuses and start doing his job by fulfilling his constitutional responsibilities to the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I have to take issue—and I know that he cannot possibly believe it for a second—with his statement with respect to the efforts of the member for Brant. I cannot imagine any member of provincial Parliament who could have done more for his community and continues to do more for his community than the member for Brant, Mr. David Levac. The member has brought the community, Haudenosaunee Six Nations and developers into the same room. He is dedicated to providing solutions. He works every single day on this, not only to build bridges but to get solutions for his community, and it's thanks to him that we've had—

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

### ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I have a question to the Premier. The McGuinty government's failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations has brought the National Aboriginal Day of Action to Ontario early. Members and leaders of First Nations from across Ontario, indeed from across Canada, have gathered and continue to gather on the front lawn of this building to protest the jailing of First Nation leaders, forced to protect their traditional lands from a McGuinty government that has failed to properly consult and accommodate First Nations before recognizing mining claims.

I want to ask the Premier this: Has the Premier gone out onto the lawn here at Queen's Park, met with First Nation leaders and apologized for the McGuinty government's failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations before recognizing mining claims?

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me just take the opportunity first of all to say that we look forward to all Canadians becoming better informed on issues that are of concern to our First Nations on the National Day of Action to be held across the country tomorrow. I think we can perhaps take some lessons from what is happening on the front lawn of this magnificent institution. There have been members of First Nations communities who have been out there for a couple of days now. They are making their presence felt in a peaceful and unobtrusive manner, in a respectful way. The security around here has responded in kind. That is exactly the kind of thing that we'd like to see happen throughout the country and, of course, here in Ontario during the National Day of Action itself: a peaceful, respectful dialogue, something we've been working hard to institutionalize as a government.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier talks about a peaceful, respectful dialogue. I note that the Premier has not gone out to speak with aboriginal leaders, just as the Premier and his government have failed to properly consult and accommodate First Nation leaders, even as some of these First Nation leaders have been forced to spend over two months in jail. Why? Because they decided to protect their traditional lands after the McGuinty government failed to do that.

Premier, all of this could have been avoided. Sending a 58-year-old great-grandmother to jail could have been avoided if you, as Premier, had simply used section 35 of the Mining Act to say, "We are setting these traditional lands aside until we can find a resolution to the dispute." Instead, you allowed these people to be put in jail. Why did Dalton McGuinty not utilize section 35 of the Mining Act and avoid—

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Just off the top, the member may be aware, or may not, that the appeal that's taking

place today in fact recently recessed because Platinec basically consented to the appeal. The Ontario Attorney General was already taking the position before the court that it ought to be appealed, and obviously, defence counsel is arguing for an appeal. So in fact, this is an instance where it does appear that an appeal will be entered. The individuals, Chief Morris and council—I met with Chief Morris and Councillor Sam McKay yesterday—are out; never should have been in. That was the position that the Attorney General took before the court at first instance, that's the position that the attorney took on appeal, and it appears that that's exactly what is going to happen.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The point is that there was no need to send a 58-year-old great-grandmother to jail. There as no need to send the chief of Ardoch Algonquin First Nation to jail. There was no need for Chief Donny Morris, who simply seeks to protect the traditional lands of his First Nation, to be sent to jail. The Premier could have used section 35 of the Mining Act a year ago, six months ago, three months ago. The Premier could have acted. He could have said that it is not proper to send First Nation leaders to jail merely because they're trying to stand up for their constitutional and legal rights.

I think the Premier has to answer to that 58-year-old great-grandmother and all those people who simply acted to protect their constitutional rights. Why did the Premier fail to use section 35 of the Mining Act to withdraw the disputed lands so that innocent people wouldn't have to go to jail?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I agree. The individuals ought not to have gone to jail and that's why we opposed their incarceration at first instance. That's why the attorney took the position today that an appeal ought to be entered. That's why the attorney brought a motion to expedite the appeal. Ontario did that. We're in agreement. The jailing ought never to have happened, and it is fortunate that now it is over for chief and council. The member is absolutely right: They never should have gone to jail. They are now out. Unfortunately, they were in, but they are now out. The appeal is before the court, but it appears that it will be allowed.

So I say again, this government takes the position that we will continue to work with and support the First Nation of KI on a government-to-government basis—

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

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Last week, the Change Foundation, a think tank funded by the Ontario Hospital Association, invited health care leaders from across the country to a symposium to talk about the rights and wrongs of health care regionalization. Though it was a closed-door meeting, Carol Goar from the Toronto Star was able to report key findings, one of

which is to bring all physicians under the LHINs. Can the minister tell us if he plans to go in that direction?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Firstly, I wasn't part of the closed-door session, but I heard that 40 individuals came together and had a nice chat.

I think that piece of advice, as one example, is a problematic piece of advice. Firstly, the Ontario Medical Association prefers very clearly to continue to have their negotiations with respect to matters of compensation with the government of Ontario. We have abided with their wishes on that point.

But on the matter of the engagement of local health care professionals in decisions around how health care is organized, I don't think that's about doctors alone. What the LHIN legislation does do is create a mechanism where a variety of health care providers will come together with LHINs and work as part of the team helping to plot health care delivery models. I think that's a very, very effective approach, and I think it is far superior to that which was on offer from these unnamed experts.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** For many Ontarians, their family physician is their primary care provider, the only one. Other primary care providers, such as community health centres, are already under the LHINs. With the renewal of the OMA agreement currently underway, will the minister signal to the OMA that it is the government's position for all primary care providers, including physicians, to be integrated under the LHINs?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** If the question is a matter of integration, then I think if the honourable member was to review the legislation that brought local health integration networks to life, she would see that there is a mechanism there that engages physicians by the LHINs, alongside other health care professionals. This is a more appropriate way to think about a health care system—to have all of those, not just a special conversation with doctors, but to have a mechanism where doctors, nurses and allied health professionals are all part and parcel of that conversation.

The member knows very well from her time as a leader in the community health centre model that we believe in an interdisciplinary approach and we believe in integration. Accordingly, the mechanisms that we created at the LHIN level, where all those health care professionals will be engaged in a conversation—the same conversation—is a far better approach to this model. LHINs can integrate services and can plan for health care services even in instances where they haven't been responsible for negotiating contracts. We think the model that we've adopted is superior to the one that is on offer by the honourable member.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The Change Foundation experts have pointed out the importance of including physicians in the LHINs. Having physicians operating under a small-business, fee-for-service model hinders the implementation of an interdisciplinary team, which we know provides the best primary health care, as the minister just concurred. The recent report from the Ontario Health

Quality Council makes it clear that we need to focus on health promotion and disease prevention, bringing primary care, including physician services, under the LHINs. Not just engaging them in planning, but actually having them under the responsibility of the LHIN, is a crucial step for Ontarians to reap the benefits of health care regionalization.

I ask again: With the talks between the OMA and the government currently underway, will the minister send a strong signal to the OMA that an effective system of primary care means the inclusion of all physicians under the LHINs, not just consultation and not just engagement?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The first thing I want to say to the honourable member is that we're extraordinarily proud of the work that our physicians do. We have 1,700 more doctors practising today in the province of Ontario than even a few years ago. Through the expansions that we've made in the size of our medical schools, including the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and with the investments that we've made in expanding the access for international medical graduates, we have great prospects for graduating and licensing more and more doctors in Ontario.

1110

They're already integrated and they're already working at the community level. In the South East LHIN, working with the LHIN, they've led initiatives around care connection models. In the Champlain LHIN, physicians from communities like Hawkesbury have been engaged with the Champlain LHIN in helping to plot health care strategy.

We have a mechanism that brings them to the fore in terms of integration, but we continue to believe that the relationship and the investment in doctors is an important responsibility at the central levels of the government of Ontario. We'll continue to have those negotiations between the government and the medical association and make sure doctors are integrated—

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

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, it's quite shocking to hear your Minister of Health say a public inquiry would be too costly. It is also an insult to the families of those who have died, and they deserve an answer. I ask you: What is the cost of 260 lives—or maybe 5,000? In 2003, you believed that the loss of 44 lives was worth the cost of a public inquiry into SARS. Will you today support a public inquiry into C. difficile?

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

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member knows from her time as a Minister of Health that C. difficile has been an ongoing challenge, along with other so-called superbugs, in the hospital environment. This is why it's necessary to take advantage of the information

that we have at hand today, to apply that today. The best thing, it seems to me, that we can do to honour those who have passed is to take advantage of the information that we have immediately.

The honourable member, in her first question today, used the words “immediate public inquiry,” and we all know that those matters take a lot of time. We have the benefit of a coroner’s inquest that’s very current. We’re going to work to implement that information under the leadership of Dr. Michael Baker. We think there’s information at hand that can be put to work today with this enhanced transparency and reporting that will benefit patients today, whereas the proposal that the honourable member makes is about downstream. We have opportunities today to make a difference, and that’s what we’re doing.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** The reality is, this minister hasn’t made a difference. He has sat on information, he has taken no action and now he’s in full damage control. There’s no reason why the actions that are being undertaken and proposed couldn’t happen simultaneously with an inquiry; none whatsoever. Some 260 deaths already—maybe 5,000; we don’t know because he won’t tell us. But I would say to you today, you deserve to provide an answer. In 2003, you demanded a public inquiry. Your seatmate demanded a public inquiry into the 44 deaths. Your leader introduced an opposition day motion saying, “Let’s have an inquiry on how best to prevent and respond to such an outbreak in the future.” The reality is, the extent of C. difficile has never been what it is today. Are you going to give us the inquiry that the families deserve?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** First off, I want to say to the honourable member that the valuable information gained from the inquiry into SARS is information that’s being implemented in the province’s health care system today. The honourable member needs to be reminded that public health funding has doubled since 2003, in response to the circumstances related to SARS. SARS was an event that was managed to an end. At the conclusion of its end point, it was substantially investigated, and that work is being put to the benefit of patients every single day.

In the case of C. difficile, it’s well known, it’s been broadcast across all of the western world and hospitals are grappling with it every single day. We have the opportunity today to put in place a regime of public reporting which will today strengthen the circumstances for Ontario’s patients. I choose, with the information that’s available, to act today on behalf of those patients. There are lessons to be learned. We have current evidence around what we can do to make improvements, and we’re moving forward on that basis.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Education. This question is about the 50 schools, including the five in Oshawa, that were announced

yesterday that are about to close and the 300 more schools across the province that are on the chopping block. And before the minister gives me the reasons why, I’ll make it easier for her. We all know that there are 90,000 fewer students in Ontario schools since 2002.

