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Tuesday 30 September 2008

Mardi 30 septembre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 30 September 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 30 septembre 2008

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Some of the members asked that I introduce the prayers, and I will. This morning we will be reciting an Islamic prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO PROMOTE THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES SERVICES ET SOUTIENS FAVORISANT L'INCLUSION SOCIALE DES PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 25, 2008, on the motion for third reading of Bill 77, An Act to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities, to repeal the Developmental Services Act and to amend certain other statutes / Projet de loi 77, Loi visant à prévoir des services pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle, à abroger la Loi sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle et à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate? The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker. I understand neither of the other two parties is going to be debating this morning.

For people listening and watching, we actually are present to debate Bill 77, known as the Developmental Services Act. If this hasn't been explained to people, the long title is An Act to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities, to repeal the Developmental Services Act and to amend certain other statutes.

I can say for the official opposition that we support this piece of legislation, but we feel there is need for further consultation. There was some consultation in the middle of the summer, perhaps not the best time for people to come forward with any concerns they have with this proposed legislation—and it is proposed legislation, it is a bill; it is not law as yet. It's very important for those families, people affected, children who have disabilities, to ensure that their voice is heard.

This is a piece of legislation that was just introduced in April of this year, and I personally feel that more time

is in order, essentially, to ensure that we get this right. I think it's very important for members in this House from all three parties to continue to address this issue. I might say that the other two parties present have actually skipped their rotation. I'm not sure why. It's early in the morning, but I think it's very important for the government to continue to let us know what they're doing with this particular piece of legislation.

One interest I have with respect to people and young people with disabilities is the opportunity that is out there that comes from the private sector; it doesn't necessarily come directly from government. I'm referring to those good employers who take the interest and go out of their way to bring a person onto staff, onto their team, to help out in their workplace. Money changes hands, of course: When one works, one expects to be paid. However, we have millions of people who put in millions and millions of volunteer hours.

But this kind of program, from my perspective, isn't necessarily about the money. It's an opportunity for young people to join a grocery store chain, for example, to assist in that particular role or slot within that organization so that they can do well and contribute to the organization. They are paid; however, they gain so much more. They gain the benefits of a work environment. So many of our friends develop through a work environment. They're able to access the camaraderie, the esprit de corps, if you will, in a well-run organization.

This has come up a number of times over the years on the finance committee, where various advocates for people with disabilities have approached the witness table and testified. As I recall, the third party, the NDP, agree with the Conservatives on this one, that we feel it is inappropriate that so much of this money earned by people on ODSP, for example, who are working is clawed back if they go over a certain level. It leaves very little opportunity for people who are already dependent on government in many ways, and certainly dependent on their families, to, in a sense, be locked in or to have that relationship routinized somewhat, where there is essentially a negative sanction for these people to work, to accrue extra money and to save this money. Any money earned over a certain level is clawed back. I think that's one area that we, as legislators, could take a look at.

With respect to this bill, the Developmental Services Act, I hope that it will continue in the spirit of this employer program where people are offered the opportunity to work. This last Thursday night I attended the second annual employer awards evening. It was held in Brantford. It's sponsored by an agency called Abilities First.

The particular catchment area there—we met in Brantford and had a great evening: great speakers, a good dinner, of course. It's an area that covers not only Brantford, the city, but also Brant county and also my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk. The mission of this particular agency essentially is to continue to develop and improve on the relationships between employers in the community and people who have disabilities. To their credit, they seem to be doing a very good job. I attended last year as well.

There are other agencies as well who build on this link between the workplace and people who may well have trouble getting into the workplace or even getting experience, even if it's volunteer experience. I think of the Ontario Works program. There are many other programs, and I don't have the list of all the other agencies here. Because I attended this evening so recently, I'd like to take an opportunity to commend a number of the companies and the stores that opened their doors to people with disabilities and essentially put them to work.

0910

I think of Ted Swent of A. Swent and Sons. This is a welding and metal fabricating shop down in Rainham Centre, which is down in the south end of Haldimand county, just a mile or so north of Lake Erie. They received an award the other night from Abilities First for opening their doors for this program. I do recall a number of years ago, one of the employees there, if I'm not mistaken, was injured in a motorcycle accident—I may not have my facts straight—and ended up in a wheelchair and made the assumption that his career with the heavy lifting and moving steel around and welding was over. As I recall, the owner, Ted Swent, with the co-operation of his sons, indicated to him, “No, you're not leaving. We're going to train you to be a draftsman.” That was the story that I heard. I give that particular company a lot of credit, and through that company, I do say thank you to all the other companies and the small businesses that take that initial first step and go out of their way to offer their facilities and their resources to better bring along somebody who, because of certain impairments, if you will, is having some problems.

I would like to take the opportunity to commend a number of other organizations that are part of this program: Cora's Breakfast and Lunch, the Five Oaks Christian Workers Centre, Airvent Metal Products, Haldimand county. There is a municipality of 40,000 people, and I would hope that all municipalities are taking advantage of this type of program, taking the time to work up a program to bring on people with disabilities.

There was another organization there that night called Helping Others Thrift Store, and Home Depot—again a very large organization. InStore Focus Inc. is a company that does the food display in companies like Zehrs. As I recall, a number of years ago at our hearings in London, the Zehrs corporation testified before the finance committee and explained how they as a large grocery chain benefit from having people in their workforce who have some of these barriers. I mention InStore Focus because

my son Brett is part of that organization. He works there and is paid to work there through the Abilities First program. I'm very proud to see that both my son and the people from InStore Focus were at this awards ceremony to be duly recognized for what they are able to pull off.

Again, my son, my family, my wife, we can attest to the valuable contribution that that program has made personally to our family. It gives our son an opportunity to go to work, to be part of the team, to continue to make friends and essentially just be part of it all and also to continue to have that independence that is so important to my son. He obviously grew up on a farm. He knows how to work. Going right back to the Mike Harris days, 12 or 13 years ago, my son was determined to get a real job. That was one expression that my son picked up from the media. That has always been his goal, and that will be his accomplishment.

Some other companies: Martin Building Maintenance, Mary Poppins Preschool, NCO Brantford, New Orleans Pizza—they're up in St. George—all these organizations received awards the other night. Prima Klean, Quic-Klean, Rosa Flora—a very successful greenhouse operation just outside of Dunnville who employ people. The Salvation Army in Caledonia: Why are we not surprised to see this name on the list? Sifton Properties: another very, very large organization. Wendy's restaurant, down on Icomm Drive in Brantford. The Zehrs food market in Caledonia received an award, and also the Brantford Golf and Country Club, where we had the ceremony. I met the young fellow who works at the golf club and I met his manager. Those guys work together; they make a really good team, and it was a pleasure to speak with those two.

As I said, I'll use my son Brett as an example. He knows how to work; he goes looking for it; he's not afraid of work, like a lot of kids who grow up in the country and in the cities. He's not afraid of work, and has never allowed his particular disability—he has a visual impairment—to get in the way of his ambitions or his accomplishment of independence.

It is comforting to know there are agencies out there like Abilities First. They're present in our communities and always encouraging employers to tap into this labour pool. We know that this labour pool is full of very eager, enthusiastic young people. I know that many companies, many employers, help spread the word to other companies: “Just take that step. Just consider what you can do because of those young people that are out there.” They're diligent; they are punctual. I know this for sure. These people show up for work on time, no worries. I employ people; my staff are very, very punctual as well. But no worries about somebody being out all night and perhaps dragging themselves in halfway through a shift or something like that.

With respect to my staff in my constituency office, down in the town of Simcoe, many years back a young man was accessing help from our office. He had a number of issues. My staff, to their credit, took this fellow—his name's Ken—under their wings and set up a program with Ontario Works so that Ken could do his volunteer hours in my local constituency office.

We cannot get along without him. Ken is there every day, first thing in the morning. He reads all the newspapers. Like many members in this House, I subscribe to probably 12 or 14 newspapers, and if I need to know what is going on locally, I ask Ken. Ken is downtown Simcoe; he's out and about; he knows everything that's going on downtown. He fills me in on all the rumours, if you will, the gossip, the happenings or what's going to happen. We have discovered a number of times that we cannot get along without Ken. He has proved to be invaluable at that certain time when you need somebody there in a hurry. When something very important needs to be done, Ken has pulled that off for us.

By the same token, with Ken being in our office, we've seen a change in him. I know it gives him, obviously, a sense of belonging. I have a great staff. I can understand why he comes in every morning: a sense of belonging, a sense of accomplishment. I will say too that on those occasions when Ken isn't able to come in in the morning, my staff are concerned.

Ken has learned a great deal from this arrangement with my office, and our staff and I personally have learned a thing or two about the things that Ken knows.

In these types of programs, small actions can make a world of difference. Everybody should have the right to work to the best of their abilities, and the right to be part of a team and to form friendships and to be a full working member of our society. That's one reason why, in principle, I support Bill 77 and other bills of this ilk.

I understand the government unions have a problem with this, and that may have something to do with the funding arrangement, this concept that will be enshrined in this legislation to ensure that there is direct funding through various channels, but direct funding to families and people dealing with some of these issues. Again, that's why I think it's very important to go beyond just the four days of consultation this summer.

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We do know of many of the problems, the horror stories, if you will, of people dealing with some of these issues. There's a family in my riding who have a teen-aged daughter with a neurological disorder called Rett syndrome. I don't know a lot about Rett syndrome, but the way things are currently, the family receives money through Easter Seals for toiletry items for their daughter. However, they have to keep the receipts for two years, for example. Again, I just think there are some better ways of doing this.

We're told—this may be government figures—that there are about 40,000 people who could be classified as disabled. I read in the *Toronto Star* a number of 300,000 people who are disabled. I pose this question: Why is there this big discrepancy between the government figures of 40,000 disabled when I read in the paper there are 300,000?

I am concerned that, like many of the other pieces of legislation that this government has brought forward, this is being rushed through. I say that because the government has not spoken on this this morning. They skipped

their turn. I don't know why they would want to do that. This is their bill; this is their legislation. This is their action step or commitment to bring this forward. I don't want to see this rushed through. I don't want to see any important amendments overlooked.

The consultations were fast-tracked. There were meetings in Ottawa, Timmins, London and Toronto. Everybody had 15 minutes not only to speak but also to receive questions. It occurred in August, and it came before the social policy committee. Those people who did present obviously had one goal, and that was to find the best possible services for their loved ones. I will say, we know the people who presented did a very good job; they were able to get time away from work and did a very professional job. I think we have to do the right thing to honour the time and commitment they put into this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments related to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk's presentation on Bill 77?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's always a pleasure to comment on my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk. He raises some excellent examples of why it is important that Bill 77 and the Developmental Services Act be updated, because as he pointed out, it is quite a dated piece of legislation—I believe 35 years since the last amendment.

He's also raised how differently we, as a society, have approached inclusiveness and the importance of inclusiveness in Ontario and for our developmental services sector. I was pleased to hear him talk about the examples in his riding where employers have embraced the value of having individuals with developmental disabilities work in their business and across society, because as I pointed out in my speech, we all benefit when we add the diversity that is so much a part of what Ontario is. So I was pleased to hear him raise some of those examples.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

I will return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I thought there would be some participation from the other party. I thought there would be perhaps somewhat of a rebuttal from the government, but hearing none, it looks like the opposition is driving the show on this bill.

I thank the member from Dufferin-Caledon. I didn't hear her speech in the House but I read the transcript, and to her credit she painted a picture using some examples within her local riding and addressed the work that is being done by local agencies. I understand too that as a result of that consultation and the agencies that came forward, a number of agencies are not happy with this legislation. I'm continuing to go through the transcripts of those hearings to find out from the horse's mouth just what the problems are, what we heard.

We're still in September, so the hearings were held just last month. We have to find out what is on people's minds with respect to this, and much of it, I think, does relate to funding issues and future funding issues. We know that given some of the problems we're hearing

about this bill, a number of amendments are in order. If those amendments are not successful in being passed and being implemented, then I am obviously not too interested in this kind of legislation, if it's going to either set us back or hold us up or just cater to somebody in the backrooms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to rise and participate in this debate on Bill 77. I want to approach this debate from the standpoint of my constituents whose lives this bill was intended to improve. Those are people with developmental disabilities and their families. I want to say at the outset that I regret that I will have to vote against this bill on behalf of my constituents, who when this bill was first tabled by the minister were very optimistic, as were we in the official opposition, because it was a long time coming that this act that addresses the issues of people with developmental disabilities be revised and brought up to date and that there be legislation in place and programs in place that in fact create the kind of independence and integration into our communities that people with disabilities deserve.

But what we observed was that while we have a bill that is very strong in stating the purpose of the bill—and that was where the focus was when the minister initially presented the legislation—there is a significant gap between what is stated as the mission and objective of this legislation, and what we actually have and what will actually happen in our communities.

I want to read for the record what was stated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in May 2006, as the vision and principles for this legislation. I quote: "Transformation of the delivery of supports to people who have a developmental disability is based on the overarching principle that people who have a developmental disability are people first, and focuses on independence, dignity and self-reliance for people with a developmental disability. The fundamental vision is to support people to live as independently as possible in the community and to support the full inclusion of Ontarians with disabilities in all aspects of society."

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I fully support that objective. Every member of our caucus in the official opposition was enthusiastic when we heard and saw those words, because truly that should be the objective of not only this legislation but the programs that then empower the implementation of that mission.

It was very clear, however, once we looked at the details of the legislation and stakeholders had an opportunity to participate in those consultations through public hearings, that the stated objective and mission of the legislation was being missed, that the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families would not be met through this legislation. The result was that we put forward some 66 amendments to this legislation, encouraged by stakeholders, by people with developmental disabilities, by their families. We pleaded with the

government to consider the implementation, the adopting, of those amendments so that we could in fact have not only a revised piece of legislation, but one that actually works and supports the people it pretends to help.