Here’s what the minister doesn’t know: Parents don’t like their children’s schools closing, and, by the way, it doesn’t make it any better when Liberals close them. When are you going to do what you were elected to do—keep more schools open—instead of hiding behind declining enrolment as an excuse to let the devastation go on?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question. It’s interesting to me that—and I misspoke yesterday. I said yesterday that when the Conservatives were in office, 100,000 more students were in the system. Actually, it was when the NDP were in office that there were 100,000 more students, and there were still hundreds of schools across the province that closed when enrolment was increasing. Okay?

We’re in a situation now where we have declining enrolment, and the member opposite says that we are hiding behind declining enrolment. In fact, the reality is that when there are fewer students in schools in the province—and that has happened across this province since 2003; 90,000 fewer students—boards struggle to deliver the programs that those students need. Boards need the ability to make decisions based on program delivery for their students. That’s what they’re doing.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I think it’s also important for you to remind the public that you cut the declining enrolment grant by \$60 million last year. Why is it that People for Education is looking for ways to keep schools alive and the minister is giving you reasons why they must close?

Here are some good reasons to keep schools open: because you can remake schools into thriving hubs for parenting centres or libraries or health clinics; because other jurisdictions like Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec are coming up with ways to keep schools open, not closed; and more importantly, because parents in places like Oshawa expected you to keep their schools open and their children will not forgive you for closing them.

Minister, do you feel like going back to excuses and delays or will you tell me what you will do today, not in 2010, to keep more Ontario schools open?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just want to point out to the member opposite that since we’ve been in office, we have put \$465 million to buffer school boards against declining enrolment, \$465 million to allow boards to continue to pay the residual costs, because we know that as enrolment declines, the boards still have residual costs.

The fact is that even under the NDP, when there were 100,000 more students, there were 150 schools that had to close because boards made decisions based on program delivery to students. It would be irresponsible of us to tie the hands of boards.

What we are doing is putting in place a declining enrolment work group. I was at the People for Education event on the weekend. We talked about their report that has come out. I am absolutely supportive of the work that People for Education does. We know that our declining enrolment work group is going to need to look at issues like how we have collaboration among boards, how we have collaboration—

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

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question today for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. It's regarding *C. difficile* as well. I've heard from some of my constituents in Oakville regarding the recent media reports about *C. difficile* in Oakville and the outbreak at Joseph Brant hospital. They're very concerned, as I am, about reports that *C. difficile* may be prevalent in hospitals across the province.

You've already said that there's no need for a public inquiry because there have already been investigations into outbreaks at Joseph Brant hospital and the Sault Area Hospital. My constituents would like to know exactly what the minister is doing to track infection control rates in our hospitals across the province.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** As I had a chance to say in part earlier in question period, we're moving forward with public reporting which will substantially enhance the awareness that the people of Ontario have about patient safety indications in their hospital environments.

Starting on September 30, public reporting on *C. difficile*, by December 31, 2008, will add to that MRSA and VRE—also known infectious elements in our hospital environments—as well as the second reporting of the hospital standardized mortality rate that came out a few months ago.

By April 30 of next year, rates of ventilator-assisted pneumonia, central line infections, surgical line infections and hand hygiene compliance amongst health care workers will be added to this model of public reporting. This transparency will dramatically enhance accountability and the power that the people of Ontario have over their organizations, based on the information that will be publicly reported.

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**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I know there are a lot of people who have been calling for the mandatory reporting of *C. difficile* as well as a number of other indicators, so it's a very important step in improving patient safety in Ontario. That information will obviously be helpful to our hospitals and the patients in those hospitals.

I also know it's important to be able to measure those infection rates so we can identify the hospitals that may be experiencing particular challenges and assist those particular hospitals to reduce their rates.

My supplementary is, I'd like to know how the minister is going to reduce the spread of infectious

diseases in our hospitals and make sure that our patients are even more safe in Ontario hospitals.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Obviously, a substantial obligation rests with the more than 100,000 people who work in hospital environments. Over the course of the last several years, we've added substantially to the capacities that they have. We've brought 137 infectious control practitioners into hospital environments. We've initiated the Just Clean Your Hands program, formed the provincial infectious disease advisory committee, created 14 infection control networks and, as I mentioned before, we've more than doubled our public health funding.

We think that the progress that we make will also be augmented by the leadership of Dr. Michael Baker. He's the physician-in-chief and noted patient safety expert from the University Health Network. We're going to make him the executive lead for patient safety. He'll be helping to promote these efforts all across the hospital environment and alongside the public reporting. We feel confident that the patients in Ontario will gain a powerful new ally in making our health care environment safer.

#### POLYGAMY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** To the minister responsible for women's issues: Can she inform this House where she stands on Toronto's dirty little secret, the illegal polygamous marriages that are taking place right under her nose at the expense of gender equality in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Under section 37(e), I don't think that this qualifies as a responsible referral—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's not a point of order. The minister has the ability to refer.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Polygamy is a serious crime in Ontario. It's not something that's tolerated. As you know, the best advice I can give the honourable member opposite is that if she has any evidence that someone is engaging in multiple marriages, she should report it, because our Registrar General and our official reporting mechanisms have no evidence that that's happening.

As you know, marriage is a contract. A contract requires a licence. Once a marriage occurs, it has to be registered. There are no multiple marriages being registered in the province of Ontario.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Back to the minister responsible for women's issues. I don't buy for one minute that the government doesn't read the Toronto Star or listen to AM640, where imams have openly admitted to officiating polygamous marriages in Ontario.

To the minister of women's issues: If you agree that women in this province are equal citizens under the law, why are you allowing polygamy to occur under your watch? Have you brought your concerns to the Minister of Government Services, to the Attorney General and to the Human Rights Commission to uphold the rule of law

and gender equality in Ontario? If so, will you table the documents? If not, why have you done nothing?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** We've already answered that question.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Why is his government putting the interests of a child murderer ahead of the interests of the child he killed by refusing to order a coroner's stand-alone inquest for Jared Osidacz, the 8-year-old boy who was killed by his father? We want an inquest and we want to know why the Premier won't order one that isn't attached to the inquest of his murderous father and that will automatically grant standing to his family.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Thank you very much for the question. I know that Jared's mother and grandfather are in the gallery this morning. I want to reassure them that there isn't a member on either side of this House who doesn't want the family to have the answers they've longed for. The chief coroner of the province of Ontario have decided that they can receive their answers with one coroner's inquest. I look forward, we look forward, everyone looks forward to that mother and grandfather receiving answers to the questions they've had in their hearts for such a long time.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** All the sympathy in the world is not going to satisfy this family until they get a stand-alone inquest into that child's death. The government can do something about this, and they should do something about this. The minister can use his powers under section 22 of the Coroners Act, or he can embrace the bill that I introduced yesterday, Bill 81, which guarantees a stand-alone inquest into Jared's murder and into the death of any child killed by a parent where child welfare authorities are involved. Which is it going to be? Or will the McGuinty government just continue to deny justice for Jared?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I'm going to, hopefully, answer the question from the member opposite, but I'm not going to engage in political rhetoric. I am going to firmly reassure that mother and grandfather that once they're granted standing, they will be able to hire the lawyer of their choice. The government will help with the funding for the hiring of that lawyer. That lawyer will be able to ask the questions the family has. That lawyer will have the latitude to represent that family's interests 100% of the way. I don't think that's glossing over. I don't think that's clouding the issue. I think we're addressing the issue so that this mother and grandfather get the answers they want.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** My question is to the Attorney General. Ontario is one of the most diverse and multi-

cultural centres in the world. Ontario should be proud of our collective heritage and the example we continue to set for many places around the world and, indeed, in Canada. However, I know that communities across Ontario, like mine, must also deal with the negative effects of hate crimes, racial intolerance and discrimination. I also know that my constituents are keen to know that this government is taking a strong stand against these acts of intolerance which demean our dignity and the dignity of individuals in our society. Attorney General, can you tell me what you're doing to eliminate those issues and deal with them in order to continue peace and tranquility in our communities across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Our government's approach—I know the member from London-Fanshawe's approach and I expect the approach of all members of the House—is that we build a society based on respect and understanding. We reject hate. We reject hate crimes. We reject them in whatever form they take. Whether it's Islamophobia, anti-Semitism or any other, we reject intolerance.

One of the ways we have historically done that is through our human rights system. Our government is moving to support the human rights system through the human rights transformation, which will ensure the timely resolution of complaints, beneficial to all, ensure proactive work through the new Human Rights Commission, timely resolution through the newly enhanced and supported Human Rights Tribunal with a legal support centre that will ensure people get access to legal advice when they might not otherwise be able to afford it. I'm looking forward to that transformation on June 30.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I know my constituents are reassured to hear that this government has no tolerance for hate crimes, racial intolerance and discrimination. I know that since taking office in 2003 the McGuinty government has moved forward in a number of different areas to combat hate crimes, promote equality, and deal with many different issues and different people who raise hate crimes in our communities. Minister, can you tell this House—because our communities, especially mine of London-Fanshawe, want to know—what different initiatives you've taken since taking office in order to deal with this issue?

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**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** There is a lot of work going on, not only in our ministry, but in many. I'd like to highlight two. Through the Ministry of the Attorney General, we have a \$1.3-billion investment in community-building projects, which get at the root causes of hate crimes and intolerance. There are 23 projects all across the province. The choice of the projects was fed by the advice of a working group that was established by my predecessor, Minister Bryant, to bring very good ground-level advice on what types of projects would be extremely good in dealing with those root causes of hate.

Another project that was launched recently by my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and

Correctional Services and jointly funded by our two ministries was a \$1.4-million investment in programs, the Ontario victim safety project and the safer and vital communities grant program, which again supports community-building projects so we can build that safer, respectful, more understanding society in the future.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Education. I would like to start by sharing a quote with the minister today: “I don’t have that list. The fact is that school boards make those determinations board by board, community by community.”

The true fact is, Minister, that five minutes after question period yesterday, this report miraculously appeared. So either the members opposite have divine intervention on their side, or they were simply not making that list public. The question—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** They lied.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw the comment.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I withdraw.