Not even one of those amendments was adopted by the government. They were amendments that would have put in place some very practical direction and would have truly held out hope for people with developmental disabilities and their families in this province. But not one amendment was accepted. I tell you that as a result of that, it came to light that what we have here is a piece of legislation that basically, in the final analysis, when all is said and done, will simply create additional bureaucratic structure, will force people with developmental disabilities and their families into slots that the government has predetermined would be the solution for their individual lives. Rather than empowering people, it actually restricts people into what the government feels is appropriate for them. We can't support that and we will not support that. We will continue to argue on behalf and advocate on behalf of people with developmental disabilities and their families that they are the ones who should be entrusted with the resources and with the funding because they know best what is right for their daughter or their son, they know what's right for their family members. We on this side of the House actually believe that those families can be trusted with that responsibility, because they want to be trusted with that responsibility.

I want to share with my colleagues some specific examples from my constituency. Those who are watching this debate will know that these are but single examples of families across this province by the hundreds and by the thousands who find themselves in identical circumstances. These families cannot comprehend how this government can in good conscience on one day make a pronouncement of funding and promises and continue to talk about the programs that they have in place in this province to help families and people with developmental disabilities, but the coffers are empty, so that when people make an application for these programs, they are told by local agencies charged with the responsibility to implement, or by the ministry itself, that there is no money left in these programs. So people have been put through the process of making application; their hopes are in the program. They remain optimistic until the final word is given them: "Sorry. We'll keep your application on file, but at this point in time, there is no money available, no hope. Stay tuned."

That is unacceptable, and I want to challenge the government to consider a motion that they put forward, that the Premier himself put forward, that was debated in this House and that our caucus supported unanimously yesterday—we supported the government in this House—and it was the fairness motion. It was a motion that the Premier put forward calling on federal politicians to implement a principle of fairness when it comes to funding health care, social services and many other areas of need across the country. The Premier called on the

federal government, every federal politician and every federal leader to adopt the principle of fairness when they consider funding of important services. We supported that, and now I call on the Premier and his colleagues and the Minister of Community and Social Services to reread that motion, adopt the same principle of fairness when it comes to funding people with developmental disabilities and their families and ask themselves how they can justify, on the one hand, calling on their federal colleagues to be fair when it comes to funding, and yet turn their back on people within our province—over which they have total control of the budget—and in some good conscience still stand in their place and pretend that they're doing something by bringing forward legislation that in the final analysis they know full well will not make any difference in the lives of real people in our communities.

I want to read into the record a letter that I received recently from a constituent. They plead; it's a mother and a father. The daughter's name is Elaine.

"Dear Mr. Klees,

"We need you to advocate for us at the provincial level....

"At present our youngest daughter, Elaine, lives at home with us ... Elaine has Down syndrome and has benefited from the support from the special education department at her school to reach her full potential. She will continue to require supports to continue as an active member of her community.

"The Ministry of Community and Social Services states that 'as part of its commitment to build a more inclusive province, the government is working with individuals with a developmental disability, families, community organizations to build the foundation for the next generation of services for people with a developmental disability.'

"In January 2007, York Support Services Network ... from York region reported that 189 individuals with a developmental disability were on the community needs list awaiting financial assistance from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, for activities that encourage their personal development and help these individuals achieve their potential. In April 2000" York Support Services Network "reports there are 301 individuals in York region on the community needs list. The number of individuals seeking some financial support from the provincial government just keeps increasing.

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"In January 2008, Elaine, along with her friends and family members, completed a person-directed plan and made an application to the Passport initiative. The Family Service association of Toronto describes the Passport initiative as a provincial government initiative that provides opportunities for individuals who have a developmental disability and have left high school to find more ways to participate in their communities.

"In April 2008 we received notification from" York Support Services Network "that 'we (YSSN) cannot provide you with support from Passport at this time. Pass-

port is an ongoing initiative and your application will be kept on file and considered once additional funding becomes available.' Once Elaine completes high school she will join many others on the community needs list."

There is quite a gap between what the government states is available and what is actually made available to people in our community once they make the application to the program. I have a second letter, written by a mother and a father who have a son. His name is Evan. He has Down syndrome. I quote:

"Dear Mr. Klees,

"I am writing you to request your assistance. My husband and I have lived in this area all of our lives. We run a business here. We also have three sons. The middle one, Evan, is an outgoing and conscientious young man. Through his school, Evan is participating in a work experience program. This June, he will finish high school and is rather excited about upcoming graduation and prom.... He has attended inclusive schools with supports and will require supports to enable him to be productive and active in our community....

"This February, Evan and I made an application to the Passport initiative. The Passport initiative is a provincial government initiative that provides assistance to individuals with a developmental disability.... Since then, we have been notified by" York Support Services Network "that there is no Passport funding available.... His application will be kept on file for consideration when additional funding becomes available."

I don't know how the minister, how members of cabinet, how the Premier can continue to justify bringing legislation into this House, occupying the time of the Legislature, drawing people from across the province to public hearings under the guise that what is mobilized now is an attempt, a commitment, a promise on the part of the government to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families, and yet what is really happening is that while they may be getting some publicity about their intent, there is a huge gap between what is stated and what is done. I believe it's an integrity gap that this government has, and it's growing by the day—the integrity gap between what is stated as an intention and held out as a promise, and what is actually delivered to people every day.

I want to end my comments by calling on the government to do this: to revisit the intent as stated in the legislation, to take a very clear look at what it is that they promised this House when they brought in the legislation. I would ask them to revisit the 66 amendments that our caucus put forward, that our critic put forward during those public hearings with the support of families across this province. I would ask them, before they close the books on this and vote in favour of a piece of legislation that in fact is incomplete, that will entrench a bureaucracy that will do nothing to help people in this province, that they give it a second sober thought. I would ask that they then, on a broader basis, give serious commitment to developing a social services and health growth plan for the province of Ontario that takes into consideration the

needs of people in this province, especially in high-growth areas where the gap between the need and the actual service continues to widen. It's a serious gap that only the government of the day has the power to address. Surely, when this cabinet and the Premier look at all of the programs that they agree to fund every week in their cabinet meetings, they can prioritize this program that deals with the most vulnerable in our communities, people who cannot help themselves, and take the time to consider those needs first. When they do that, then they can, in good conscience, talk about a fairness principle.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: As always, my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora has brought Bill 77 back to what it is and what we should always remember it is: It's about individuals, it's about inclusiveness and it's about how to ensure that those individuals within our society with developmental disabilities can play a critical and important role in our society. He raised the Passport funding program and talked about how much work an individual and a family in his riding went through to apply for it, only to be told, like so many other people across Ontario, "No, there's no money." We've used a number of times the Family Alliance number that says over 2,890 people have applied for Passport funding in Ontario and only 254 have been successful. That's less than 10%. If we had 10% of the people applying for hospital beds receiving them, then there would be editorials, there would be marching in the street. If we had Ontarians applying for services for their children in our education system and only 10% received them, the parents of Ontario and the educators of Ontario would be livid. Yet for some reason the Liberal government has chosen to believe that individuals with developmental disabilities can apply for Passport and only 10% can receive it. It's unfair, it's unconscionable that we are talking about Bill 77, and we haven't solved the true problem: What are you going to do with all of those children, all of those adult children, who don't have the services because you have chosen not to make it a priority?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: The member from Newmarket–Aurora did an excellent job pointing out some of the flaws in the process to do with Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act. We supported this bill on second reading and then our critic, the member from Whitby–Ajax, and the member from Dufferin–Caledon did a lot of work. They spent four days in committee, they listened to the people that came before the committee. They put together some 66 amendments to the bill, and all 66 amendments were defeated by the government-controlled committee. So we've been trying to improve the bill. There are some significant flaws in the bill, so we will not be able to support it, and that's unfortunate.

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The member from Newmarket–Aurora brought up some specific cases to do with Passport funding. That's a

program I very much believe in: individualized funding that allows people with developmental disabilities to have the best quality of life, allows families to plan on the best services for their particular situation. All I can say is there must be a room full of those letters he was speaking about that are kept on file somewhere in one of the offices in Toronto. The numbers we see show that only some 5% of the people who apply are actually receiving the funding. I brought up a number of cases from my riding the last time I had a chance to speak to this.

I would say that the government does have an integrity gap, as was pointed out by the member from Newmarket–Aurora. They speak a good game, but when it comes to putting forward the money to deliver, they're just not there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I also wish to comment on the presentation this morning by Frank Klees, the member for Newmarket–Aurora. He drew an excellent analogy with respect to fairness, and what should be fair for federal–provincial relations should also be fair with respect to the issues we're debating this morning. MPP Klees also pointed out in more detail some of the flaws that are in this legislation and flaws that were highlighted during the consultation.

Our critic Sylvia Jones from Dufferin–Caledon made mention of the dearth of funding for this Passport program. In May of last year, the minister announced a \$200-million budget for developmental services. Out of that \$200 million, only \$6 million went to Passport funding. Nine million dollars was allocated to people with disabilities and their families to hire support workers to better enable them to be part of society and to be involved in community life. That was \$9 million out of a \$200-million budget. The rest of that money went to wages and what's referred to as infrastructure.

So as far as putting one's money where one's mouth is as far as this Passport program, we can take a look at the Hamilton area, where apparently 174 people applied for this Passport arrangement; six people were funded. In the London area, 262 people applied for this Passport arrangement; funding went to 11.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I, too, want to commend the member from Newmarket–Aurora for his presentation on Bill 77, which was concise and to the point and showed the problems with the bill.

I had a number of family members in our office who had developmental challenges in their family and who came to speak about the bill. The first thing they told me was that they went to the public presentation on Bill 77, and they were commending our representatives of the Conservative Party at the committee hearings for a job well done and showing an interest in what was being said and coming up with some suggestions that may be made to change the bill to better serve the people. They said that the government seemed to be going through the pro-

cess but they didn't seem to be listening to what was being said. It was a very simple presentation. These family members felt that if they would just put the money in place for the people who have been assessed and qualify for the Passport funding, this bill would not be required.

To make matters worse, because they put this bill in place and they put a new system in place to assess the need and eligibility for people who would be eligible for Passport funding, and they have no extra money in the bill, it means that they're going to take more resources from the front line. So even less than the 5% or 6% of the Passport funding that has been allocated is going to be funded, because we set up the new assessment centres to reassess the people who have already been assessed and are eligible and are not getting the money.

I think it would be better to put the money where it's required, rather than build a bureaucracy in Bill 77 and serve no one any better than they presently could be served.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll return to the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who has two minutes to reply to the question.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to thank my colleagues for their supportive comments, and especially Sylvia Jones for her work on this bill, along with Christine Elliott.

I want to make reference to one final letter that I want to leave on the record. I sent this to the Honourable Deb Matthews on August 19. It refers to David, who is autistic. In the letter, I state that his mother "received a letter in April 2008 advising her that although she is eligible she will be placed on a wait list for services. I am told that there has been no funding available for families needing respite services since January 2008."

The letter goes on to say to the minister: "The distress for families with children with severe disabilities is tragic. Not only will David wait for years on the intensive behavioural intervention services list, but the family is left to cope without any respite services. I trust that you would agree this is unacceptable.

"On behalf of my constituents, I would ask you to initiate an immediate review of the special services at home program and funding available to residents of York region."

I received a letter back from the minister on September 18, about a month later, basically telling me, "The concerns you raised regarding special services at home fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, for her consideration." I have yet to hear from the minister.

It's another example of how families in this province are left to cope on their own, are given many promises and many commitments and now new legislation, but are left without the resources to deal with the challenges that they face.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Are there any other honourable members who wish to participate in this debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Speaker: If no members from the Liberal Party or the NDP are willing to speak, I'm happy to speak some more on this bill. There's much to be said. If I can have the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member must seek the unanimous consent of the House in order to achieve that. Is that what you're asking for?

Mr. Frank Klees: I would seek unanimous consent to speak further on this important bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Newmarket–Aurora is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to continue his remarks.

I've heard a no.

Mr. Toby Barrett: On a point of order, Speaker: I did present this morning, but I had additional comments in my presentation. I would request to have a few more minutes.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I will deal with them one at a time.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to continue his remarks on Bill 77.

I heard a no.

On a point of order, the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, we've now heard from two members. I don't know if the rest are all going to plan on doing the same thing, but you have ruled, I think, or perhaps you should rule that that is an inappropriate point of order to be raising. They can seek unanimous consent, but I don't believe it's a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It is indeed a valid point of order to seek the unanimous consent of the House to ask for something to be done.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is this the same point of order? I've already ruled on it.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): No, I've already ruled on it. Please take your seat.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): No. Please take your seat.

Interjection.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Newmarket–Aurora to please take his seat, since I've already ruled on the point of order. Thank you very much.

Madam Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 77, An Act to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities, to repeal the Developmental Services Act and to amend certain other statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Pursuant to standing order 9(d), this vote is deferred until routine proceedings this afternoon.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent for the House to recess until question period at 10:45.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is there consent to recess the House until 10:45? Agreed?

Interjection: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): No. Orders of the day.