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

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question to the minister: Now that you have found this list, what are you going to do to make sure that this list doesn’t grow any longer?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What we have is a media scan. There is no official list of schools that are up for review for closure. It is a media scan that is used for issues management. The fact is—and I made this point yesterday—if the member opposite understood how education worked in the province, she would understand that, board by board, decisions are made on school closures, school reviews. That’s how the information is disseminated, board by board.

Also, if the member opposite really had the interests of parents and communities at heart, what she would be doing is facilitating the dialogue between her constituents and the boards so they would understand the processes that each board is undergoing.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** That was yesterday’s answer and it doesn’t cut it today. Minister, you announced \$550 million to prevent rural school closures one minute and then you stand in this House and pass it off as a board responsibility. Every time we ask you when the money is coming to save our schools, you say it’s a board responsibility.

They don’t have that money that you promised. The parents of the students who are going to be spending hours on a school bus every day are not going to forget that you and your government wooed them with that promise of saving their rural schools and then abandoned them when it came time to take action. Minister, when are you going to keep your promise and deliver on the

funding necessary to keep your secret—and not-so-secret now—list from expanding?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We made a commitment in our recent budget for \$315 million more in education and another \$750 million in capital spending over the next four years. The money that the member opposite is talking about, part of the \$3.1 billion that we committed to spend in this term of government—that money has begun to already flow to our boards. Boards are making their decisions on their capital plans based on those resources that are going into the system.

It is irresponsible for the member opposite to suggest to parents and to communities in this province that the commitment to funding schools is not being kept by this government. We are absolutely committed. We have started flowing that money—as I say, \$315 million in our recent budget. It is the role of boards to make the decisions around their capital plans and their reviews of schools on a board-by-board basis. That’s why we have school boards.

### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the finance minister. Many Ontarians are worried about their pensions and whether they will be able to enjoy a financially secure retirement. They’re worried because Ontario’s pension protection legislation is badly out of date and full of holes. In fact, the coverage provided by the Ontario pension guarantee fund hasn’t been updated since 1980 and now covers only a small part of the typical monthly pension benefit.

Minister, will you act immediately to significantly increase the monthly pension benefit protected by the pension guarantee fund? Yes or no?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member forgets that the NDP government failed to fund the pension benefit guarantee fund. The first time that chicken came home to roost was with Stelco, and what government helped Stelco with its pension? The McGuinty government helped Stelco with its pension.

I would say to the honourable member that pension legislation is extremely important to the future of this province. That’s why we’ve asked Mr. Harry Arthurs to review the legislation. We’re consulting with unions and management and we are working towards a fall presentation of his recommendations that will aid and assist us as we move forward in protecting the pension and benefits of all of our working people in this province. I would invite the honourable member, when that comes out, to participate in what will no doubt be a very rigorous discussion about the best way forward for Ontario in the future.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I’d like to thank the minister for his comments; however, we’ve had three meetings with Mr. Arthurs already, and there are some interesting things coming ahead. In fact, the mention of Stelco—that was an interesting comment by the minister. Actually, it was

under the Conservatives in 1996 that Stelco's pension responsibilities started having problems, unfortunately.

Minister, the people of Ontario expect their government to be at the table, fighting for them, not making excuses by passing the buck and breaking promises. They are watching your government very closely on the security of their pensions. My Bill 17, which was ignored again, like Bill 6, raised the monthly pension benefit guarantee to \$2,700 from the current \$1,000.

Will you send a clear signal, Minister, that you're going to take action to protect pensions? Will you support this legislation when it comes to this place for debate?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I can say is that this government is committed to protecting the pensions of Ontarians. We have demonstrated it time and time again. There are many difficult issues that demand a very thorough—and, yes, the member is absolutely right. There are going to be some challenges moving forward as we respond to Mr. Arthurs' report.

That being said, unlike previous governments, we will move forward. We are doing so in what I would call a prudent and balanced fashion to look at the complexities of this legislation, recognizing that our constituents expect us to have legislation that protects their investment and the investments of their employers to ensure that they have a very healthy pension benefit into their retirement.

#### ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, my constituents in Willowdale feel that the Ontario Municipal Board is not working. They've heard talk about reform of the OMB, but the reality is that gridlock is getting worse, new condo owners can't get their kids into the schools next door, and they see unobstructed condo and commercial development left, right and centre.

And the situation is only getting worse. Recently, city councillors in North York voted in favour of providing a formal warning to condo purchasers in the Yonge and Sheppard Avenue area, where the rapidly increasing development has turned traffic into a nightmare.

Minister, what have you done to reform the Ontario Municipal Board?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member from Willowdale for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents. Let me just give a couple of examples of some of the issues that our government has dealt with, with respect to reforming the OMB.

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First of all, we've established the citizen liaison office to guide citizens through the OMB process, which at times can be difficult.

Second, the list of matters of provincial interest has now expanded to include the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and be oriented to pedestrians.

Third, all approval authorities that make decisions relating to planning matters, including the OMB, must have regard to decisions made by municipal councils and approval authorities relating to the same planning matters.

Finally, this government doubled the timelines that municipalities have to render a decision before a case can be referred to the OMB.

It's the most comprehensive reform of the OMB in 110 years to bring back balance to the OMB. We're proud of it. Yes, we have more work to do, and we're open to suggestions.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm pleased to hear about these reforms. I know that municipalities have struggled in the past with the timelines they've had in which to make a decision before a case was referred to the OMB. However, municipalities want more than a more efficient and accessible OMB. They want the ability to make their own decisions. None of these reforms have addressed the fact that municipal planning decisions are still subject to an appeal to the OMB.

Local communities like Willowdale and others need to have a role. Elected members of council from Willowdale and across other GTA ridings deserve a larger say in the matters that go before the OMB. Will the minister reassure my constituents in Willowdale, who are concerned about overdevelopment and who must go to the OMB to resolve these concerns, that the OMB will take their concerns under serious advisement?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** One of the things the McGuinty government has brought to the table, when it comes to dealing with municipalities, is that we do treat them with the degree of respect they deserve. They're a responsible, accountable order of government.

One of the things we try to do when we make any changes to the OMB or to an organization that is going to affect the municipal sector—we have signed an MOU with AMO and now we have an MOU with the city of Toronto that requires us, as a government, to ensure that we consult those municipalities before any changes come into effect.

One of the things we did, under the OMB reforms, was that we allowed municipalities to establish local appeal bodies, or LABs. If a municipality chooses to establish a LAB, they'll be able to hear and come to decisions on over 54% of the cases now being sent to the OMB. This is run by the community, in the community and for the community.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. There are approximately 100 remaining residents at Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls. Almost all of these severely disabled people will be occupying long-term-care beds in the city of Ottawa. Is it true that you are evicting these residents from their homes of, in many

cases, 40 years and labelling them homeless in order for them to jump the long queue of hundreds of people waiting for long-term care in the city of Ottawa?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It's very unfortunate that comments like this come from the member of the Tory party. It's very unfortunate. Yes, we are closing these institutions. When that government was in power, they also supported closures.

These people are treated with respect, and the decisions are taken with the individual at the centre, not with the MPP who used to represent that sector and did not want to close an institution because it would take away jobs in his riding—not because of that. It's about the people. We have people in the centre working with staff, who are helping them place these individuals in the right place, closer to the family. The family is involved and the service—

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

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** You are declaring them homeless, and you are putting them to the top of the list by doing that.

On Monday, during debate on your bill, you said that former residents of Rideau Regional were guaranteed as good or better treatment than they received at Rideau Regional. Madam Minister, you're putting many of these former residents in long-term care because they are severely disabled and that's the only place to go. At the present time, at Rideau Regional, there are three staff taking care of 12 residents. In the long-term-care facilities, there are three staff for every 32 residents. That's a decrease of 60% staffing to take care of these vulnerable, severely disabled adults. Madam Minister, how can you guarantee equal caring for these individuals with 60%—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me say that it's incorrect to say that these individuals are placed in long-term care. It is incorrect. These individuals are placed close to their families in—

**Hon. Jim Watson:** In the community.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** —in the community, yes, in a group home. It's unfortunate because this member, even though he supported it when they were in power, has tried to scare the families and say that we are not looking after their interests. The person is at the centre, and we have these people working with them. Two weeks ago, I had a meeting with these officials who are helping to move these people into the community. They were telling me that that's the best job they ever had because they see these individuals before and they see them after—

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

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A question to the Premier: Premier, in March you appointed Hugh MacLeod to be head of your Climate Change Secretariat. He was going

to be reporting to you every five weeks. It has been 10 weeks. Has he reported, and will you table his report?

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

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I know that the secretariat is set up, which I think is a great idea, and I'm sure the member will agree with that. The secretariat is there to coordinate all the various activities that the government is involved in. As he well knows, there are at least seven or eight ministries that are directly involved in the climate change program. There have been meetings on an ongoing basis with the secretariat. He's getting up and running, and we look forward to his report in the near future.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** In the newspaper articles, unless you were misquoted, unless your government was misquoted, the secretariat reports directly to you, Premier. Has he reported to you and will you make his report public?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** There is an ongoing relationship between the Climate Change Secretariat, which is housed right within the Premier's office, on an ongoing basis. Yes, there are discussions going on, in the same way that there are discussions going on with each and every ministry, from environment to energy to transportation to natural resources to agriculture and food. He reports on the activities that we collectively do as a government to deal with the climate change situation here in Ontario, which I'm sure he would agree is extremely important for not only this government but also the federal government to start dealing with on an ongoing basis.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome, in the east members' gallery, the honourable Ed Lumley, former mayor of the city of Cornwall and former minister in the Trudeau cabinet. Mr. Lumley, welcome to Queen's Park today.

#### PETITIONS

##### ALMA COLLEGE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here presented to me by a number of people from the great riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, and I want to present it. It's concerning Alma College.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas historic Alma College, designed in the High Victorian Gothic style, chartered by an act of Ontario passed March 2, 1877, opened in October 1881, located in the city of St. Thomas, county of Elgin, province of Ontario, has fallen into a dire state of disrepair; and

“Whereas Alma College continues to be threatened with demolition by its current owners despite the efforts

of many concerned citizens, alumni and various officials; and

“Whereas an historical plaque commemorating Alma College was unveiled at the college on Thursday, October 28, 1976, by the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency within the Ministry of Culture and Recreation; and

“Whereas the city of St. Thomas designated Alma College under part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (bylaw 167-94), in 1994; and

“Whereas recent amendments (2005) to the Ontario Heritage Act allow the Minister of Culture to designate property as being provincially significant;

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

“The Minister of Culture immediately designate Alma College as a building of provincial significance and, in the event of a demolition order being issued for Alma, to immediately intervene by issue of a stop order, and to further identify provincial partnerships and possible funding to protect the existing buildings from further deterioration while financial resources are generated to restore the property to its former glory.”