INCREASING ACCESS TO QUALIFIED
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR
ONTARIANS ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE
L'ACCÈS DES ONTARIENNES ET DES
ONTARIENS AUX PROFESSIONNELS DE
LA SANTÉ QUALIFIÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned September 29, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 97, An Act to increase access to qualified health professionals for all Ontarians by amending the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 97, Loi visant à accroître l'accès des Ontariennes et des Ontariens aux professionnels de la santé qualifiés en modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on Bill 97?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to add my comments to a bill that, quite frankly, is yet one more disappointment for many. I predict the same concerns: People who are going to be disappointed with the previous bill, Bill 77, that we have just debated—people who are expecting that this legislation will provide some support and hope—those same people will in fact find that there is a significant gap between the promise that is held out in terms of providing opportunities to practise medicine, to practise their professions, be it engineering or accounting, that this is yet more bureaucracy and leaves us short in terms of actually delivering on what was intended and what was promised.

I have the privilege of representing one of the fastest-growing regions in this country. In fact, my riding of Newmarket–Aurora will realize about an 18% growth. In the entire province of Ontario, my region alone will absorb some 18% of that growth for the province. That means that some additional 30,000 people will be in our region annually who were not there before. Many of those people who come into Ontario and have qualified as immigrants come here with the expectation that they will be able to practise their profession. In fact, the immigration system that we have in this country provides a significant advantage in terms of their assessment in the point system that is being used to qualify applicants as

immigrants. Significant advantage is given to those who have a profession, and yet, notwithstanding the fact that these individuals are granted immigrant status and come to this province on the assumption that they will in fact be able to work in their profession, earn a living and provide for their families, they end up here without the opportunity to work. In fact, they're relegated all too often to doing work for which they are considerably overqualified.

You can imagine what that does to a family. You can imagine what the impact is on the individual. I have had many examples of constituents in my office who appeal to me, often under great emotional stress. They show me their documentation, they show me their qualifications, whether it be a doctorate, whether it be an engineering degree, whether it be other professional qualifications—and they're very proud to present me with their qualifications, their track record and their work experience in other jurisdictions—and yet they can't find a job here in their own profession. They are relegated to doing other work. I often have said that in York region one of the fastest ways to find a doctor is to call 967-1111, because the chances are that whoever is delivering that pizza may well be qualified as a surgeon—unable to practise here. The barriers are up.

In this legislation before us, rather than having a dynamic piece of legislation that tears down those barriers, what we have here is basically a default mechanism. We essentially have a bill that says to our several colleges, "This is now your responsibility. This is now your responsibility to ensure that the barriers are brought down. It's your responsibility to ensure that foreign-trained doctors, foreign-trained professionals, can have an easier transition into productive work here in this province."

Unfortunately, what this bill doesn't address is how we get from where we are today to this nirvana that's being prescribed by the government, in their pronouncement, in their promise and in their release, in terms of how this legislation now gives hope to foreign-trained professionals. What it doesn't address and what the several colleges are asking the government, without any response, is, "Where are the resources coming from that will allow us to in fact put in place the programs that are necessary to enable that transition?" What we're not being told is what the government intends to do to ensure that those resources are in fact made available. We're not told what the time frame is going to be. We're not told how those colleges are expected now to cope with the additional responsibility and yet meet their regulatory mandate to ensure that the standards of their profession are upheld.

What I would ask the government is, is it your intention to ask the colleges to compromise those standards? If that is the case, I speak on behalf of the people of Ontario who say, "No. That isn't what we want." We want the colleges to ensure that we have the highest standards of professional conduct, the highest standards, whether it be for doctors or whether it be for the engineering pro-

profession or any other profession. We won't stand for any compromise, but what we do want is that there be access. We want programs in place that will, on a practical level, ensure that foreign-trained doctors, surgeons and engineers—professions at all levels—receive the appropriate consideration for their training, education and work experience, so that when they come to this country, when they come to Ontario, they are given credit and recognition for their ability to become active participants and productive citizens in this province, which is what they want to be.

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The barriers that need to be taken down are not standards but, rather, practical transitions so that their foreign training and experience can find an equivalency rating here in the province of Ontario, so that when a potential employer, when a potential hospital, when the Ministry of Health is considering their qualifications, they can in practical ways assess that individual's qualifications.

As the Progressive Conservative caucus, we've made very specific recommendations. We have tabled those. We have had public deliberations on them. We've had public consultations. I would urge the government, as they consider this legislation, to take into consideration that very practical document that sets out very clearly how that foreign education, training, experience can in fact be taken into consideration as an Ontario equivalency.

We're proposing that—in a time when technology is so readily available—when an individual is in the process of making an application to immigrate to this country, at that very time they begin their equivalency application and at that point in time, they can begin to do their Ontario equivalency training. Regardless of what profession it is, they begin the process of ensuring that when they reach Ontario, they already are familiar, they have been pre-qualified, and there is already an understanding of what the expectations are here in the province of Ontario. That will not only prevent many months and, in some occasions, years of waiting times when individuals and families are in a no man's land in terms of not knowing where the next job is coming from, whether or not there's going to be an opportunity to find gainful employment within their own profession, but they get here and they're off to a running start. From the very beginning, they can be productive and know that the education and the experience that they've gained in their country of origin can be put to practical application here in their new home. It's a practical recommendation that I would ask the government to seriously consider for implementation.

I would suggest that we need to look very carefully at what, in fact, the barriers are. I give you an example of a surgeon who came to see me as a constituent. Extensive background: He is teaching medicine at a university here in the province of Ontario, but he's not allowed to practise. That's the kind of frustration that professionals are facing in the province of Ontario. You're good enough to teach others to perform surgery, but you're not good enough to perform surgery yourself. How can that be

reasonable, and how can that be rational, and how can that be justified? He looked to me, as a member of the provincial Legislature, to help him figure this out, to reason it through. I had to admit to him that it makes no sense to me and I would take it to the Minister of Health, which I did. I wrote the Minister of Health a letter, provided my constituent's extensive background, and asked the Minister of Health to explain. That was months ago. I have yet to hear from the Minister of Health. I suspect the reason the Minister of Health isn't responding is because it's difficult to respond and still sound reasonable. The answer perhaps is in this legislation that we have before us in the form of Bill 97, An Act to increase access to qualified health professionals for all Ontarians by amending the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

So I read with some interest this one-page bill here. I found it difficult to comprehend how this was going to do what the long title of the bill promises, because under section 2.1 here is what the bill states: "It is the duty of the college to work in consultation with the minister to ensure, as a matter of public interest, that the people of Ontario have access to adequate numbers of qualified, skilled and competent regulated health professionals." Well, that's interesting. I tried to parse this in many different ways. I tried to find how that would work and what the end result of this might be. I have not been able to come up with an answer. What I would expect, hopefully, is that we will all be enlightened in the course of the next number of months as this bill is reviewed by stakeholders, by professionals, by the college, how we're going to achieve this. Perhaps the Minister of Health has some hidden regulations somewhere that will expand the bill and that will provide the appropriate structure to ensure that the objective of the bill is finally achieved.

The reality is this: We have literally more than a million Ontarians who are without a family doctor. In the region of York alone, I get calls on a regular basis from constituents who not only do not have access to a family doctor, but when it comes to specialists, the waiting lists are months. Just two weeks ago, I was speaking with a constituent who said this to me: "I've been advised there's a good chance that I have cancer. I now will have to wait at least two months before I can see a specialist." That was her comment. I can't imagine, in Ontario, where we boast about having one of the best health care systems in the world, a resident of this province is told that based on tests, there's a good chance that she has cancer, but she now has to wait two months to see a specialist to either confirm that or to begin to receive treatments. Something is fundamentally wrong.

What we don't see from this government is action. We continue to see excuses from this government. Now we have a one-page bill that, based on the announcement of the government, is going to increase qualified health professionals for all Ontarians. How? By amending the Regulated Health Professions Act.

Amending the Regulated Health Professions Act is not going to increase the supply of qualified health profes-

sionals for all Ontarians. Action will do that. Resources will do that. The one single thing that will do that is to increase the number of residency positions within hospitals so that doctors who are qualified with foreign credentials can actually prove themselves and integrate into our health care system.

That doesn't take legislation. What it does take is a few dollars and a direction from the Ministry of Health that they are going to provide the resources, increase the number of residency positions and actually get foreign-trained doctors to begin to participate in our health care system in this province.

But that's too practical. That's too practical for this government, and so what we have is legislation that will do nothing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: Could I ask for unanimous consent to recess until 10:45?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ask for a point of order first.

Mr. Norm Miller: On a point of order then, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is seeking unanimous consent of the House to recess until 10:45. Agreed? Agreed.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 10:45 a.m., later on this morning.

The House recessed from 1023 to 1045.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please be seated. I'd like to draw the members' attention to the presence at the table of a visiting table officer: Mr. Michel Bonsaint is Director of General Parliamentary Affairs and Director of Research in Parliamentary Procedure at the National Assembly of Quebec. Mr. Bonsaint is visiting the Legislative Assembly throughout the week. Michel, welcome, and welcome to the table. We just may have to do something about your mauve tie, though.

On behalf of page Karlie Potts, I would like to welcome the following guests to the public gallery today: Barbara-Ann Potts, her mother, Austin Potts, her brother, and Lyndall Bassett, a family friend. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member from Hamilton Centre, we would like to welcome representatives from the Workplace Bullying Institute: Dr. Gary Namie, Marina Beacock, Angela Monaghan and Andrew Knoop.

On behalf of the member from Mississauga–Erindale, I would like to welcome to the House Mrs. Gurkanwal Kaur, president of the Women's Wing, Punjab Congress, and former minister, government of Punjab, India; Baldev Mangat and Mrs. Manjit Mangat; and Mukand Pandher and Manjit Singh Bhoondi, who are seated in the members' gallery. Welcome today.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Premier, the economic news out of the United States has the people in this province justifiably on edge. They see the value of their savings plummeting, seniors worried about their retirement and families anxious about being able to keep their home and put their kids through school. The warning signs have been out there for at least two years, Premier, and during that time you've chosen to ignore them. Only yesterday did your finance minister finally acknowledge that the province is in troubled times. Your policies of high taxing, high spending and rapid growth in regulation have placed this province's economy in a difficult place, to say the least. Premier, can you assure us that next month's economic statement will address those issues and concerns that we've been drawing to your attention for over two years?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The first thing: I do want to acknowledge the anxiety felt by many Ontarians in the aftermath of the serious issues unfolding, not only south of the border but in our stock market here in Canada. I want to assure them as well that we will do everything we can to maintain strong support for all those public services that Ontario families have to be able to count on, whether that's the education of their kids, health care for everybody in the family, or retraining opportunities for folks who are caught up in this economic dislocation and have lost their jobs. I also want to say that I believe that Ontarians don't believe that somehow what is unfolding in the province of Ontario is exclusively the result of either our economic policies or industrial agendas in Ontario. I think they understand that what is happening south of the border does indeed have an impact on what we are experiencing here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: We've always acknowledged that, and one can only hope that the Premier and his colleagues are going to begin to take this situation seriously. Yesterday at his press conference, the Minister of Finance indicated that in the face of our economic challenges, he's an advocate for prudence. That's the definition of conversion on the road to Damascus. This is a government that has increased spending by 40% in the five years calling for prudence, and that's pretty tough to swallow. Premier, does prudence mean allowing the Minister of Education to increase her spending on hotels by 46% in one year—3.5 million tax dollars—or the Attorney General to increase their hotel spending by 48%? Is that your government's definition of "prudence"? Is that what your minister is advocating?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm very confident that any expenses incurred by my ministers in the pursuit of their

responsibilities are indeed responsible and prudent and in keeping with public expectations.

I will also say that we have worked long and hard to restore the quality of our public services. I think from any objective basis, things are better in our schools today. We are reaching out to more Ontario families with better health care. We are doing more to better protect public safety, whether you're talking about what's happening on our streets with policing or in protections for the quality of the water that comes out of our taps. I think Ontarians also would acknowledge that we're making serious new investments in the quality of our infrastructure, whether we're talking about roads, bridges or new investments in public transit. There's a cost associated with those things, but we will always maintain a great deal of respect for Ontario taxpayers, who are giving us money in trust for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'd like to see the dictionary the Liberals operate from.

Premier, your Minister of Finance has finally acknowledged that the province is facing economic challenges. Others recognized this at least two years ago, but you've continued on your merry spending and taxing ways. Premier, when your minister talks about prudence and restraint, when jobs are fleeing the province and people are worried about their future and the future for their kids, what kind of a message does your government send out with its spending practices? What kind of message did you send out when you spent up to \$2.7 million of taxpayers' dollars on a casino party for you and your friends in Windsor?

Premier, before you start cutting program spending, will you look at the imprudent, offensive and excessive spending habits of your own caucus colleagues?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we will do everything we need to do to demonstrate in a real way our respect for taxpayer dollars. One of the things that we are not prepared to do, contrary to what the Conservative Party would have us pursue, would be to cut taxes by over \$3 billion. In fact, they're talking about total tax cuts of \$5 billion. I'll tell you why we're not prepared to do that: because it will compromise the quality of our public services.

We do have a plan in place to further reduce business taxes in Ontario. We could go further and we could go faster if we stopped giving 4% of our GDP to Ottawa for distribution to the rest of the country. The opposition feels that that is not a real issue, but I refer them to Mr. Drummond's report, where he refers to that with a great deal of clarity and conviction. I wish they would join us in making that legitimate request for fairness from Ottawa.

C. DIFFICILE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is going to be for the Premier. Premier, I wish you would have joined

the other provinces and started to address the issue of C. difficile as early as Quebec, Manitoba and others did.

Yesterday, we heard from the Auditor General when he released his special report, because your government has refused to do an overview or any investigation. He summed it up best when he said that there is much more work to do. It was clear from the Auditor General's report yesterday that there are no clear, consistent rules from the Ministry of Health for infection control and protection. Further, the Minister of Health has failed to coordinate and provide oversight to the hospitals to give them the best advice and to check and make sure that they're following the advice.