I thank you very much for the honour of presenting this petition.

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#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This petition is a repetition from yesterday, actually, because we're getting many more signatures supporting Bill 56. The petition reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and I'm delighted to sign this document.

#### ALMA COLLEGE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I have a petition from residents of Elgin-Middlesex-London.

“Whereas historic Alma College, designed in the High Victorian Gothic style, chartered by an act of Ontario

passed March 2, 1877, opened in October 1881, located in the city of St. Thomas, county of Elgin, province of Ontario, has fallen into a dire state of disrepair; and

“Whereas Alma College continues to be threatened with demolition by its current owners despite the efforts of many concerned citizens, alumni and various officials; and

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

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly sent to me by Dr. Tom Short. I also want to thank Nancy Zero of Terragar Boulevard in Mississauga for being among the signatories. 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 am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Christopher to carry it for me.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I am pleased to read a petition on behalf of the residents of the riding of Durham, presented to me at the Clarington Older Adult Association recent meeting. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to present that to one of the new pages, Natalie, and to support it.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** "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 affix my signature to that and pass it to Charles.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank the residents and staff of Blue Mountain Manor in Stayner for sending this petition to me.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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 have signed it.

#### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from the residents of York South-Weston.

"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;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill," Bill 25, "entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day."

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

#### LORD'S PRAYER

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

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

These petitions were delivered to me by June Devolin, from Haliburton, the mother of our MP, and I'm gladly going to pass them over to Murray, our page.

1200

### PROTECTION FOR MINERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of Sudbury, Mattawa, Elliot Lake, Little Current and Barrie.

"Whereas the current legislation contained in the Ontario health and safety act and regulation for mines and mining plans do not protect the lives of miners, we request revisions to the act;

"Lyle Everett Defoe," a resident of Wahnapiatae, in my riding, "and the scoop tram he was operating fell 150 feet down an open stope (July 23, 2007). Lyle was 25 years and 15 days old when he was killed at Xstrata Kidd Creek mine site, Timmins....

"The stope where Lyle was killed was protected by a length of orange plastic snow fence and a rope with a warning sign. These barriers would not have been visible if the bucket of the scoop tram was raised. Lyle's body was recovered from behind the scoop tram."

They ask the Legislature that:

"Concrete berms must be mandatory to protect all open stopes and raises;

"All miners and contractors working underground must have working communication devices and personal locators;

"All equipment involved in injuries and fatalities must be recovered and examined unless such recovery would endanger the lives of others; and

"The entire act must be reviewed and amended to better protect underground workers."

I support this petition and will affix my name to it and send it with page Jocelyn.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

"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 being found in motor vehicles; and

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

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

I affix my signature and send it over with page Charles.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many young people with developmental special needs have no meaningful social, recreational or vocational opportunities after high school; and

"Whereas many of these young people have no real options for living independently in the community; and

"Whereas current supports in place are insufficient to meet the needs of these young people;

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

"That the McGuinty government allocate an appropriate level of funding to advance the transformation agenda of individualized funding for adults with developmental special needs in the province of Ontario to allow them to live with dignity and to reach their full potential as members of our communities."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

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

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

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

"Whereas, with the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, it is important ... to 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 affix my signature to this, and I will pass it to Alie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for petitions has expired.

The House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1205 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Ontario Prayer Breakfast, along with John Tory and a number of our PC caucus members. At that breakfast, we heard from the founder of Habitat for Humanity, Millard Fuller, who gave his inspirational message of hope. Habitat for Humanity International has built more than 250,000 homes around the world, providing affordable, decent and safe housing to more than one million people in more than 3,000 communities.

Georgetown, in Wellington-Halton Hills, is one of those communities where Habitat is hard at work, and for three hard-working local families, new Habitat homes will soon mean a considerable improvement to their quality of life.

It was a privilege for me to join Habitat for Humanity Halton at the groundbreaking ceremony on May 9, when officials and volunteers, including the three families themselves, along with the mayor and councillors of the town of Halton Hills, gathered to mark the beginning of the new homes' construction. Habitat for Humanity Halton aims to raise more than \$200,000 cash and at least \$65,000 in materials for each home. They are well on their way to achieving that goal.

A few years ago, when I participated in a Habitat build in St. Jacobs, I witnessed first-hand the power of Millard Fuller's words, and his famous quote: “For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other.” That's why I'm so pleased to see Habitat working to make Halton Hills a more healthy and whole community, even more so than it is today.

### WEST HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH VICTORY GARDEN

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I'm delighted to tell the House about my recent visit to the community gardens at West Highland Baptist Church in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. Last year the church developed a pilot project to help the community by creating a victory garden. In its first year of operation, the victory garden grew 1,300 pounds of produce, which was distributed to local food banks. This project was well received, and this year the church has a goal of producing 5,000 pounds of fresh produce.

During my visit last Thursday, I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Bill Wilcox, the man with the vision for the victory garden. I joined him and many other volunteers who helped make this marvellous project possible. These volunteers oversee every step of the operation from start to finish. In some cases, entire families volunteer their time at the garden, helping with the planting, watering and harvesting, and even hand-delivering the crops to the food bank.

Projects like this are an excellent example of how a few dedicated people can make a huge difference. It fills me with pride to see members of my community donating their time to help those in need on Hamilton Mountain, and I hope their example will lead to the development of similar projects in other ridings.

### POTATO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Last summer, Ontario potato growers experienced the longest drought since records have been kept. Streams and ponds dried up. The potato crop was devastated. The drought affected approximately 30,000 acres of potatoes, and those farmers lost an average of more than \$2,000 an acre.

For these farmers, it was a natural disaster. They didn't cause it, they didn't control it, and they shouldn't have to suffer for it. But when they turned to their government for help asking for ad hoc payment to help them keep farming, they got a lot of talk but no action.

Ontario's potato farmers need help. Existing programs aren't enough to help them cover these huge losses. They have been struggling to keep up with their mortgages and to find money to plant this year's crop. The companies that depend on quality Ontario potatoes are also at risk. The potato board began discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricorp in August, nine long months ago, but so far there has been no support for the potato farmers.

Dave MacKenzie and the potato board have done the right things. They're working with their local MPP Jim Wilson. They tried to work with the ministry. They put forward fair proposals. They sent letters to the minister and the Premier, asking for help. The McGuinty government has done absolutely nothing.

These farmers have been more patient. They have been struggling to make ends meet while they waited for

the government, but now the situation is urgent. It is spring, planting time, and Ontario's potato farmers need help, otherwise they're going to become the latest people that the McGuinty government has forced out of farming.

#### WINONA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Overcrowding, mould, poor heating, poor cooling, leaks in the roof, crumbling floors and ceiling tiles, injuries, dangerous parking, sidewalks, paths, seas of portables, too few washrooms—this is the sad reality of Winona Public School, an elementary school in my riding.

The students, parents and community members of Winona need a new public school now. Because of powerful community activism and the efforts of the school's parent council, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has committed in its 2008 capital plan to build a new Winona Public School. This, however, is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education.

In June, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will submit a business case to the ministry calling for a new public school in the Winona area to alleviate the current accommodation and facility pressures. In keeping with the promise to uphold the Ontario safe schools strategy, I expect that the Minister of Education will personally ensure that the approval and funding are granted expeditiously to address this urgent need so that the construction of the Winona Public School can commence immediately.

I look forward to the delivery of good news to the Winona community in my riding and encourage that this decision be made before the school year ends.

#### CITY OF CORNWALL

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** Last year, Ottawa Citizen reporter Kelly Egan wrote an article about the city of Cornwall, located in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, where he referred to Cornwall as “unkillable” and “a cool place” and said that there is something “so Canadian” about the city.

He is right. The story of Cornwall, and my entire riding, is steeped in the history of our country. Indeed, Ontario's first Premier, John Sandfield Macdonald, was born in my riding at St. Raphael's, practised law in Cornwall, and is buried just north of the city at St. Andrew's West.

As Ontario becomes an increasingly multicultural place, this is reflected in the rich ethnic diversity to be found in my riding.

As our economy shifts from traditional manufacturing to a new era of development, Cornwall is once again at the forefront. Just recently, Verdant Power, a company specializing in the creation of renewable energy from the current of a river, announced that they would develop a power project on the St. Lawrence River at Cornwall. This and other companies are capitalizing on our affordable property rates, access to major markets,

bilingual workforce and the “can do” spirit of the community.

Cornwall and area is emerging as the best place to establish industries that focus on new and emerging technologies, and I am proud to continue working with local leaders, those leaders we have in the gallery here today, and businesses as we continue our local economic renaissance.

#### ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** CBC reports that a coalition of native groups is proposing to own a 49% share in new electricity transmission lines from Sudbury to Barrie. It has been suggested that share ownership would lessen the possibility of vandalism.

We saw vandals damage the power towers in Caledonia two years ago. The Niagara-to-Caledonia power lines have been sitting unfinished for the past two years.

Is this government now going to hand over shares of public assets to prevent vandalism? Is this bowing to extortion?

The Premier said this morning, “I can say I like the notion of finding more ways to put more of these central revenues into the hands of our aboriginal communities, and if there's some possibilities there, we'll look at them.”

We see what happened in Brantford because the people of Brantford refused to do business with the HDI extortionists, but this government has refused to protect the people in Brantford from these extortionists, those in HDI asking for money to make the protests go away.

I have questions, Speaker. Are the public, our electricity ratepayers, going to have a say in whether their transmission assets are going to be handed over? Will people in Ontario, electricity users, want to be part of any potential for extortion?

#### HOSPICE NORTHUMBERLAND LAKESHORE

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's with great pleasure that I rise today to speak about Hospice Northumberland Lakeshore.

I had the pleasure last Saturday to host seven mayors and councillors from my riding and their assistants at the ninth annual Hospice Cup Challenge. This annual challenge features a race of sorts, with the winner taking home the Hospice Cup. This year, I was blindfolded while attempting a three-legged race with my EA. We didn't win the race. The hospice was the big winner at the end of the night. We raised almost \$12,000 that night, which totals almost \$70,000 over the past eight years in pledges raised by the local mayors and MPPs.

**1510**

Please join me in thanking the mayors and their assistants, and especially the volunteers of Hospice Northumberland Lakeshore. These tireless volunteers give their time, efforts and talents to make our com-

munities such a wonderful place to live. Bonnie Walker and Nancy Crapper have been the heart behind the fundraising efforts, and they're officially retiring from their many years of volunteering with the hospice. Please join me in thanking them for their years of dedication and in wishing them well in their retirement.

#### WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I want to talk about a very important event this month being organized by the Women's College Hospital Foundation here in Toronto. On Thursday, May 29, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair will speak at a gala event to benefit Women's College Hospital Foundation. This is part of the foundation's speaking series, which has fundraised more than \$4 million to support research and care at Women's College Hospital. The evening will be a great opportunity to hear Mr. Blair speak about his political life and his ongoing work as the Middle East envoy for the UN, the European Union, the United States and Russia. Up to 1,500 people are expected to attend and support this very important work of the hospital.

Women's College Hospital is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary focus on women's health. The fundraiser will enable the hospital to continue its leading-edge research and explore new and better ways to provide health care to women and their families through every phase of their life.

I urge all members of the House, as well as their constituents, to learn more about this evening with Tony Blair and do, please, support Women's College Hospital.

#### ALGOMA UNIVERSITY

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** This morning, this assembly gave second reading to Bill 80, An Act to establish Algoma University and to dissolve Algoma University College. This bill, when passed, will make Algoma University a free-standing, independent, degree-granting institution. This is a significant and important step for post-secondary education in the north, in Algoma and obviously in Sault Ste. Marie.

Since its inception in 1964, Algoma University has evolved into a proud multidisciplinary institution which is known for its innovation and its partnerships. Its creativity in programming, the excellence of its professors and teaching staff, the support staff, the administration and particularly the vision of its president, Dr. Celia Ross, have helped make this day a reality.

I want to acknowledge the Premier for his commitment to Algoma, Minister Milloy for moving quickly with this bill, the support of the community of Sault Ste. Marie and its mayor, John Rowswell, the support of Algoma District municipalities, and particularly the strong championing of this project by my colleague the MPP for Sault Ste. Marie, David Oraziotti. I want to thank all members of this House on all sides for

expediting the progress of this bill. Congratulations to the chair, Bud Wildman, and to the board of governors.

Bill 80 is an important milestone on a journey to an even more prosperous future for northern Ontario students and the northern economy. We look forward to great things.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 97(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Kwinter assumes ballot item number 68 and Mr. Ramal assumes ballot item number 32, and Mr. Flynn assumes ballot item number 31 and Mr. Brownell assumes ballot item number 76.

#### ALMA COLLEGE

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I need to seek the indulgence of the House for a moment. I recognize that I'm probably out of order and I can't rule myself out of order, but I lost a really good friend today, and it was a heritage building. Alma College was a historic school in my community that towered over the city. I could see it from my backyard and from my office every day. Tragically, it burned to the ground at noon this afternoon. I trust that if it was arson, they will find the culprits.

For me, Alma was a special place. First, it was incorporated by this very chamber in its beginning, and it stood as a monument for a long time. I worked at that college 20 years ago when I was a university student. It was a special thing to have a girls' school and being the only guy that could walk through the front gates of that school and not be arrested. I say this because there have been community citizens for over 20 years who have actively tried to find a new use for the building. And in over 20 years, we've had various governments.

I needed to make the statement for myself and to say thank you to the people over the years who worked so hard to preserve this building. I just ask that we remember that. I hope it's a lesson to all of us that our heritage is precious and that we need to collectively do what we can to ensure that we preserve our heritage for future generations. Once these buildings are gone, they're gone. You can't ever bring them back.

If nothing else, I hope that this fire today at Alma College—that all the work everyone has done over the years hasn't been in vain, that we can learn collectively that it's incumbent on all of us to make sure that we stand up and preserve our heritage and find ways of developing new and unique partnerships to make sure that these symbols will remain for generations to come. I thank the members for allowing me this opportunity.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: My wife was one of those girls who graduated from Alma, and I thank you for your sense of history and for making that statement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's not a point of order, but I will accept it as a point of order today. It was interesting speaking to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. Norm Miller's sister attended Alma College as well, and Norm very well remembers visiting the school and acting as a date for his sister for a graduation ceremony.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HANDGUN MANUFACTURERS' AND IMPORTERS' LIABILITY ACT, 2008 LOI DE 2008 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ DES FABRICANTS ET DES IMPORTATEURS D'ARMES DE POING

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns / Projet de loi 82, Loi imputant aux fabricants et aux importateurs la responsabilité de toute atteinte causée par l'utilisation illégale d'armes de poing.

**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):** Member for a short statement.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** With the news today in the media of another fatal shooting in Toronto, I'd like to explain that this bill provides that when a person is injured or killed as a result of the actual or threatened unlawful use of a handgun, the person or the personal representative and his or her dependents are entitled to bring an action against the handgun manufacturer or importer. The crown in right of Ontario is also entitled to bring an action against the manufacturer or the importer of handguns to recover the cost of health care benefits caused or contributed to by the actual or threatened unlawful use of handguns.

### SKIN CANCER PREVENTION ACT, 2008 LOI DE 2008 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU CANCER DE LA PEAU

Mr. Ramal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to help prevent skin cancer / Projet de loi 83, Loi aidant à prévenir le cancer de la peau.

**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):** Member for a short statement.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** This bill provides for a prohibition on selling or supplying tanning services or ultraviolet light treatment services to a person under the age of 19. The prohibition does not apply to ultraviolet

treatments prescribed by authorized medical professionals for conditions prescribed by the regulations.

1520

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice with respect to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I move that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures and that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the 29th annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees.

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

*Agreed to.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

#### LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 27, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée pour protéger les enfants contre le tabagisme passif dans les véhicules automobiles.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I'm very pleased to be able to speak today in support of Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles. What we're doing here is amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This bill, if passed, will ban smoking in a motor vehicle when children who are under the age of 16 are in the car. Specifically, any person who is caught smoking in a car with a young child in it could receive a ticket of \$250. The police will have this on the list of offences that they will be responsible for enforcing—and just to emphasize that the legislation applies to children under the age of 16.

We're doing this because the medical science is very clear: Second-hand smoke is dangerous to everyone, but

particularly to children. We know that children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer health problems such as sudden infant death syndrome and asthma as young people, and later in life they're more likely to suffer from cancer and cardiac disease. So this is a very important health initiative from the point of view of the child.

We also know that second-hand smoke levels in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times worse than in a smoker's home. Some people have said, "Why are you particularly zeroing in on smoking in cars with kids?" That's why. It's because the level of the intensity of the smoke they are breathing and therefore the number of harmful, poisonous agents that young child is breathing in is much more intense in a car than in a home or some other venue where a child might be and where there are adult smokers there.

We also know that in this climate that we have, while in the summer you might drive around with the windows open if you're smoking in the car, in a Canadian winter, if it's 20 or 30 below out, you keep the windows closed, and that means that the concentration of smoke in that vehicle is very high.

In fact, we know there is a lot of public support for this. The Canadian Cancer Society has been doing some work on this and found in a poll done in January that 82% of Ontario citizens support a ban on smoking in vehicles with children. I think the public understands the health risks involved here and that we need to act on this, and I hope act on it quickly.

When we first came to power in 2003, smoking was permitted in many places. Obviously with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act—and I'm sure my colleague the minister will want to speak about this—we've cut down on the number of places in which smoking is allowed. During that time period, tobacco consumption in Ontario has fallen by 31.8%. That's really important; we're having an impact.

One of the things that we've been doing is targeting some of our programs at young people, people in the high school and university age group. The programs that we've introduced to deal with smoking in that age group include peer leadership programs for teens aged 14 to 17 that engage youth in tobacco control activities within their local communities.

Interestingly enough, this group in my community of Guelph has actually branched out beyond tobacco smoke to express a concern about chewing tobacco, so the group of young people in my area is now focusing on trying to educate their peers about the dangers of chewing tobacco and how that can also have a negative impact on a young person's health.

Of course, a lot of people are aware of stupid.ca, which was developed for youth by youth and has been very successful in making young people aware of the dangers of tobacco in a way that really grabs them.

Our plan is working. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health did a survey in 2007 and found that 72% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported never smoking a

cigarette in their lifetime. That's wonderful news, and that, in fact, is a 15% increase in the kids who don't smoke since 2003.

However, if we go back to this bill and we're looking at kids, particularly little kids in cars, they can't control that atmosphere. They are subject to the atmosphere that the adult who's smoking in the car is creating for them. I want to emphasize that for kids who are in a car where an adult is smoking, that atmosphere is 27 times as bad as if you simply had an adult smoking at home.

We're going to ban that. I'm very much in support of this legislation, and I will now turn that over to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, if I may.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member for Guelph for sharing some of her time with me. I'm very proud to stand in support of this particular piece of legislation, Bill 69, which is the first amendment to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which as the former Minister of Health Promotion I had the responsibility for implementing a little over two years ago.

We implemented it on May 31, which is World No Tobacco Day, because we're particularly proud of the legislation that bans smoking in all public workplaces in the province of Ontario. When we came to office under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, we were very clear in our campaign platform that we would bring in a uniform Smoke-Free Ontario Act, because what was happening? Once again, municipalities were ahead of the curve. Cities all across the province were passing their own municipal bylaws, and what was happening was that you were creating a patchwork approach to this particular important public health issue.

The Premier put it in the platform really for a number of reasons, but one of them was a woman in my hometown of Ottawa named Heather Crowe. Some of you may remember Heather Crowe. She was a wonderful woman who worked in the hospitality industry for over 20 years, didn't smoke a day in her life, yet several years ago contracted lung cancer as a result of exposure to second-hand smoke. She was working in restaurants and eateries and serving people, supporting her daughter as a single mother, trying to make a decent living, and unfortunately, as a result of being in these smoky, blue-haze restaurants, contracted lung cancer. Sadly, about a month before the Smoke-Free Ontario Act came into effect, she passed away.