Can you explain, Premier, why you have left the hospitals to fend for themselves in dealing with these deadly infectious diseases, which resulted in 500 preventable deaths?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question, and we welcome the auditor's report. It's very helpful in terms of all of us coming to grips with C. difficile.

I took the opportunity to speak with Dr. Michael Baker, who's head of our patient safety here in Ontario. One of the things that he impressed upon me was that 5% of Ontarians are carriers, essentially, of C. difficile at any one time. It's not something that we're going to eradicate. It's not like SARS, for example. You can't eradicate it; it's out there in the general population. But what we can and must do is be more aggressive in terms of preventing its spread and its introduction into our hospitals.

Let me tell you about some of the things we've done in that regard. As a result of public reporting, we now know, for example, that the number of cases is 50% higher in Quebec; they have a 50% higher incidence. In the UK, where they've had a program in place for seven years, they have a 300% higher incidence.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: To the Premier again: You know, it's all well and dandy that you're finally talking to some of the experts in the area of infection control. The reality is, you have known since the fall of 2003, when we had the outbreak in Peterborough, that there was a problem. That's been followed with other outbreaks in Burlington and Sault Ste. Marie, just to name a few. You set up a Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, or PIDAC, and last week you were touting the fact that it had provided all sorts of good information to hospitals. One has to wonder what was going on with PIDAC when only one third of the funding that has been allotted to it has been spent.

I ask you, Premier, where did the remaining money go that should have been spent on giving hospitals the best possible advice on patient safety?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to begin by repeating something I said a moment ago, because I think it's very important in instilling a sense of confidence in Ontario families. I believe we are the second province in the country that is now publicly reporting the incidents of C. difficile in our hospitals. When we compare ourselves to Quebec, they have a 50% higher rate, and the UK, which has had an aggressive C. difficile reduction program in

their hospitals for seven years now, has a 300% higher rate—just so we have a few facts out there in terms of where Ontario stands in the grand scheme of things.

The other thing that we have done as a result of the information and advice that we've received is, we have in place now 203 infection prevention and control positions in the province of Ontario, which we are funding. We have now put in place infection control resource teams, people distributed among a number of hospitals who can come together in the face of an outbreak. We have also put into place more and more—

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Isn't it sad for the families of the more than 500 people who died of C. difficile to, five years later, see the Premier finally assuming some interest in the issue of infectious diseases? I'm going to say to you today, Premier, for five years, you've known about the problem, and yes, you compare this jurisdiction to others, but we don't have data, and so the data you're comparing is not apples to apples and oranges to oranges. I've seen it too.

So I say to you today, are you finally going to do the responsible thing and answer the concerns of those individuals who have lost loved ones, and do the right thing and order an investigation so that we can get to the bottom of what caused it, why it happened, and are we confident today that every step is being taken to reduce the deaths and the disease itself?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm very confident that we're pursuing a very aggressive agenda here in the province of Ontario, particularly when you compare how we're doing in this jurisdiction to others in the international community.

I think one of the things that's worth drawing our attention to is some of the information found within the Auditor General's report where he says:

"Physician compliance started at 18% overall and increased to 28% by the end of their pilot program. Compliance rates for nurses started at 44% and were at 60% by the end of the pilot."

So what we're saying is that we had a pilot; it was very aggressive. At the end of that time, only 66% of nurses were doing what needed to be done and only 28% of doctors were doing what needed to be done. We're talking about washing our hands. So I think that, clearly, there is more work that can be done and I'm asking our professional community in particular to please follow the guidelines that have been in place for some time and simply wash your hands.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. This morning, the Premier said that he believes some traditional manufacturing sectors in Ontario are likely about to vanish forever. We've seen 240,000 manufacturing jobs disappear in Ontario under the McGuinty government. Many more people are worried

about the possibility of losing their jobs. Will the Premier tell these worried Ontario workers which manufacturing jobs in Ontario are about to vanish forever?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I can say that we're going to continue to bring a decidedly different approach than the one that was advocated by my colleague the leader of the NDP. So, for example, we will, notwithstanding his objections, continue to find ways to work with the auto sector. He maintains that we should not do that, that we've had some instances where he feels that we have not been as successful as we should be. We intend to continue to find ways to work with the auto sector. We remain the single largest producer of autos in North America. We think there is a solid foundation there on which to continue to build. We think there's all kinds of room for innovation and new opportunity, especially when it comes to building greener products, more energy-efficient products. So there is a very good example of where I'm not prepared to give up on an industry, unlike my colleague opposite.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: No one is talking about giving up on industry other than the Premier. These are your words, Premier. You were asked, "What parts of the economy are dead?" and you responded, "I am absolutely convinced that some parts of our economy are not coming back."

So I think you owe it to those worried workers, those workers who have lost their jobs, are losing their livelihoods and are now losing their homes. What parts of manufacturing in Ontario, according to Premier McGuinty, are absolutely dead? I think you owe it to those workers to answer that question, Premier. What part of the industrial economy is dead in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let's talk about some of the continuing successes in Ontario. In the last quarter alone, through the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, as it was then known, our government was involved with 11 separate projects, representing over 1,700 new jobs and \$60 million in capital investments. That was in the first quarter. Those success stories included NCO in Brantford, involving 500 jobs; the Energy Savings Group in Mississauga, 500 jobs; Dieffenbacher in Windsor, a \$9-million investment, 10 more jobs; Inter-Call Canada in Kingston, 300 jobs; Transcom Worldwide in London, up to 150 new jobs. We will continue to stay focused on new opportunities for the manufacturing sector in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I say to the Premier that people across Ontario have heard these boasts from the McGuinty government before. They heard about this wonderful call centre by Dell in Ottawa that received all kinds of government money and then, literally, thousands of workers got the pink slip.

Here is the reality: Under the McGuinty government, 240,000 hard-working Ontarians have lost their manu-

facturing jobs, and when the media asked the Premier, "What's your plan to sustain manufacturing jobs?" the Premier said, "Well, I believe that there are whole sectors of manufacturing in Ontario that are dead." If you believe that, Premier, I believe in all honesty you owe it to those workers to tell them what parts of the manufacturing economy in Ontario, according to Dalton McGuinty, are dead and are never coming back.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP, my honourable colleague, prefaced his remarks by saying, "Here is the reality." I'll do the same thing. Here's the reality: The leader of the NDP says that we should not have partnered with Dell to invest in new training opportunities for the folks who were working there. He says we should not partner with the auto sector in the province of Ontario. If there's a guy who is walking around this province who is not prepared to do anything to stand up for the manufacturing sector, I think I see him sitting opposite.

We're prepared to roll up our sleeves, to take a few risks. From time to time we're going to stumble, from time to time we're going to fail, but we're not going to stop trying. We're working as hard as we can to stand up for working families in the province of Ontario.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: I want to be very clear. When you write multi-million-dollar cheques to Dell and then Dell, a corporation that is very profitable, walks out of Ontario with millions of dollars in taxpayers' money and thousands of workers get the pink slip, I think that's wrong. When General Motors gets taxpayers' cheques in the range of \$265 million from the McGuinty government and thousands of GM workers get the pink slip, I think that's wrong. If you count those as your successes, Premier, then we are really in serious trouble.

We've advocated a real plan to sustain manufacturing jobs: a reasonable industrial hydro rate, a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit and a buy-Ontario strategy, such as they have in Quebec, to sustain manufacturing jobs. When is the McGuinty government going to get serious about sustaining manufacturing jobs instead of talking about the death of manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, what I would encourage the leader of the NDP to do is to sit down and talk to any of the folks at Dell, in whom we invested in new training opportunities and transportable skills, which they now have. Or if he was to speak to anybody at the CAW, who encourage us to continue to find ways to partner with the auto sector, I think he'd hear something different.

He made reference to a tax credit that he's talked about often. We bring a different approach. We have a plan in place to cut business taxes by \$3 billion over four years. When we put in place a tax cut for capital taxes, that was retroactive. That meant we could put cheques—

hundreds of thousands, millions of dollars—into the hands of our manufacturing sector right now, when they need it. They don't need it in the future; they need it right now, and that's what our policy effected.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I noticed that the loudest cheers about the cut in the capital tax came from banks and financial institutions. I understand that banks and financial institutions are in deep trouble in the United States, but the Premier himself said that banks and financial institutions are doing fine in Ontario. We're talking about manufacturing, not about cutting taxes for banks, insurance companies or oil companies. We're talking about manufacturing, which has been the heart and the soul of Ontario's economy. Other provinces are focusing their tax measures on sustaining manufacturing jobs. Tell us, why are you so proud of cutting a capital tax which mainly benefits banks and insurance companies and ignores the manufacturing sector?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Here's a quote from the CFIB report on manufacturing from September of this year. They say, "... we must acknowledge the tax relief that has been delivered over the past few years. Relief has been both vital and welcome in: corporate capital tax, corporate income tax (small business) and provincial property tax (former education) portion."

So I just can't agree with my colleague who says that somehow when we cut capital taxes for the forestry sector, for example, for the struggling auto sector, for other sectors within the broader manufacturing industry, where we've cut it and now eliminated it and in fact gave them a cheque as we eliminated it retroactively—I can't agree with him that this somehow is unhelpful for that sector. When we spoke with them, they said that the single most important thing we could do for them was exactly that. We've done that; we continue to talk to the manufacturing sector and we will continue to find ways to partner with them.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier says that the capital tax has had a significant, positive effect for the forest sector? Go down to the workers in Thorold and tell them that, as they have been told they're getting a pink slip for at least the next 30 days and possibly longer. Go to Thunder Bay and tell the people who used to work at Abitibi Mission, the people who used to work at Bowater and the people who used to work at the three sawmills and Cascades paper, the people who used to work at the other paper mill in Thunder Bay. Go to Red Rock and tell them that. All of those people are now out of work. You boast about the capital tax. Why are so many people continuing to lose their jobs in the very sector where you said it's had a positive influence?

Here is the issue: You say, in one breath, manufacturing is dead in Ontario. I think you owe it to those workers who are worried, who are desperate. Be honest with them. Tell them what sectors, according to—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think there's no doubt about it. It would only be helpful if the leader of the NDP were to acknowledge some of the tremendous change that has taken place within the Ontario economy. It is taking place and that creates some real challenges, not just for the economy as a whole, but more importantly, for families on an individual basis. I understand that, and I know that the leader of the NDP actually understands that as well. I think what we need to do is come together and prepare families for that change and speak to a brighter, more optimistic future which holds more opportunities for them.

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Notwithstanding the tremendous amount of uncertainty south of the border, there are some things we know for sure. For example, when you invest in the skills and education of your workers, you can't go wrong. When you support innovation to turn ideas into new technologies for sale to the world, you can't go wrong. When you invest in infrastructure to create jobs in the long term and enhance productivity in the long term, you can't go wrong. We'll continue to do the things that are tried and true while we look for new opportunities—

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

C. DIFFICILE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday again—I go back to the Auditor General's report—he recommended that the Ministry of Health require hospitals to track and report patient outcomes from C. difficile, which of course means deaths as well. Your own ministry officials recommended as far back as 2004 in the Peterborough report that that should be done, but you've chosen to ignore it. You've also said, though, that you will rely on experts. I want to quote Dr. Mark Miller, the head of infection prevention and control with Montreal's Jewish General Hospital, who told the Spectator in Hamilton on July 18 this year: "If they want to know the whole story on C. difficile, if they want the whole picture, then they have to count the number of patients dying."

I ask you today, Premier, when will you start to record the number of patients who are dying in our hospitals each month?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My colleague raises a really important issue, and it's the same thing that I put to the minister. He told me what Dr. Baker, who heads up patient safety for us, has been telling us: that there is yet no developed standard for determining whether or not a death was in fact caused by C. difficile. There are a number of elderly patients who are affected by C. difficile because, as I said, it's present in the general population, but right now there are no standardized criteria to determine whether or not your death was in fact so caused.

He's onto that. He's working to develop those standardized criteria. Once we have that in place, then we will provide the kind of reporting that my colleague seeks, which I think would be quite appropriate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The Premier knows full well that other jurisdictions are able to make those determinations. Unfortunately, we've gotten into the mandatory reporting somewhat late, so we will continue to lag behind.

I want to now go to Dr. Allison McGeer. She said in November 2006, "There are patients dying as a consequence of the fact that we're not moving more quickly." Of course last spring, the Ombudsman said that the C. difficile deaths are a human tragedy of great proportions.

I want to tell you about Carole Partington. Her mother had C. difficile. She says, "Her belly was distended, her body fighting bouts of uncontrollable diarrhea." Premier, I've spoken to the families of the victims. They have described excruciating pain and a death without any dignity. In the face of all of this and the fact that these people want answers as to why their loved ones died, are you prepared to—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure that Hansard would have picked up the end of my colleague's question, but she's asking us yet again to pursue an independent inquiry or investigation. I'm not prepared to do that, for the reasons we've offered in the past. We think that we have all the information we need. I rely on experts in this regard. We've heard from Dr. Schabas, for example, the former Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, and he says that, no, that would not be a productive exercise.

We've made some tremendous progress. Now, in the face of public reporting, we see that we really stand head and shoulders above other jurisdictions where they're reporting on these kinds of things. But that is of no real consolation to families who have been affected by this; I understand that. So we're going to pursue this as aggressively as we can and in particular we're going to make sure, as much as we can, that all of our health care professionals do practise good policy when it comes to handwashing, moving from one patient to the next and moving from one hospital room to the next.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, in the weeks to come, hard-working Ontarians across this province will be getting a nasty surprise. All across Ontario, property owners will be receiving assessment increases averaging 20%. For those whose assessment increase is more than that, they're looking at a property tax increase. Under the McGuinty government's flawed market value assessment approach to property taxes, this will result in many seniors and other property owners on fixed incomes receiving double-digit tax increases.

How does the minister justify and explain his rejection of the freeze-till-sale property assessment model, which

we advocate and which is used across North America, in forcing seniors out of their homes?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would remind the member and the people of Ontario listening to this that an assessment increase does not necessarily translate into a tax increase, number one. Number two, this government implemented a four-year phase-in of those assessment changes, and I would remind the member opposite that, accordingly, municipalities can make adjustments.

Our government's approach to this issue has been balanced. This gives stability and predictability to property taxpayers across Ontario. We believe it is the right response to the current value assessment and how we should respond on an ongoing basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Prue: Back to the minister. I think the minister knows full well that if your house appreciates in value more than the average, you will get a tax increase. That's the way it works.

We have advocated a freeze-till-sale model that would freeze new assessments until a property is sold. This would ensure that seniors and other fixed-income earners are not forced out of their homes because of skyrocketing property tax increases.

Why doesn't this minister admit that it is precisely at this time of financial volatility and declining property values that Ontario should reject the market-based approach to property taxes and bring in an assessment model that puts people first?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We share the member's concerns about the effect of property tax on seniors. I would ask him why he voted against our property tax credit for seniors.

The member opposite advocates freezing assessments. What you'll have is two seniors living next door to each other in different homes with different property taxes.

That party is devoid of real answers on these challenging questions.

We have laid out a system of property tax credits for seniors, a system of assessment that will be implemented over four years, that is balanced, prudent and will provide fairness between and among neighbours, will provide fairness between and among property tax classes. This system is the best approach to this.

I'd urge the member and the leader of the NDP to stop voting against property tax credits for senior citizens. You should be ashamed of your record on that particular issue.

RENT BANK PROGRAM

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, as you know, municipal service managers across Ontario felt the sting of the challenging economy when they noticed their rent bank funding drying up.

In Waterloo region, the rent bank was in dire straits this past summer. Waterloo Region Community Legal Services told you in a letter that a loss of rent bank funds would be a disaster for tenants and landlords.

Minister, I know you came through with funding, but some families need assurances that rent bank funding will be there in the coming years if they happen to fall short.

Minister, how can local service managers ensure the viability of the rent bank program without a long-term funding commitment from your ministry?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for the very good question.

The rent bank is a valuable tool. It prevents the eviction of individuals who are having short-term financial challenges. Brent Matthews, a rent bank recipient, summed it up when he said, "It was like angels came down to help us."

The rent bank is popular—

Interjections.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm surprised the Conservatives are heckling the rent bank—because let me quote the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who wrote to me on May 20 and said, "The Waterloo regional rent bank has proven to be a valuable resource to many tenants in the community.... The much-needed interest-free loans given by the rent bank are vital in helping people get past this rough patch in their lives and maintain their housing."

I thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for her support. I wish she'd talk to her colleagues and tell them to stop laughing at those people—

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

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Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I look forward to hearing more from the minister, as you develop a long-term strategy. I thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for her support of the rent bank.

The rent bank is a valuable resource in fighting homelessness and poverty. I know our partners in Waterloo region such as the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group are supportive. Minister, can you tell me what this program means for Waterloo region and why all parties don't support the rent bank?

Hon. Jim Watson: The region of Waterloo received \$108,565 in new rent bank funding this year that the Premier had announced. This means that the region of Waterloo, to date, has received over \$659,000, which has prevented 550 evictions since 2004.

I have no idea why the NDP do not support the rent bank. The member from Beaches–East York said in this House, "It means almost nothing." The NDP poverty plan that was released this week did not mention the rent bank once. So I would ask members of the NDP caucus why they are turning their back on those 15,500 individuals who have staved off eviction as a result of the McGuinty government rent bank plan.

We were there in the past for the individuals who needed it, and we will be there in the future when we develop our long-term affordable housing strategy. This is a program that works and that helps those people who find themselves in difficult, short-term—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you know, the international liquidity crisis is impacting today on the pocketbooks of Ontario families and seniors. Not only are their life savings on a rollercoaster ride, with an 841-point drop—with some recovery today—on the TSX, but Ontario families are vulnerable because of their significant debt burdens. Economists and bankers are citing a risk that mortgage rates and consumer loan rates may increase and that lending practices will tighten as a result of the crisis. Your failed economic policies have made the squeeze on middle-class families and seniors even tighter through higher taxes, higher hydro rates and skyrocketing property assessments. Minister, what is your plan to give middle-class families and seniors a break during these very difficult times?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We laid out a plan almost a year ago that we will continue to follow and make adjustments to. I do want to say to the people of Ontario that our financial institutions remain stronger than their counterparts south of the border. Over the course of the last 24 hours, the Premier and I have spoken with the governor of the Bank of Canada, all of our provincial regulators, and we have spoken to the CEOs of our major banks and insurance companies. Yes, there is no doubt that there are challenges, and the member is quite accurate: Liquidity is a major issue. That issue is part of the bailout plan in the United States. It is our view and our hope that the US Congress will adopt some form of assistance, because this is very much a real problem in the US economy. The impact on the US economy, obviously, has an impact on us. We'll continue to implement our plan and continue a prudent course towards a balanced budget, recognizing that targeted tax cuts—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to hear the minister and the Premier at least recognize the challenge, but we want to see some action on this side of the House to address this risk to Ontario families. When John Tory and the Ontario PCs hosted our economic summit, we heard from Derek Holt, the VP of economics at Scotia Capital, who said that getting credit is going to be next to impossible for all but the businesses with the most stellar financial conditions. We heard from TD's chief economist, Don Drummond, yesterday that some 250,000 manufacturing jobs will disappear from Ontario in the next five years. Drummond says that the slowing economy is no excuse for inaction.

Minister, under Dalton McGuinty, taxes are way up, energy costs are way up, and red tape is getting thicker and thicker. What efforts will you make today to lower the tax and regulatory burden to help businesses create jobs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think the argument in the United States is very compelling: that the lowered corporate taxes and getting rid of regulation is precisely

what has put the American economy in this challenging position.

What I can tell the member opposite—and I have spoken to all of the leading economists—is that their plan will not work. We need a comprehensive plan that involves targeted tax cuts, which we've done. You need to invest in infrastructure, which we've done. We have in fact lowered hydro rates since we took office and have provided for a more reliable and secure source of power in this province well into the future. There is no doubt that there are enormous challenges in the international economy, and as the member opposite's interim leader pointed out here in the House, many of those challenges—

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

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective ways to support healthy development of children. Health promotion starts with breastfeeding. When will your ministry listen to Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Registered Nurses' Association, Toronto Public Health—and the list goes on—and develop a provincial breastfeeding strategy based on the standard of the World Health Organization's baby-friendly initiative?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that it's principally through our public health units that we have in place programs to support breastfeeding. We require public health units to provide breastfeeding programs, and we give them funding at 75 cents on the dollar. The rest is a municipal responsibility. I'd like to put this latest development in some context: The fact of the matter is, we continue to support breastfeeding programs through our public health units.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: We agree that hospital and health unit breastfeeding programs are in place, but they have very limited resources and they lack coordination. Premier, breastfeeding is natural, but it is not easy. Women often need help in order to succeed, but breastfeeding programs are at the bottom of the priority list, so when funding is tight, those programs are the first ones to close. Dr. Jack Newman is a world-renowned breastfeeding expert. The program where he used to work closed in 2005 due to tight hospital budgets. A provincial breastfeeding strategy would not be expensive; it just needs your commitment. Will you do it? Will you agree to an Ontario breastfeeding strategy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we require that public health units provide breastfeeding programs through our 36 public health units. Funding for those kinds of programs supports these kinds of activities: information support lines; 24-hour advice lines where mothers can call; 48-hour follow-up from a nurse to new mothers; group parenting sessions on a range of topics, including breastfeeding; breastfeeding support during

home visits provided through the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program; and then working with the community to develop supportive environments for breastfeeding.

Again, I just want to make it clear to the member opposite, to Ontarians, generally, but mostly to new moms especially, that it is through our public health units that we have in place programs to support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, when I talk to students in my riding of Ottawa Centre and from Carleton University about the value of post-secondary education, I hear time and time again that obtaining a college diploma or university degree is getting harder because costs are going up. I think it is very important to encourage our youth to continue on after high school, whether it be in a classroom or on-the-job training through an apprenticeship. But, Minister, students are finding it more difficult to pay for the increasing costs associated with higher education. There is tuition to pay for, textbooks to buy and living and transportation costs to cover.

Minister, what are you doing to ensure that students who want to go on to post-secondary education can, no matter their ability to pay?

Hon. John Milloy: I'd like to congratulate the member for his advocacy on behalf of the post-secondary institutions in his community and students specifically. I'm pleased to report that through our \$1.5-billion skills-to-jobs action plan announced in last spring's budget, we're providing an additional \$465 million to expand post-secondary student aid and programs. This includes a textbook and technology grant, which will help 550,000 full-time university and college students; it starts at \$150 per student this year, and once fully implemented, it will rise to \$300. In addition, several months ago, the Premier announced that we're providing \$27 million over three years for new distance grants to assist with transportation costs for about 24,000 full-time students from rural and remote areas attending publicly assisted colleges or universities.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Minister. Certainly, any initiative that alleviates pressure on students is a welcome one. Research shows that students who come from lower- and middle-income families are less likely to go on to post-secondary education. The same is true for aboriginal students, students whose parents did not attend university or college and students with disabilities. We know these students face unique challenges. We can be even more effective in our goal to reduce poverty by making post-secondary education more accessible.

Minister, can you tell this House what you are doing to ensure that these groups of students have the opportunity to pursue higher education?

Hon. John Milloy: One of the hallmarks of our Reaching Higher plan has been the access strategy for those students who are traditionally under-represented in the post-secondary system. Access grants are available to students from families earning up to \$78,000 a year, and about 53,000 students qualified for an access grant last year. In terms of aboriginal post-secondary education, last year we invested over \$24 million in education and training to provide supports for students and institutions to increase aboriginal participation. We're providing \$30 million over the next three years in initiatives to inform and encourage more first-generation students to pursue higher education; this includes bursaries for students.

I'm also very proud that we are expanding the Pathways to Education program, which works with students at the high school level to encourage them to go on to post-secondary education, and training vulnerable students from poorer areas in the province.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is for the Premier. On a number of occasions in the course of this question period, the Premier has restated his confidence in the auto sector and talked about the restructuring that's taking place and the challenges within our economy. I agree with him that there are major changes taking place, and I welcomed the Premier's announcement of the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. I believe that there is a role for government to come alongside businesses that are facing challenges.

My question to the Premier is this, however: Given the number of applications that have gone forward to this fund—and I am speaking now on behalf of a specific business within my riding that has made an application. That application has now been in process for nine months and there has not been any money flowing to this company, although they were told they were approved. I'm asking the Premier if he personally would look into this file, which I will provide him, and generally find out what's going on with this fund?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to refer this to the Minister of International Trade and Investment.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: The member opposite knows, if we're speaking of the same company, I've had an opportunity more than once to speak to this company that this member opposite has forwarded to my office. We have had good conversations. We've talked about opportunities for this company to make application to our funds. I am not certain to which of the programs this particular company has applied, but would be happy if we could get confirmation of that. We'll certainly look into seeing the status of the applicant to any of the programs through economic development and trade.

Mr. Frank Klees: That's why I'm bringing the issue to the Premier's personal attention. To her credit, the minister did speak with the applicant. We also got significant help from Mr. Kwinter.

I believe that these are issues that we should not be dealing with in a partisan nature. This is a company that needs help. They have now gone through four financial audits. They are being told that they have been approved. What is happening is that they're not seeing the cheque, Premier.

I believe there is a problem internally with how these matters are being handled. I believe it's in your best interest and the best interest of the government and of businesses that are counting on your program to help them. I believe it's in their best interest, Premier, that you personally look into this to find out why these firms that are being told they qualify are not getting the money.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: It's difficult to speak to specifics if we don't know the company and know exactly what fund, but if it is the one that I've called for the member opposite in the past, the member opposite knows how genuine we are in wanting to help this company move forward in manufacturing in what is a very challenging time in Ontario today. We're determined to do that. That is the indication that we gave to this company. We have personally made certain that they knew all of the application process and helped them through it. So if I could get forwarded that information, we can confirm that that is in fact the case, that there is an investment to be made with the Ontario government as a partner potentially. We would be happy to look forward to that.

In fact, this member opposite can be certain that there is no partisanship when it comes to business in Ontario. We want our businesses to grow, and you know full well that we are intent on helping to make that happen.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Is keeping hospitals clean and free of infection part of health care services we can expect from medicare and, if so, where does the Premier rank hospital cleaning in importance? Is it an essential service or ancillary to the provision of hospital services in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let me just speak from the capacity that Ontario families I think would want me to speak. Of course, when we go into a hospital we expect our hospital to be clean. We expect to be able to have our loved ones go there and be treated and come out better. We don't want them to go into a hospital and contract an illness on the basis of an experience they've had within the hospital itself. I think that's a legitimate expectation, and we're going to work as hard as we can to meet that expectation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Health care workers at St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton have launched a job action over the hospital's plan to privatize cleaning services. These workers and the jobs they do are vital to containing the spread of deadly diseases like C. difficile. Recent reports criticize the McGuinty government and their handling of infection control. Will somebody over

there connect the dots? Allowing privatization and for-profit cleaners is no way to alleviate the public's concern.