Many of us on both sides of this House had the pleasure over the last year or so to distribute Heather Crowe Awards, which were the government of Ontario's recognition of Heather, for the work that she did to ensure that this particular piece of legislation saw the light of day. We awarded them to individuals who did wonderful work in their own communities to promote a smoke-free environment, whether it was lobbying municipal councillors or working with the Canadian Cancer Society, the Lung Association or the Heart and Stroke Foundation. I'm very proud of having known Heather. I knew the restaurant she worked at before she

passed away, the Newport Restaurant owned by a great community activist, Moe Atallah, in the city of Ottawa.

**1530**

This particular piece of legislation is the natural extension to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act because, as my colleague from Guelph indicated, second-hand smoke levels in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times worse than in a smoker's home. Some of you may have heard one of the radio commercials that I believe has been put on by the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society. It has a mother asking a young child, "What are you doing?" The young child asked for a light. It was trying to get across the image of the real lunacy of a child of seven or eight years old smoking. Yet in a car, perhaps in a child seat, if they're of a certain age, they're actually inhaling all of that second-hand smoke. We don't think that's right. The child can't speak out for themselves, can't defend themselves.

We know that it's the right thing to do. We would hope that this particular piece of legislation would receive unanimous support from the Legislature because when the Smoke-Free Ontario Act came into effect, the New Democrats supported it, our party supported it, but sadly, half the Conservative Party either was absent for the vote or did not support it—actually voted actively against it. My hope is that we're able to get unanimity on this particular piece of legislation because we know that this will save lives and prevent illness.

Some people say governments are hypocritical because they accept all of this tobacco tax revenue, but let's look at the facts just for a moment. The fact of the matter is that smoking not only kills over 13,000 Ontarians every year but also costs the health care system \$1.7 billion. The last figures I saw showed the tobacco tax brought in just a little over \$1 billion in taxes, so it's costing us a lot more to treat people who are ill or dying of second-hand smoke and direct tobacco than it is to get the tobacco tax, so we're no farther ahead.

In conclusion, I want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie, our colleague David Oraziotti, because he listened to his community. He listened to stakeholders, to health care workers, to nurses and to doctors, and he brought this idea forward originally, as a private member's bill. I commend my successor, the Honourable Margaret Best, the Minister of Health Promotion, for bringing it forward as a government piece of legislation, and the Premier for his support.

I also want to commend my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans because on May 31 of this year the next phase of implementation of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act comes into effect. It's known as the McNeely amendment, which he amended in the legislative committee process; it bans the power walls from all of the different retail operations. We understand that the retail operators have some difficulty with it because they get a lot of money from the tobacco companies. We also understand that it is a much more important public health issue to ensure that when a child goes into a convenience store looking to buy a chocolate bar or a package of gum,

they are not inundated with this huge wall of tobacco. Also, those individuals who are trying to quit, because it's difficult to quit smoking, are not tempted when they see this massive wall. The tobacco industry knows full well that that's the prime location for advertising, and we want to make sure that that particular aspect of advertising is eliminated. I commend the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing that forward. In just a few days, on Saturday of this week, that particular aspect of the legislation comes into effect.

I'm very proud of the work we've done to create a smoke-free Ontario. I think Bill 69 is in response to a number of municipalities, including Peterborough, Ottawa, Kenora, Terrace Bay, Toronto, Tecumseh and the region of York, all passing resolutions in support of us. I would hope that the honourable members opposite support this because this is the right thing to do from a public health point of view, and it's the right thing to do to protect the health and well-being of children in our province.

C'est mon plaisir de dire un grand merci à la ministre de la Promotion de la santé pour ce projet de loi. Je pense que c'est bon non seulement pour les enfants mais pour les adultes dans une voiture.

It's not only good for the children; it's also good for the adults and it's good for public health in this province. I urge all members to support Bill 69, because it will save lives.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This question on Bill 69 raises in my mind—it's a no-brainer, as some speakers have said. We could get on to more serious things. So with that liberty, I'm going to read an obituary here that is relevant to this. I'll explain it later. I'll read it word for word:

Tom Edvard Krogh: "Born in Peterborough, Ontario, 1936, passed away April 29, 2008. Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Geology, University of Toronto; retired curator and founding director of the Geochronology Laboratory of the Royal Ontario Museum. Much loved and greatly missed by his wife Kathy Myers and sister Joan Armstrong Bennett. Fondly remembered by his children and their spouses: Erik and Jane, Kari and Dave, Sara and Mark and Jason and Jenn as well as grandchildren Jeremy, Rebecca, Ezra and Alyssa Hong Gee. Tom approached life with a scientific mind, sharing his insights into geology, cooking, organic gardening, energy efficiency and more. Every experience was seen as an opportunity for learning. Always down to earth, Tom was as comfortable in a straw hat on his tractor as he was examining minerals under a microscope. But Tom was perhaps most at home on an outcrop of the Canadian Shield. A graduate of Queen's University M.Sc. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ph.D., Tom especially enjoyed his many years of research at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, DC. His work"—this is important—"revolutionized techniques of radiometric uranium-lead rock ... of the history of the Earth's crust.

Tom was the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of" the science of his profession.

He was a person I knew as a young person, who was always looking at rocks. That's a more important theme than talking about Bill 69.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I don't know what the last comment had to do with the speeches made by the member for Guelph and for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would like to comment on what they actually had to say.

It seems to me that, although we 100% approve of this bill and we are going to vote for this bill and send it to committee, the Liberals are indeed protesting too much. They are trying to take credit for an action which is long overdue and which was proposed during the last session of Parliament, only to have the Premier at the time say that he was not going in that direction and to do a 180, an about-face, which I am thankful that he has done. But all the same, it is a complete 180-degree turn for the Premier and the cabinet and how they voted in support of this very resolution when it was before us two years ago.

In terms of the power walls, I hear the Minister of Municipal Affairs trying to take great credit for locking down the power walls. But I remember the debate two years ago, or three years ago, in this very House, when it was suggested that the power walls be taken down right away, that there was no real reason to have those continue in the convenience stores for the two years because of the numbers of children who would go into the stores and potentially could take up smoking in that interim period. It was suggested by the Liberals at that time that there was no real rush. So for them to turn around today and to say, "Here we are doing it"—it's two years too late. I am glad it's two years too late rather than never, and I commend the members for what they had to say, but these are times that are well past. The sooner we get on with this, the better.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I'm proud to rise in support of Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles. I'm proud to rise in support as an educator as well as a mother of three boys. We have a responsibility to raise our children and to protect them.

I've dedicated my life over the years to education, to keeping our schools safe and to protecting our youth. This is part of that very same commitment. As citizens, by definition we have a responsibility to give back to our communities and to our society. Part of that responsibility is to protect the health and well-being of our children; in this case, to protect them from second-hand smoke in vehicles.

**1540**

We teach literacy and numeracy in schools, we teach healthy relationships, we teach our youth to make good decisions. But in vehicles, children under 16 are not driving; they are not making that primary decision to smoke. Therefore, it is not within their control to avoid second-hand smoke. They are not the decision-makers.

The medical evidence is clear: Second-hand smoke is dangerous. I'll share with you a quote from Dr. Suzanne

Strasberg, the Ontario Medical Association board chair, who says, "Ontario's doctors welcome the provincial government's decision to ban smoking in cars carrying children to ensure that they are protected from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Protecting the health of Ontario's children is one of our most important jobs." As with seat belt legislation, we owe it to our children to keep them safe and healthy.

One more quote from the Heart and Stroke Foundation: "We applaud the Premier for his commitment to protecting children."

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I will be supporting this bill, as I have supported the whole movement toward a second-hand smoking ban for a long period of time. But I find it very odd that this Liberal Party, which turned down an amendment on the original bill to control smoking in motor vehicles, which I put forward at that time in opposition, is now taking credit for the very same measure some 18 years later. It's taken them 18 years to get on side with me, Norm Sterling.

The truth of the matter with this Liberal government is that they take a poll, they put their finger to the wind and then they come in and bring forward a phony piece of legislation like this. We could pass this in 10 minutes. There's no need to carry on the debate and waste the time of the Legislature on it. Let's talk about the economy. Let's talk about bills brought forward by the NDP, who want to increase Canadian content in our manufacturing sector. Let's talk about real things for the people of Ontario. Let's talk about the regrettable behaviour of this government in putting severely disabled people out of Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls. Let's talk about real issues that mean real things to people. We all agree with this. Let's get on with the real business of the people of Ontario.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the member for Durham, who might have been a little bit off track with, I'm sure, a perfectly wonderful person's obituary; and the members for Beaches—East York, Kitchener—Conestoga and Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

What I think we've heard here today is a tremendous amount of support for this bill banning smoking in cars with kids. I'd just like to tell you what the former president of the Ontario Medical Association, Dr. Janice Willett, said: "Ontario's doctors ... congratulate the McGuinty government for introducing legislation to ban smoking in cars carrying children. The health effects of second-hand smoke in adults and children alike are undeniable. This initiative is an important step forward in protecting our children's health."

What I think I hear today is that we are all in agreement with that, and I hope we will be able to pass this bill quickly.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** This might be an appropriate time for me to remind members that questions and comments are intended to be, and

should be, directed toward the comments that were made by the speaker—or speakers, in this case. We might remember that from time to time.

I also would like to take a moment to introduce guests of the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. In the east members' gallery: Mayor Bob Kilger, Lezlie Strasser, Guy Willis, Paul Lefebvre, Jeanette Despatie, Pierre Lefebvre, Mark Boileau, Don Fairweather, Denis Thibault and Caroline Dexter. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Since we're all having such a good and raucous time here this afternoon, I thought I would join the debate. But in all seriousness, I rise to address Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, of which I've had the opportunity to speak many times of late in this Legislature.

The last time that I rose to refer to Bill 69, I think I didn't please my colleagues on the government side very much—notably, the member from Peterborough. I felt the palpable displeasure of the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who had previously introduced a private member's bill along the lines of Bill 69—the same type of thing: no smoking in cars with children. My own colleague the member from Kitchener–Waterloo has also made that effort, to no avail, in the past. So a number of private members' bills were not passed by the government and are now brought forward as a government bill.

I have to say that I have never criticized the concept, and I want to go on record right now as saying in fact that I would support it, and I rise to do that now. My prior criticism, which I do not recant, was of the McGuinty government for using a bill like this as a smokescreen—no pun intended—to shield it from the big-picture issues. We're talking about the economy; we're talking about health care, education, general fiscal restraint, and of course an economic stimulus package, which we desperately need, right behind it. "So much to do; so little time"—an expression we've all heard so many times. I would divert that a little bit and say, "So much to do in this House and so much time to do it; why don't we get on with it?"