Why is the minister allowing St. Joseph's hospital to contract out its cleaning services and potentially put safety at greater risk?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Hospitals have to make their own choices and decisions when it comes to these matters. But where they don't have a choice and when there are no options available to them is when it comes to upholding a high standard of cleanliness, illness prevention and preventing infections from spreading. I think we can all agree on that. As long as we have those standards in place, as long as hospitals are working as hard as they possibly can to ensure that they're reaching for those standards, then I think we're on the right track.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Government Services. Up in Willowdale and indeed throughout the province, we hear a lot of queries from constituents about getting birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates and the like. They usually need these for passports, drivers' licences, marriage certificates and pension information. Right now, the office of the registrar deals with this and we fax in copies of their documents and there is a process involved. But Service Ontario is a facility where you can apply online, and if you apply online, there's a 15-day service guarantee. That sounds very good, but can you tell me how that works and how you can possibly give that guarantee?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's a good question, and I think I've got a good answer. We were able to live up to a series of service guarantees because we have one of the most modern and efficient systems and best public service delivery systems in the world right here in Ontario. We've made it a priority to serve the people of Ontario.

You know, my mom used to say to me as a kid, "Nobody is perfect," but when it comes to Service Ontario, we're about as close to perfect as you can get: 99.9% of Ontarians who need marriage and death certificates and 99.77% who need birth certificates have those within 15 days.

Service Ontario delivers over 40 million transactions annually, so that's three billion—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

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Mr. David Zimmer: Okay, I understand that part of the answer. But I've got a lot of constituents in Willowdale, and I hear throughout the rest of the province, who are computer illiterate. Seniors who are kind of nervous about dealing with computers, like some of my elderly relatives, people with special needs, people who don't have computers, they can't access the system online. So what are we doing to speed the process up for those people who aren't familiar with the computer online services? How are we going to help them?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Personal services are certainly important to us. All across Ontario, we have 70 Service

Ontario staff locations in which people can get the fast, friendly service they've become accustomed to. There are also 270 private issuers across the province, as well as 400 libraries and service kiosks in various malls. The crown jewel of Service Ontario is right here in Toronto—777 Bay Street—and I invite everybody to come over and look at it. When I was over there last, what impressed me the most was just how clear the directions were for people wanting service. They are there for driver and vehicle registration and other office registrar services. Even Sarah Palin would be happy, because she could get a fishing or a hunting licence there.

Our goal is to roll out more of these all-in-one service centres all across Ontario, as we continue to make it easier and faster to get government—

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

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: To the Minister of Education: It took the death of Jordan Manners to finally prompt you into some degree of action. If you had launched that inquiry that we had requested within a reasonable time frame, law enforcement would have unearthed the assault cover-up of a six-year-old girl, and the police could have held those responsible to account, as they'd planned to do. As the statute of limitations had expired, the police were unable to proceed.

Protocol is not the same as the law. It is offensive to parents that the minister would suggest that reporting student-on-student abuse is a matter of protocol. Mandatory reporting should be the law.

Keeping Ontario's children safe is our priority. Why isn't it yours?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I reject out of hand any implication that somehow school safety and the safety of the precious students who are in our education system are not a top priority for this government. I reject it out of hand.

Since we were elected, we have been putting resources into the system. What that means is more adults in our schools, more teachers, more child and youth workers, more social workers and psychologists—more caring adults to make our system safe. The reality is, when we came into office in 2003, those adults had been stripped out of the system. So what we've been doing is rebuilding that.

The member opposite also knows that the requirements for reporting exist in a number of pieces of legislation. Liz Sandals, who is my parliamentary assistant, is working with the safe schools action team to report—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Actions speak louder than words. There's no excuse for failing to institute mandatory reporting. Our children and our students should not be used as political pawns in your failure to address law and order issues in our schools. It's time to stand up for

our students who cannot stand up for themselves. Minister, when will you finally take the action our children need and deserve and implement mandatory reporting in our schools?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, one of the really distinct differences between that party's approach and this government's approach is that we actually talk to people who do the work in the system that we're trying to fix. What we are doing right now is having a very intelligent, in-depth conversation with the sector about how to keep our kids safe: What are the reporting requirements? Where are the gaps? Where are the things that we need to do to keep our kids safe? We have put millions of dollars into more human resources, into cameras for schools. We have changed the legislation to make it more rational. We've been on this since we were elected. What we know is that we need to have that conversation about reporting—that is what my parliamentary assistant is doing—with the experts and with the people in the field who understand education.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. On May 29 of this year, in this House, I asked the minister to investigate the unfair assessment of Ms. Julia Sangster's granny flat. He promised to co-operate and do something. Can the minister update this House on what he has managed to discover over the last four months?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite knows we have been working with his office on that particular file. There's a range of letters and correspondence between us. I will get the answer to the member as quickly as I can. I'm not familiar right at the moment with where that is at. I've been pleased to work with you since you raised the question through correspondence and other ways and conversations between our offices. I will endeavour to get an answer for the member after question period.

Mr. Michael Prue: The minister is correct. I met with two of the minister's staffers on June 11 in my office. They came, we had a big discussion. We exchanged the correspondence that we had. But our office has been waiting for someone, anyone, to get back to us so that we can convey this news to Ms. Sangster.

Four long months have passed. The minister has said today that he wants to do something, but will he do something to rectify the unfair assessment on Ms. Sangster's modest granny flat and for all of those other people who are living in granny flats? We think the regulations are wrong, and we're looking for that kind of commitment as well.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We take all citizens' concerns very seriously. That's why we responded to the Ombudsman's report, every recommendation that gives further protections to citizens, including reverse onus on that. That's why we voted to give seniors a property tax grant which will be coming into effect in the early part of the

new year, which is important to residents throughout the province, particularly seniors.

We take every member's concerns seriously. That's why my staff have been engaged. I will, as I indicated earlier, report back to the member with respect to where that particular situation is.

I look forward to his support of the property tax credit that senior citizens across this province will begin receiving in the early part of next year.

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

PETITIONS

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Ms. Laurie Scott: This is a petition for fair journeymen tradespeople to apprenticeship ratios.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current journeymen tradespeople to apprenticeship ratios in the manufacturing and construction sectors in Ontario are both outdated and unfair; and

"Whereas the ratio of journeymen tradespeople to apprenticeship in many other jurisdictions in Canada is already one to one; and

"Whereas the current journeymen tradespeople to apprenticeship ratios put small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario requiring skilled trades at a disadvantage to other provinces; and

"Whereas MPP Laurie Scott and MPP Garfield Dunlop have both brought forward notices of motion requesting the government and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to make the necessary regulatory changes to current ratios;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately make the necessary regulatory changes to accommodate the construction and manufacturing trades so that the ratio of journeymen tradespeople to apprentices be one to one."

I hand it to page Timothy.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board reversed the 2006 announcement closing the maternity and pediatric services at the Ajax-Pickering hospital due to an overwhelming public outcry; and

"Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board of directors has recently approved closing the 20-bed mental health unit at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

"Whereas there remains further concern by residents for future maternity/pediatric closings, particularly with the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, which will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum

(LDRP) birthing rooms and an additional 21 postpartum rooms ...

"Whereas there is a natural boundary, the Rouge Valley, that clearly separates the two distinct areas of Scarborough and Durham region;

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

"That the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE-LHIN) and the Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) board of directors review the Rouge Valley Health System makeup and group Scarborough Centenary hospital with the three other Scarborough hospitals; and

"Further, that we position Ajax-Pickering hospital within Lakeridge Health, thus combining all of our hospitals in Durham region under one Durham region administration."

I will sign this and pass it to Marissa.

1150

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: "Whereas the current Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital is fully utilized; and

"Whereas Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital was sized to serve a town of Oakville population of 130,000, and the current population is now well over 170,000; and

"Whereas the population of Oakville continues to grow as mandated by 'Places to Grow,' an act of the Ontario Legislature, and is projected to be 187,500 in 2012, the completion date for a new facility in the original time frame; and

"Whereas residents of the town of Oakville are entitled to the same quality of health care as all Ontarians; and

"Whereas hospital facilities in the surrounding area do not have capacity to absorb Oakville's overflow needs;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure take the necessary steps to ensure the new Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital be completed under its original timelines without further delay."

I'm very happy to sign this petition and pass it to page Matthew for delivery.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition prepared by the Ontario Health Coalition and signed by the people of Cornwall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with page Justin.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas crack houses, brothels and other persistent problem properties undermine a neighbourhood by generating public disorder, fear and insecurity; and

“Whereas current solutions—enforcement measures based on current criminal, civil and bylaws—are slow, expensive, cumbersome and not always successful; and

“Whereas safer communities and neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation is provincial, civil law which counters the negative impact on neighbourhoods of entrenched drug, prostitution or illegal liquor sales based out of homes and businesses and is being successfully utilized in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and the Yukon;...

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned ... urge the province of Ontario to enact safer communities and neighbourhood (SCAN) legislation in Ontario for the benefit of our neighbourhoods and communities.”

I agree with this petition and send it, by way of page Timothy, to the table.

WATER METERING

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s secret agenda to require the installation of meters on all water wells in the province of Ontario was recently revealed by the medical officer of health for Durham region;

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

“To recognize our concern and dismay with respect to this secret Liberal agenda and encourage all members of the assembly to ensure that this covert initiative does not proceed.”

I’ve signed this.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: “Whereas Milton District Hospital was designed to serve a population of 30,000 and the town of Milton is now home to more than 69,000 people and is still growing rapidly; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is the fastest-growing town in Canada and was forced into that rate of growth by an act of the Ontario Legislature called ‘Places to Grow’; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is projected to have a population of 101,600 people in 2014, which is the earliest date an expansion could be completed; and

“Whereas the current Milton facility is too small to accommodate Milton’s explosive growth and parts of the hospital prohibit the integration of new outpatient clinics and diagnostic technologies;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure take the necessary steps to ensure timely approval and construction of the expansion to Milton District Hospital.”

I’ve affixed my signature and I pass the petition to Matthew.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today from Janet Hamilton from Mississauga, Ontario.

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I will give it to page Karlie to take to the table.

ANTI-TOBACCO LEGISLATION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Liberal government recently passed the Smoke-Free Ontario Act; and

“Whereas the act prohibits sale and supply of tobacco to a person who is less than 19 years old; and

“Whereas the Tobacco Tax Act requires that a tobacco tax rate of 11.1 cents applies to every cigarette and on every gram or part gram of tobacco sold in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the two acts be enforced on all retailers in Ontario who sell, offer for sale or store tobacco.”

I’ve signed this.

HIGHWAY 17/174

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 17/174 needs to be expanded to four lanes from Trim Road to Prescott-Russell Regional Road 8 in order to enhance road safety; and

“Whereas Highway 17/174 has been known in the past for its accident rate; and

“Whereas this highway represents the main artery for the working population of Clarence-Rockland, Alfred-Plantagenet and Hawkesbury to access the national capital; and....

“Whereas the city of Ottawa passed a council resolution asking that either the province or the united counties of Prescott and Russell take the lead in the environmental assessments; and

“Whereas both the federal and provincial governments have each committed \$40 million towards the widening of Highway 17/174;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide the necessary funding to the united counties of Prescott and Russell to undertake the environmental assessments required for the widening of Highway 17/174 from two to four lanes between Trim Road and Prescott-Russell Regional Road 8.”

I proudly add my signature to the petition.

HIGHWAY 35

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Highway 35 four-laning.

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton;

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

“That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

We hope that Highway 35 four-laning comes soon.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I thank the people from Credit Valley Hospital who signed the petition, and I would like to ask page Michael to carry it for me.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Pat Hoy: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

And I have signed the petition.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from people right here in the heart of Toronto, on Bayview Avenue, who are in support of Bill 56.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support the people in the Bayview area in Toronto, and I affix my name to the petition.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Bob Delaney: I would like to, on behalf of the member for Scarborough Southwest, read this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas access to guns is a major cause behind an increase in violent crime;

“Whereas such crime has been steadily increasing over a number of years;

“Whereas current preventative initiatives have been put in place to stem the tide of violent crime, but a direct approach targeting gun usage has not been undertaken;

“Whereas signs specifically stating a zero tolerance attitude toward gun usage in the commission of gun violence needs to be created and erected to demonstrate our collective disdain for this type of activity;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Public Safety to implement an initiative to construct a zero tolerance gun usage sign and have these signs placed on all province of Ontario property, such as major roads and buildings.”

Speaker, I’m pleased to sign this petition and to ask page Matthew to carry it for me.

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

This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1203 to 1500.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

KEN DANBY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to mark the passing of a great Canadian artist, Ken Danby. If I may quote from Danby’s website:

One year ago, “On the autumn afternoon of September 23, Ken Danby, accompanied by his wife Gillian and” two “friends, paddled a canoe across North Tea Lake in Algonquin Park.... The weather was glorious and the trees glowed with brilliant colour. Laughter echoed across the lake. As the group was about to retire for the day, Ken suddenly collapsed and died immediately....

“The world lost a great talent that afternoon; an artist in every sense of the word We will miss his eloquence, his humour, his leadership, his affection, his artistic vision. We will miss the paintings he did not get to paint, but will continue to admire and enjoy the legacy of paintings he left behind.”

I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the Headwaters Arts Festival this past weekend where a selection of Ken’s work is being featured at a special exhibit and where Ken’s wife, Gillian, spoke about Ken’s influence in Canadian art. As Robert Bateman said that evening, Ken Danby made it possible for other artists to create and thrive in Canada as full-time artists. I know that Ken’s legacy will continue to encourage other artists to create art for all of us to enjoy and remind us how the arts, in its many different forms, benefits our communities and our lives.