I've been on my feet in this House more than anyone recently, probably—arguably, anyway—on the issue of smoking recently. And yes, this is germane because my concern has been on seeing tobacco products fall into the wrong hands—the hands of children—by allowing the continuation of the blind-eye philosophy of this government to the illicit sale of such products through illicit smoke shacks all over Ontario. I've asked question after question on this subject and I have had the pleasure of being escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms to the front door. We, the Progressive Conservative Party, support doing anything it takes to protect our children, and I resent any implications to the contrary. Every question directed to any minister on the smoking file gets a response that suggests otherwise. But no one on this side wants kids to

smoke any more than you do on that side. We have the power to rail about the non-level playing field; they have the power to level the playing field, but they don't do it.

Let me quote from a recent statement to this House by my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. She said:

"When my colleague brought forward a bill calling for an educational campaign for parents and others on the dangers of smoking in vehicles with children inside, this government was silent yet again. When asked why children can purchase cheap and dangerous cigarettes without so much as being asked for identification, she is silent. Why should some children in this province be excluded from protection from smoking, both first- and second-hand ways? It's two-tier protection of children.

"Is the minister going to plan to police the automobiles as they drive away from the many illegal smoke shops we have in Ontario? Is she going to enforce that?" I suggest, Mr. Speaker, to you and to the members of this House, that that is a major focal point for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

So of course this legislation is worthy of support; I don't argue that. Will they enforce it? I have my doubts. The enforcement might take the form of a just-in-passing arrest. A police car stops at a light. A policeman sees a mom smoking in her car; the kids hopefully are buckled in. At least that law is being respected. So there is a stop and there is a \$250 fine, and that's about as close as it gets.

**1550**

I used the analogy a couple of weeks ago in a short two-minute hit, the one I referred to that some people didn't like, where I talked about the possibility of enforcement taking the form of an OPP cruiser careening down the 401, to catch what? A mom smoking in the car with her children present when in fact that same mom can go home to the kitchen and, outside the view or the purview of the law, can still smoke in the presence of her children.

I used the term "moron" to describe anyone who would smoke in a car in the presence of children, and it does apply. Perhaps we can hope that debating this legislation will let the morons out there know that what they're doing in their cars and in their kitchens hurts their kids. I hope so.

That in itself—the statement I've just made—is a form of education, but it's not formal education. Why doesn't the McGuinty government, which rakes in millions upon millions of dollars in tobacco tax revenues, consider educational efforts that work as opposed to just using a nanny-state ban for everything? Until right now, what has the government done to educate people on the effects of second-hand smoke on children? The answer to that question is nothing. With the several aforementioned private members' bills on this very issue over and done with, with the Ontario Medical Association, the Lung Association, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, among many, many others, screaming for this ban, why not educate if you weren't going to legislate? "Now we'll do

it,” you say, but that doesn’t negate the education component. So let’s do it.

As with many other issues, we in Ontario are playing johnny-come-lately here. As recently as January of this year, the Minister of Health Promotion was saying that she was content to postpone the debate of such a ban until the end of the year. Did she take the advice of medical stakeholders or did she just set out to deflect the heavy criticism being levelled at her, in her innocence, over the illicit tobacco trade? I think I know the answer. Sorry, but it’s as if 37% of all tobacco sales being illicit, or 40% of butts found around high schools—and there are illicit cigarettes as well in Mississauga—is one thing, and passing a bill like this is another. They’re both about protecting people, and when I talk about people, I talk about the children of Ontario. Can we just address that?

The facts of this bill leave open many questions: first, police officers as enforcers of this. They have many things to do. I suggest to you that this is low on the priority list, as important as it may be. Second, the fine is \$250. It’s a lot of money to some; it’s sustainable to most. If we’re talking about seriously getting rid of this, maybe that number has to be higher. Finally, the legislation addresses tobacco, but lots of people smoke other substances in their cars. That’s reckless in and of itself. Add a child to that mix and my prior use of language doesn’t even begin to apply. So let’s cover smoking of any substance in a vehicle if we’re going to pass this law.

Isn’t it interesting that tobacco use still remains the number one cause of death here in Ontario? Some of that is obviously residual: older, long-term smokers reaping what they’ve sown. But second-hand smoke is what we are addressing here today. Those exposed to it, notably children, with no choice whatsoever, can be—will be, if we don’t put an end to it—the next round of victims.

Again, the legislation has merit despite the fact that I prefer education over legislation.

Let me refer this House to a significant stakeholder position. Michael Perley of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, which represents groups like the Ontario Medical Association and the Canadian Cancer Society, said that an education campaign would be an important step as long as it leads to an eventual ban. “Our collective position is that you need a public education campaign to precede the implementation of the law,” said Perley. ‘I think we also absolutely need the ban, and the law on the books, because apparently there’s still people who have not got the message about the serious impact exposure can have on kids. We need something in force where if someone is seen doing this there is a sanction, because there’s certainly one for if you don’t have you child properly installed in a child seat....’

“‘The combination of an education program and the law will get the message through to people who are still doing this,’ said Perley. ‘For those who continue to smoke in their cars with children present we need the law to be sanctioned.’”

As I’ve suggested, the sanctions should be larger than envisioned.

We also know that kids have higher metabolism and respiration rates—respiration rates fall into metabolism—so they would tend to absorb more smoke if they were in that environment. We also don’t know what effect the 4,000 chemicals and over 50 known or suspected carcinogens might have on young and still developing immune and nervous systems.

A vast majority of Ontarians agree with protecting kids from second-hand smoke and also that people strongly support this legislation. Actually, though, only 66% of smokers do, so all we can do is hope that the 34% of smokers who do not support it are not the ones with the children.

In concluding, let me restate that I support this bill because, absent common sense on the part of smokers, kids indeed need protection. Let me also repeat what I said a few weeks ago, to the chagrin of several members from the government side: We need to start dealing with tremendously important issues here. This House will rise in a few short weeks, and we will not reconvene until the end of September.

I believe that those items are: where our province is heading economically; the loss of good jobs to other jurisdictions; the loss of good citizens who leave to seek their fortunes elsewhere; health issues like C. difficile infections in hospitals—as a former Quebecker, I can tell you it is a madhouse there with that, and we haven’t begun to see what’s going to happen in Ontario, and that is not an expressed hope, but an expressed fear—long-term-care beds; and in my riding, goodness knows, transportation.

These are the issues this House needs to be dealing with. We have spent far too much time, since last fall’s election, dealing with bans and with adjustments to legislation. We have real problems in Ontario. I do not want to demean this issue by saying what I have just said, but let’s get this bill passed and let’s move on.

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I was wondering whether to actually stand, because I believe that the time for debate is over. But I was taken with a few things from the member from Thornhill, which I guess forced me to my feet.

The first was his discussion around the whole issue of enforcement. I agree with him that it may, in fact, be very problematic to enforce this bill. You’re literally going to have to have a complainant alert the police in advance in order to stop a car where they have good and probable grounds to believe that someone may be smoking inside.

It is very difficult, unless one is in very close proximity, to actually see someone smoking a cigarette. Unless it’s very blatant—if it’s in your hand—it’s not clear to the eye. It’s hard enough to see a car, let alone the driver inside the car, let alone a tiny little cigarette in the hand inside the car, let alone a couple of kids sleeping in the back seat. I think there will not be much enforcement

around this bill, and education is perhaps a better way to go. In that, he is correct.

The second thing he was talking about, and which he closed with, I think, is very important to this House. There have been a number of bills that some in the press have called fluff bills. This one, although it may be very important to some, is not one of the great issues of the day. We have taken action in the last Parliament to ban cigarettes, to ban power walls, to do a number of things that were essential and long overdue, things that municipalities had done and predated us by years upon years. We finally got around to it, and that's a good thing.

Bills like this one, which was a private member's bill that the Premier disagreed with and suddenly saw the light on, are of a very minor nature. The member is absolutely correct that we need to get on to the great issues of the day. This, as important as it is to some people, is not one of those great issues. I believe the time for debate—and I concur with him on this bill—is now over.

**1600**

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It gives me great pleasure to rise again in the House to address Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Our colleague from Thornhill is obviously very interested in the educational aspects of what the Ministry of Health Promotion is doing as it relates to creating what we hope one day will be a smoke-free Ontario. So I thought perhaps I would just tell him a little about the call volumes that the smokers' helpline has been getting—in fact, increasing annually. More than 17,000 callers accessed the smokers' helpline in 2006-07, an 8.7% increase over the previous year. In addition, over 7,000 people registered for the smokers' helpline online personalized and interactive quit program. The interim results for 2007-08 are continuing to show an increase in demand for the services of the smokers' helpline, and online. Approximately 27,000 Ontario smokers were motivated to quit during the month of March by participating in the Driven to Quit Challenge in 2008.

As it relates specifically to youth, there was a concerted effort to work with aboriginal youth. In March 2007, the first-ever provincial aboriginal youth summit brought together more than 200 youth province-wide to develop tobacco-wise activity for their communities. We are seeing results with youth. In 2007, 12% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported having smoked in the past year, down from 14% in 2005.

Obviously time doesn't allow me to continue at this particular time, but there are many examples of excellent programs provided by the Ministry of Health Promotion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? The member for Caledon-Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** What did you say? Carleton.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Thank you. I'd like to comment on the member's speech as we are supposed to in this Legislature in response. I want to talk about the illegal sale of tobacco, which he referred to in his comments.

The effect of this legislation, the effect of the legislation with regard to power walls, has such a minor effect on the use of tobacco, particularly by our young people, that it's almost laughable. The sale of illicit or illegal cigarettes is the biggest challenge we have in telling our young people not to begin smoking. We all know that the addiction to nicotine is tremendous. Once young people get hold of these illegal cigarettes and start smoking, in some cases it's impossible for that person to ever kick the habit because of the tremendous addictive nature of nicotine to them.

Now, I want to say that not only is the illegal sale of tobacco very harmful to the young people particularly in our community, but it's also very harmful to our society as a whole. I want to talk about the small business owner of a small general store in Fitzroy Harbour in the riding that I represent, Carleton-Mississippi Mills. They have seen tobacco products fall off in sales dramatically. That's not because there is a decline in the use of tobacco—because there is—but it's because the resident upstairs is selling illegal tobacco. The store owner sees bags of tobacco go out of that apartment upstairs. They report that to the police and nothing is done.