TONY STACEY CENTRE FOR VETERANS CARE

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I rise in the House today to commend the Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care, in the Highland Creek area of Scarborough, for the excellent care and dignified comfort they provide for men and women in their golden years. The centre is operated by the Royal Canadian Legion and is home to veterans, their spouses and Silver Cross mothers. The Tony Stacey Centre opened in 1979 and grew from the generous hearts and minds of veterans, and since that time, it has faithfully provided the highest quality of long-term care for our veterans, their families and the community. It is distinguished by the fact that it is the only veterans’ long-term-care facility that accepts non-serving spouses of veterans and allows spouses to be together and not separated simply by virtue of illness.

Just recently, I had the privilege to attend the 31st annual ceremony commemorating the 68th anniversary of the Battle of Britain at the centre, and I was reminded of those who went off to war in distant lands to fight for the rights and freedoms we hold so dearly to this day. The event, which included a parade by veterans from Branch 258 of the Royal Canadian Legion, was viewed by young and old, as the Highland Creek community truly came together to show its support for our veterans.

The Tony Stacey Centre has led the way in establishing best practices for the aged, and throughout the years has continued to be a community leader not only in Highland Creek, but also throughout my riding and beyond. We are fortunate to have dedicated workers and volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the best possible care, and with

facilities like the Tony Stacey Centre, we all benefit. Visitors are always welcomed at the centre to discover for themselves the great work that is being done there, to talk to the residents of the facility and to discover the pride they have for this centre and for our great country.

VIVA STRIKE

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to draw attention to a situation affecting thousands of York region residents that seemingly has gone unnoticed and largely ignored by the McGuinty government. The Viva strike is now into its sixth day, leaving more than 35,000 commuters without public transit that they count on to connect them to their jobs, schools and many other important activities and services.

Yesterday, the Minister of Labour revealed that a provincial mediator will begin talks with Viva drivers and management starting tomorrow. This passive approach by the McGuinty government is in stark contrast to the TTC strike in April, when the Liberal government stepped in after just two days to pass back-to-work legislation.

Yesterday, the labour minister commented that the TTC strike warranted such immediate intervention due to extraordinary circumstances. Well, according to him, the same suffering that York region residents will have endured for a full week before his mediator begins talks with Viva, and without any definite timeline in sight for an end to this strike, somehow becomes transformed into a set of extraordinary circumstances when one crosses the municipal boundary of Toronto.

I want to impress on the Premier and his labour minister that commuters in York region deserve no less consideration than TTC commuters, and I call on them to send a clear message that this strike must end and it must end now.

ANTHONY LOCILENTO PARK

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to bring attention to an event I attended on the weekend honouring a young man whose life ended before it should have. On Sunday, September 28, I attended the official renaming of Blue Coin Park for Anthony Locilento Park.

Anthony Locilento, son of Angelo and Grace Locilento, was tragically killed in a snowmobiling accident when he was only 37 years old. He was engaged to be married when he succumbed to the injuries of his accident.

I draw attention to this because the Canadian Institute for Health Information has found snowmobiling to be the number one cause of winter sports and recreation-related injuries, with young people most at risk. Every season, between 30 and 40 people are killed and more than 300 are injured snowmobiling in Ontario, according to the Ministry of Transportation.

Those of us who gathered to commemorate Anthony were moved that the renaming of the park will help to

maintain a bond between a family who continues to grieve the loss of a loved one and the respect and care with which we must interact with nature.

As we head into a new season, let us remember to do all we can to prevent accidents so that we can enjoy winter activities safely.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Norm Miller: Starting this week, the daily Ontario Northland bus departing from Sudbury at 5:15 and the bus departing from Toronto at 10 a.m., both servicing the Parry Sound area through Highway 69, will no longer be available. Further north, communities between Hearst and Timmins will also see the loss of two daily buses, one southbound and one northbound.

Glenn Don Lockhart, a Parry Sound resident, writes, "Our daughter, who works in Toronto uses the Friday night bus to come home. She has no other options as rail service for passengers is virtually non-existent and she doesn't own a car. Many of her friends use this bus as they are in the same situation. I have noticed ... that this bus is usually busy, so I am confused as to why Ontario Northland plans to cancel a bus that should be profitable." Under the revised schedule, Mr. Lockhart's daughter will get into Parry Sound at 3 a.m. Saturday morning.

Mr. Lockhart is not the only one concerned by cuts to the service. Parry Sound town council says that many residents rely on the Northland service as their primary means of travelling south to Toronto and the surrounding area for family and medical needs. They go on to say, "There must be recognition of the essential nature of the service to northern communities where transportation options are extremely limited."

It is shameful that the McGuinty government, which is responsible for the Ontario Northland, stands idly by while northerners are left stranded. What happened to this government's northern growth plan?

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Kormos: Down where I come from, in Niagara, folks worked real hard for a long time building public health care and building the hospitals in which that health care is delivered: small-town hospitals, like Fort Erie and Port Colborne and, yes, Welland and St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. Now we've got an unelected, undemocratic Niagara Health System board.

Mike Harris and the Tories forced the merger of hospitals on us and the creation of the Niagara Health System; Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals forced the mega-LHINs on us. So these unelected bodies, with no mandate whatsoever from the public, from the taxpayer or from the recipients of health care, make decisions to shut down emergency rooms in Port Colborne and Fort Erie. I tell you, it's not going to fly.

They made decisions to shut down maternity wards in Fort Erie, Welland and Port Colborne. There are going to be more babies born on the side of the road on the way

from Fort Erie to St. Catharines, if that happens, on a January night than you ever, ever dreamed of.

The people of Niagara aren't taking it. They know that these are undemocratic boards that make their behind-closed-doors secret decisions—no accountability. Well, we're holding them accountable. It's not acceptable that hospitals in small-town Ontario don't provide core hospital services like emergency rooms, maternity and psychiatric services.

This Sunday, October 5, there will be a rally at 2 o'clock at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park in Port Colborne, where there are going to be thousands of folks saying, "Hell, no" to the Niagara Health System and its back-room buddies. I'll be joining them with great pleasure and passion.

1510

ATIKOKAN GENERATING STATION

Mr. Bill Mauro: Since 2004, I've been working to keep the Atikokan generating station open. As you may recall, since going into the 2003 provincial election all three parties and all three party leaders were publicly on record supporting the elimination of coal-fired electricity generation in the province of Ontario. I was very encouraged when the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, expressed confidence, in a late-August tour, when he said that a long-term future was possible for the AGS.

I was there when the minister visited the station and met with OPG officials to discuss issues related to the plant and the potential for biomass use in this facility. The minister saw for himself the work OPG, the community and the research station are doing to potentially convert this plant to biomass. The preliminary indications are very encouraging. The test burn conducted by OPG at the plant has shown very promising results. Researchers have been testing increasing concentrations of wood pellets as a firing fuel and last month successfully tested a 100% wood pellet burn. These preliminary tests have demonstrated that the boiler at the 230-megawatt plant can be effective when fired by wood pellets.

More work and research have to be done for this preliminary success to be converted into a long-term future. We will work to determine that enough biomass exists not only to potentially support the AGS but also those private sector entities that will be requiring this energy stream to support their operations.

I will continue to work with Minister Smitherman to ensure that the AGS be given every opportunity to continue its vital operations. Using biomass, which is both carbon neutral and a practical way to help prevent climate change, has the promise to create a new generation of green-collar careers and industry while providing clean, renewable energy to our community.

MASAI FOR AFRICA CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Liz Sandals: This weekend I am attending an event in Guelph celebrating the Masai for Africa cam-

paign. The campaign was launched in 2006 with the goal of raising \$1 million by 2010 to assist the Tsepong Clinic in Lesotho, Africa, to provide crucial medical services for more than 6,000 patients with HIV and AIDS.

Masai for Africa was spearheaded by Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlík, founder of Guelph's Masai HIV/AIDS clinic. The project is a partnership between the Masai Centre, Stephen Lewis, the Ontario Hospital Association and Ontario Hospitals for Africa.

The challenge to help Lesotho was accepted enthusiastically by the people of Guelph, particularly by the University of Guelph community. Just two years ago, U of G students initiated their Bracelet of Hope campaign, selling red and white bracelets produced by a rural women's co-op in South Africa. They have sold more than 115,000 bracelets, raising more than \$575,000, surpassing their goal of \$100,000.

I'm tremendously proud of the support that Dr. Zajdlík and the Masai for Africa campaign have received from the people of Guelph. More than one year ahead of schedule, we're celebrating that the \$1-million goal has been met.

But Guelphites realize there is more to be done to help the people of Lesotho. We'll be issuing a challenge to Waterloo region and Woodstock. I know that the dedicated people who are supporting Masai for Africa will reach whatever goal they set.

DRAPEAU FRANCO-ONTARIEN

M. Phil McNeely: J'appuie entièrement les propos de la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, l'honorable M^{me} Meilleur, lorsqu'il s'agit de défendre le drapeau franco-ontarien. Suite à l'allocution de M^{me} Meilleur le jour du 33^e anniversaire du drapeau, le député conservateur de Thornhill, qui est d'ailleurs le critique de son caucus pour les affaires francophones, a cru approprié de déclarer que le drapeau franco-ontarien était inutile. Un tel commentaire démontre son manque de connaissance de la réalité francophone en Ontario et de l'apport fondamental de la communauté francophone à l'histoire de notre province.

J'ai reçu de nombreux messages de la part de mes commettants indignés par les propos du député de Thornhill. Je suis moi-même fier de mes racines françaises. L'attaque du député conservateur était d'autant plus choquante qu'elle a été applaudie par les autres membres de son caucus et qu'aucune excuse n'a été faite jusqu'à date.

Je tiens solennellement aujourd'hui à renouveler mon soutien et celui de mes amis libéraux de tous les francophones de l'Ontario qui ont été blessés par les commentaires du député de Thornhill.

Nous attendons toujours des excuses.

SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the report of the

Ombudsman of Ontario entitled Oversight Unseen: Investigation into the Special Investigations Unit's Operational Effectiveness and Credibility.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the September 30, 2008, report of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 107(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PORCUPINE GOLDOR MINES LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Porcupine Goldtop Mines Limited and to change its name to Porcupine Goldor Mines Limited.

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): Pursuant to standing order 85, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

WASTE REPORTING ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS À FOURNIR CONCERNANT LES DÉCHETS

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act respecting the reporting of industrial, commercial and institutional waste to facilitate the establishment of waste reduction targets and to promote recycling/ Projet de loi 105, Loi traitant des renseignements à fournir sur les déchets industriels, commerciaux et institutionnels afin de faciliter l'établissement d'objectifs en matière de réduction des déchets et de favoriser le recyclage.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to present the Waste Reporting Act, 2008, which requires the monitoring and reporting of IC&I waste in Ontario. Currently, institutional, commercial and industrial waste is not being sufficiently recycled. Many small businesses that contract recycling removal would be surprised to know that

recyclables are often going directly to landfills. There's no system in place to monitor the current environment.

My bill will track the movement of waste and facilitate the creation of appropriate diversion targets. This will help protect our environment and grow the recycling industry in Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO PROMOTE THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES SERVICES ET SOUTIENS FAVORISANT L'INCLUSION SOCIALE DES PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 77. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1518 to 1523.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Albanese, Laura	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Bartolucci, Rick	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Best, Margaret	Mauro, Bill	Sandals, Liz
Broten, Laurel C.	McGuinty, Dalton	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	McMeekin, Ted	Sousa, Charles
Cansfield, Donna H.	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chan, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Crozier, Bruce	Moridi, Reza	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	Naqvi, Yasir	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed will rise one at a time.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Miller, Norm
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Murdoch, Bill
Elliott, Christine	Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Gélinas, France	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 43; the nays are 17.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COLLEGES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE DANS LES COLLÈGES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 29, 2008, on the motion for third reading of Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 90, Loi édictant la Loi de 2008 sur la négociation collective dans les collèges, abrogeant la Loi sur la négociation collective dans les collèges et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to get up and make a few remarks about Bill 90. I had the pleasure of hearing some of the debate yesterday afternoon. My understanding is that the bill is something we will be supporting, but we regret that it wasn't the best possible bill it could be.

I believe that it was very clearly put on the record by our critic, the member for Trinity-Spadina, that there were opportunities to make this bill quite a bit better than what we have before us. In fact, not only did we bring some 16 amendments that we thought would help improve the bill, but in particular, OPSEU, the union that will be representing these workers at the college level, also provided some very good suggestions to the government in terms of how to improve the bill.

It's interesting, because in the process of that debate it was quite clear that there have been missed opportunities over the past 20-odd years, and maybe even a little bit longer, to have corrected the problem that this bill is now correcting. So I think it's important to acknowledge that that correction needs to happen.

What this bill basically does, of course, is provide the opportunity for part-time workers at the college level to collectively bargain, to be able to be represented by a union, which is a basic, fundamental right that not all, but many, many other workers in the province of Ontario have.

So in fact it has been very, very wrong, over the last couple of decades, that these particular workers—part-time academic workers or instructors as well as part-time support staff—have been prevented, have not been allowed, under the previous legislation, to organize into unions and bargain collectively for their rights and benefits at work. What Bill 90 does is correct that wrong.

But one of the wrongs it does not correct—and this is something that unfortunately will remain the same in the province of Ontario—is the significant underfunding of the college system, of post-secondary altogether, in the province of Ontario.

There is a significant problem when we have a province of the size and wealth that we have, and we often

hear our Premier talking about how this province is one that drives the economy of the entire country and about how the economy will be transforming, and yet the government does not invest the way it should in post-secondary education. In fact, Ontario is 10th in Canada in its investment per capita in the post-secondary system.