Until we get after illegal tobacco, we will not beat this terrible habit.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Thornhill, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much to my colleagues from Oak Ridges-Markham, Carleton-Mississippi Mills and Beaches-East York for their comments, which all, I feel, dovetail very well into what I had to say.

First of all, in response to my friend from Oak Ridges-Markham, I acknowledge that education has formed an aspect of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and has done some good. There's no doubt—I can't argue, and neither can anyone else—that the general reduction of smoking in Ontario has been sustained. How much of it we want to attribute to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, I can't say. We don't have that statistic. But it's good to know that it's down. That having been said, it isn't a question, when I raise the issue of education, of educating generally about the ills of smoking. I talked about educating on this particular file before we went the route of passing legislation on it.

In response, as well, to my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, he told a story that I've probably heard, at this point, a couple of dozen times, and I've heard it, indeed, from people who are charged with the enforcement of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Illicit tobacco is the problem. The Ontario Convenience Stores Association reports a 25% general revenue drop, which they attribute directly to the loss of tobacco sales. One could easily say, "Well, good, they're selling less tobacco, so fewer people are smoking." No. Their loss is due

to the sale of tobacco by illicit smoke shacks. That's where the disconnect occurs.

In response to my friend from Beaches—East York, yes, enforcement is a problem. I'll simply underscore what I said before: Education has to come before legislation. We've heard from Michael Perley in a quote that I put forward to this House, and I think the two go hand in hand.

So let's pass the bill, and indeed, let's get rid of what the press has referred to as "fluff bills." Let's deal with things like 207,000 jobs lost. Oh, and by the way, let's pass some private members' bills that have merit.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm delighted to enter into the debate. I think there are rare opportunities, as members, when we have an opportunity to have consensus. This is not a place that is designed to reach consensus. It is a place where there is to be a vigorous debate, but every so often, we have items on which I think there is a consensus. The importance for us to pass Bill 69—and I agree with my colleagues on this side of the House and the other side of the House that this is a bill whose time has come.

I come to this debate as someone who, fortunately, did not take up the habit of cigarette smoking as a young person. I'm praying that our three children—my wife and I—don't smoke. I don't think they do, and I think they've been raised not to. We know how pernicious an addiction it is and how important it is that we recognize that tobacco companies target not 49-year-old men like me, where there's not a lot of economic benefit to getting me hooked on cigarettes, but rather, they deliberately target our children.

I was in my riding just the other day and I dropped in at a little place called Gads Hill to get some gasoline. I went in to pay my bill, and I was so happy to see that the power wall in that little store had been taken down. The week before, it was still up. They were already, in advance, in compliance. When I was on the committee with other members of this House in regard to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, we dealt with the issue of the de-normalization of cigarette smoking, particularly the message that we send to our children, and we do that by saying that you do not put cigarettes out with Twizzlers and candy bars.

There are vulnerable people, our smallest children, who don't have a choice as to whether or not they are exposed to second-hand smoke. They are exposed to second-hand smoke, actually, by members of their own family in the home in which they live. But I think society has come to a point where we believe that a child, particularly one exposed to second-hand smoke in the confined quarters of a car—that is now unacceptable.

I want to commend my friend the Minister of Health Promotion for introducing this bill and all the members from all sides who have championed this cause, particularly the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who, I think, receives special note for his persistence on this idea.

**1610**

There are times when an idea is ripe for the plucking, and that is today for this issue. As the Minister of Research and Innovation, I'm focused on the issues of the future and ensuring that our children have a brighter future. It's so important that we do not allow them, whatever way we can, to be exposed to nicotine.

I heard some members of the opposition say that it's very difficult to enforce this bill. I think that, more than anything else, this sends a very clear signal to society as to what behaviour is and is not acceptable. The state is not around every corner. It is, in most cases, human behaviour that determines our fate. We're not going to have the state at every corner, but I know that people will drive and say, "If I'm pulled over by the police and I roll down the window and the smoke comes pouring out and there's a baby in the back seat"—we are sending a signal to the people of Ontario that we, and I believe all of us in this House, will say that that is unacceptable. Times change, and I think this is one of those times when we are making it very positive.

I want to reinforce that this is an item whose time has come. There is a consensus around this place. I would urge all members to stand in their place. I don't think that it is a particularly partisan bill. There is always room for debate on other issues and that people are being asked to perhaps meander off of this central issue, but there is one central issue. The people have been very clear to all of us in our constituency offices that this bill's time has come. I would urge all members to dispatch this bill just as quickly as possible and that we send a new, clear statement to all the people of Ontario about what is and is not acceptable and how we must protect those who are most vulnerable.

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

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to rise and provide some comments on the member's dissertation on the act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in vehicles.

I can recall that when I was in high school—which admittedly was in another millennium—the great talk about cigarette smoking at that time was that it might stunt your growth, it might give you emphysema when you were a whole lot older and it was just kind of a nasty habit. It wasn't a very polite thing to do around others.

Medical science over the years has gathered a lot of information and provided a lot of research, a lot of background and a lot of truth to the fact that smoking is indeed bad for one's health. It causes numerous illnesses, and now we have even come to realize through science, that second-hand smoke is also dangerous. It's particularly dangerous for children who are in an enclosed car. These children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer health problems such as sudden infant death syndrome, asthma, cancer, of course, and cardiac diseases later in life.

So I think this is an important piece of legislation to send the signal to those who might be considering

continuing to do this—even though education might be an excellent piece to go along with this bill, when it is passed and if it is passed—that we have a strong attitude about this in this Legislature, that it won't be tolerated that they would embark on this, because second-hand smoke levels in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times worse than in a smoker's home. If we think about the confined space, it only makes some sense that that particular science would be true.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I just have a request to the government: Stop filibustering your own bill. Let's vote.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Ditto.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I just want to put on the record that anything that has been expressed that this side would not support this bill should be expunged from the record.

If you want to look at the history of this particular debate over many years, the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills was a strong and often-heard advocate against smoking in any form, as well as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, Mrs. Witmer, as Minister of Health, who took initiatives and was very much supportive. I think the government is the one that was a bit slow in getting to the mark on this thing and putting it together.

That being said, as everyone else in the House is saying, why are we spending so much time on a bill that we all agree on when in fact we could be talking about the economy and other, more important issues?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The Minister of Research and Innovation, you have two minutes to respond.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take less than that. I think we have come to a consensus, and that was the reason for my remarks. I want to commend the members opposite. This is a time for us to take action, and we look forward to speedy passage of this bill.

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

**Mr. David Zimmer:** We've heard from members on all sides of this House about, if you will, the technical reasons and the statistics supporting this piece of legislation. We've heard the percentage of cancer deaths and we've heard medical evidence and we've heard of the support from various stakeholders and so on.

But let me just take a minute to put a human face on what this legislation means. I remember as a kid—and God bless my parents. I know they meant no harm, and I expect that in today's world they would have been the very first to not smoke in the car. Nevertheless, there was a culture in a generation before in which smoking in a car, if you were a smoker, was perfectly normal. I can remember trips in the car with my younger brother and my younger sister. We'd be going to visit my grandmother, my father and mother in the front seat and the three kids in the back. Without thinking, they would light up and they'd start smoking in the front seat, talking between themselves and talking about the family business. I remember distinctly—I can smell it to this day; I can feel the burning in my eyes—the three kids in the

back seat and the car filling up with smoke. And then I'd start to wheeze and my sister and brother would start coughing. But the very worst thing was getting sick to your stomach, getting green at the gills and feeling nauseous.

I remember saying to my father and my mother, pleading with them, "Stop smoking. I'm getting sick." They'd say, "Oh, you're okay. Be quiet. You're just misbehaving." Then my sister would start to whine and my younger brother would start to whine and the car would fill up with smoke and we'd get greener. Eventually, my father would stop the car and open the door and say, "Let the kids out." We'd go to the side of the road and we'd cough and maybe have a drink of water and get sick and then we'd have to get back in that car and they'd start smoking again.

Fast-forward. My parents finally caught on; they both stopped smoking. Mind you, I was a teenager when they stopped smoking. But I do remember those rides in the back seat of the car. To this day, I discuss them with my brother and sister and at some level we have a laugh about it, but at the other level we realize what an unhealthy thing that was.

I make this point because I think there's a whole new level of awareness today about what is acceptable. My parents in those days also smoked in their home; they probably smoked on a train or a plane; they smoked in their work environments. But things have changed since then. We don't smoke in other persons' homes. Nobody smokes in this Legislature, in the hallways. People don't smoke in airplanes; they don't smoke in washrooms; they don't smoke on buses; they don't smoke on public transit. The last bastion of where they'll smoke in front of others is in a car. They have this idea that it's okay, it's their car, they can smoke, that the passenger is lucky to be getting a ride or whatever. We have to break that last bastion. It's not okay to smoke in a car in the presence of others, particularly children. This is good legislation.

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

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** C'est avec grand plaisir que je viens appuyer ce projet de loi 69, un projet de loi qui porte sur la protection des enfants de cette province, ces enfants qui sont l'avenir de notre province.

Let me tell you, at the present time we have to congratulate the member for Sault Ste. Marie, who thought of coming up and tabling this bill. I just wonder why nobody ever thought of this before.

If you look at the banning of smoking in the province, I believe the city of Toronto was the first one to ban smoking in public places. Today we're looking at doing that across the province, because the McGuinty government has taken action.

Today we are debating a bill, really, that would not only protect the children of today, but also the other people accompanying a person travelling in a car. I know at this point we're really only talking about children, but we should also look a little further, in the near future, to completely banning smoking in cars. If you intend to

trade your car in and you have smoke in the car, immediately the value of the car is going down. We never took care of the health of the people travelling in a car in which a person is smoking.

When I look at the changes that occurred in the federal buildings—I used to be a federal civil servant. The absenteeism was reduced considerably after the government said no more smoking in federal buildings, in public buildings.

Today we are debating a bill that is very, very important for the health of all the children of this province.

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

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I'd like to suggest we vote on this matter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Beaches—East York.

**M. Michael Prue:** Monsieur le Président, d'accord.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? Response? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mr. Bryant has moved second reading of Bill 69. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? The parliamentary assistant, I assume.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

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

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, May 29, at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1623.*

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