1530

So, yes, this bill is important because it provides the basic right of workers to join a union and bargain collectively, but what it doesn't do is fix the long-standing problem in this province of underfunding of the college system.

What could have been done, other than a huge investment in post-secondary in the province, within the context of this bill? It's interesting. I raise that issue because some of the pieces that we think should be in that bill are pieces that I think most people would say are reasonable, but the reason that they weren't implemented is for that very problem—that very problem will become exacerbated if in fact these clauses are put in.

It's very clear that there's no commitment on the government side to actually bump up the funding of post-secondary, particularly colleges, because we see in the kind of amendments that were suggested but not implemented that these things would be cost matters that, of course, the government is not prepared to invest in.

What kinds of pieces are there that we think could have improved the bill? One very, very fundamental one is first-contract arbitration. That's a system that we think is important. We think it would help to make sure that a collective agreement is reached. If either party were desirous of having an arbitrator come in and settle a first contract, if that settlement cannot happen through negotiation and bargaining of the parties, then either party would be able to ask for arbitration of the first collective agreement. That basically would help to ensure that a collective agreement is put in place, one where an arbitrator would be able to determine which outstanding issues are a matter of resolve. So the arbitrator comes to the table and says, "Well, here is what this side wants and here is what that side wants," and the arbitrator decides what's reasonable in the context of having the first collective agreement signed. Unfortunately, although we put that amendment and although OPSEU suggested that the amendment be in, the government did not see the importance of putting into this bill the opportunity for first-contract arbitration.

Another thing that wasn't included is the issue of what's called "deemed strike." I'm going to refer a little bit to the OPSEU document that I received because it describes very well what the deemed strike or lockout provision is. Currently, in the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, there is a deemed strike or lockout provision. That provision is called the "anti-scab provision," in other terms. It ensures that when any workers in a bargaining unit are on strike or locked out, all are deemed to be on strike or locked out. What this really does is it creates an important environment where the 180,000 students who are on college campuses are kept safe, so

that there's not this anxiety about picket lines that can be very, very difficult for people and for students, in terms of their safety.

The former Conservative government didn't even go as far as to get rid of this deemed strike or lockout provision, but for some reason this Liberal government here in Ontario thinks that it's all right to get rid of a provision that is one that should have been maintained in this bill, and I really fear for the result of that over the next several years. I guess we're going to have to wait and see what that is going to mean in practice, to have that provision removed. It seems to me that the government has made a significant error in not continuing on with the deemed strike or lockout provision. Unfortunately, the bill is flawed as a result. It's hard to understand why the government doesn't see the value of having that provision. It's hard to understand why the government doesn't see that there was a reason for that language to have been there for all of these years and how they can so easily remove it with the passing of Bill 90. I think that they will see, in time, that that was an error, that that was a mistake, and that they should have heeded the advice of OPSEU and of the New Democratic Party here in Ontario and left that provision in Bill 90.

There are a couple of other pieces to the bill that we thought should have been there. One of them is an issue around what happens or what could have been included in the bill to make sure that the school year is not jeopardized if there is a dispute. What this bill doesn't do is carry on the practice of making sure that the negotiations follow a certain timetable and a certain schedule, and also certain notice periods to make sure that the process of collective bargaining does not end up jeopardizing the school year.

I think this is also a mistake that the government has made. Again, these are recommendations that came from OPSEU. We recommended some of these amendments ourselves as well during the committee phase of the bill. Unfortunately, the government didn't see fit to include them in the final bill. We're going to be in a situation where we'll possibly have jeopardizing of school years for students, and I don't think that's in anybody's interest. I think it's actually quite a serious problem, and one that could have easily been resolved if the government had taken the time to make sure that those very important pieces were maintained in the bill.

Another piece that's not included here that should be included is that the way the government decided to move forward in providing these opportunities for collective bargaining for these new groups of employees—in fact, these are not new groups at all. These are employees that have really, frankly, been exploited by the system for decades on end now—yes, under many governments, not just under this government and not just under the last government but even under the government before that. I'm free to admit it; I'm admitting that's the case. What's happened is, these workers, because they have not had the chance to bargain collectively and they have not been treated on an equal footing, have been basically paid and

provided with benefits that are less than their counterparts in the system. So instead of using this bill to bring everybody together—all of the part-time workers and all of the full-time workers in two separate bargaining units which exist already, instructional full-time and support staff full-time—instead of bringing the instructional part-time in with the instructional full-time and the support staff part-time in with the support staff full-time, what they've done is decided to create two new bargaining units. Now there are not only two bargaining units, there will be four bargaining units. You have to scratch your head and think, "Well, why would you do that?" It's kind of making things more complicated than they need to be. But it doesn't take long to figure out the wily government and its desire to use the tactic of divide and conquer.

Because, of course, if you have a larger bargaining unit with more workers in it, they gain strength. There's strength in numbers. It's an old adage but it's a true one. So if we keep these instructional workers separated from each other, with fewer opportunities to have common cause, then of course it's easier to divide them from each other and create conflict between themselves; whereas if they're one bargaining unit, it will be a lot easier for them to bargain for the voice of all as opposed to having, perhaps, issues amongst themselves. That's not to say that they do, but you can see how management and how the government would prefer to have a weakened voice, if you will, rather than a stronger voice. This is not a good thing for the workers, but I guess it's a good thing, from the government's perspective, to create division and dissent.

I've got to tell you, I for one am pretty sick and tired of the politics of division in the province of Ontario. They have been reigning here for very, very long—many, many years—and unfortunately this Liberal government seems to be quite in line with that same kind of methodology. The government before the Liberals were in power, the Harris government—that's what made them famous, the divide-and-conquer tactic and the idea that you just have to divide people off, create conflict and turn people against each other, and then you can come in and govern effectively because everybody else is fighting amongst themselves. I fear that the government is using the same kind of perspective when they say that it's best to have four bargaining units instead of simply two bargaining units. I think it's a callous tactic, and one that does not bode well for a positive future in terms of the ongoing bargaining that's going to take place in the college system.

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Having said that, the fact of the matter is that the bill is long overdue. It's something that the college sector has been working on, particularly the workers. OPSEU, the union representing these workers, has been trying to have this issue addressed for a very long time. If you want to look at it in monetary terms, I'm sure hundreds of millions of dollars have been saved over the years on the backs of the workers who have not had the opportunity to be part of the union. Many of the workers there are

working full-time hours and have been working full-time hours—some of them probably for their entire career as an employee of a college—but being paid at part-time wages and benefits. So you can see how over the years these workers have been significantly exploited. I would expect and hope that everybody in the chamber would support taking these workers out of the dark ages, really, and taking them out of an untenable situation that they've been dealing with for all these years.

The big tragedy, though, is that the bill leaves a lot to be desired in terms of the details. If people are particularly interested in this issue, it's very easy to go through the Hansards, particularly of the committee work that was done, and look at some of the arguments and recommendations that were brought forward. I've highlighted four of them very briefly in the small amount of time that I've had, but there are others that are significant as well.

The issue around first-contract arbitration is a really big one, which we think this government should have included. It's an extremely important piece. We think that the union—OPSEU—was right in suggesting that first-contract arbitration be allowed and be enshrined in the legislation. Unfortunately, the government didn't agree, so first-contract arbitration is not in the bill.

The deeming of strikes and lockouts, again, an issue that was raised by the union: Of course we, meaning the New Democratic Party, brought forward amendments to the bill to include this. Our critic, Rosario Marchese from the Trinity–Spadina riding, brought those issues forward, brought the issue of deemed strike or lockout to the table, and the government, in its wisdom or lack thereof, determined that they did not want to have that provision in this legislation. That's unfortunate; that's extremely unfortunate.

Another issue that we are concerned wasn't included in the bill, again, is the issue of the extent to which the jeopardization of the school year is now much more likely, because the provisions of the previous legislation provided for an environment where everything could be done to make sure that young people were not in jeopardy of losing a school year as a result of collective bargaining processes that might be leading towards an eventual strike or lockout. This is something that was a very responsible scenario, a very responsible way of dealing with the situation. But, unfortunately, the government didn't see fit to put that in the legislation either.

Again, I'm fearful that these things are—they seem like minor issues when you just talk about them here on a Tuesday afternoon in the Legislature, but as we go through the next couple of years and see how this legislation becomes enacted in real life, I think the government will have some regrets around not taking the good advice of OPSEU and the New Democratic caucus, particularly our critic, who put these things forward.

Finally, the whole issue that I spent a little bit of time on, around insisting there be four bargaining units instead of only two bargaining units: Again, this is the issue of divide and conquer, of creating a scenario where, instead

of having everybody who is an instructor, part-time and full-time, in one bargaining unit, or an academic, if you want to use that language—a teacher, all of those part-time and full-time people—in one bargaining unit, there's going to be a full-time bargaining unit, a part-time bargaining unit. Similarly, all of the people who are support staff, who are full-time and part-time, instead of being in one bargaining unit—again, that's going to be cut into two bargaining units, the purpose of which is pretty blatant, and that is to just reduce the collectivity, the collective voice, the strength of that collective voice, that those larger bargaining units would have.

I think that is a really inappropriate thing to do, that there is an obvious community of interest between instructors, whether they are full-time or part-time, and support staff, whether they are full-time or part-time. I think the government has purposely tried to weaken the bargaining units by dividing them into four separate pieces, as opposed to the two which were already in place: instructional and support staff.

I know that yesterday afternoon a number of members got up and extolled the virtues of their own community colleges, so I would be remiss if I didn't put on the record the fabulous work that gets done at Mohawk College in Hamilton. It is in my riding. It is a fabulous institution, and they have recently expanded to do a more skills training type of instruction and work in our community, which is great. I only hope that when people graduate from those courses there are actually jobs for them, because we know that these days we are losing jobs faster than you can shake a stick at, particularly in Hamilton, where we are extremely hard hit by the manufacturing job losses that have plagued this province and that this government has done very little to nothing to address.

Having said that, our community college is an excellent resource. It is well utilized. We have great instructors there. The students are an excellent piece of our community. As we move forward through this bill, I hope the way the government has decided to go does not weaken our college system but strengthens it. I only hope that the government gets back to a position where it is funding so that we are not number 10 in the country in terms of funding for post-secondary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to commend the member from Hamilton Centre on her analysis of the bill. I guess this is one of these situations where the government could have done the right thing and had everybody onside. In this case, they've sort of done a half measure. The bill does some things, obviously, that the workers are in favour of, and that is a good thing. But where it falls is that it's really short in a couple of key elements.

There's one I wanted to speak to earlier, because the member raises the issue of successor rights. We know that more and more we're seeing work being contracted out in public institutions. In my view, if the government doesn't allow for successor rights and related employer

provisions to be enacted within the bill, which it has not, this is really going to be an incentive on the part of some community colleges to have some of their courses hived off to others to be delivered, and, if it's a successor employer and there are no successor rights, lose that right you have as an individual to be part of the bargaining unit and having to start all over again. It's a provision that has been around for a long time. People may know the Shebandowan mine, north of Thunder Bay. That was under the Steelworkers some years ago. It closed down the first time, I guess, for about six, seven or eight years. Then, when it was reopened under a new employer, there was an attempt on the part of the new employer not to recognize the union. But the Ontario Labour Relations Act was very clear: Just because the mine had been sold, that did not give the right of the new employer not to recognize the collective agreement that was at that mine property.

Certainly, if you see that within the private sector in order to get around successor rights, there are going to be the same kinds of pressures within the public sector. I would say that we see these days, under this government and the federal government, more services going to the private sector than we've ever seen before. So I think the government's not putting successor rights and employer provisions inside this legislation is telling about where it really is with contracting out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

The member for Hamilton Centre has two minutes to reply if she chooses to do so.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I appreciate the comments from the member for Timmins–James Bay. Of course, one of the issues he was referring to is another of the 16 amendments that the NDP tabled during the clause-by-clause process of the bill; again another one that the government, in my recollection, did not put into place. Here we have a situation where there are a number of amendments that could have been included in the bill that would have made for a much better piece of legislation.

1550

I know, as we've watched so many times in this Legislature, the Liberals are okay with not good enough or they're okay with just making it, getting by with the minimal amount of change and not really rising to the challenge of putting really good and solid legislation in place. So I would expect the people around here are going to support the bill with all of its foibles and flaws because it is better than what we had. We had a situation where these workers didn't have the right to bargain in Ontario and haven't for many years and have been exploited as a result; again, not the colleges' fault but more the government's fault because of lack of resourcing and funding of the sector.

Having said that, it's unfortunate that a bill that has the opportunity to be so much better once again has been low-balled, if you will, by the Liberals. They are not prepared to put the finishing touches on that would make the bill really strong and really effective, and instead they are happy with second-best. And you know what? They

are the government, so I guess if they are happy with second-best and it's a bill that we are glad that at least they are moving a little bit on, then we will probably support the bill. But it is unfortunate that they didn't take the opportunity to do the right thing by these workers and to put a really strong bill in place, and I fear that they are going to see the results of that in a negative way over the years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I am delighted to have the opportunity this afternoon to rise and speak in support of Bill 90, the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act. Bill 90 would extend collective bargaining rights to part-time faculty and support staff at Ontario's colleges of applied art and technology and modernize college collective bargaining. This is an area that I have been quite interested in over the years, because of course I've done a lot of collective bargaining in the elementary and secondary and university sectors, or at least been involved in labour in the university sector, so I have been quite involved in this. I was very surprised to learn that part-time teachers, part-time staff didn't have the right to do collective bargaining as they do in those other education sectors—to me, that seemed an automatic. I am very pleased that we do have Bill 90, which is going to extend the rights of collective bargaining to those people and also, I might add, fix up a number of other anomalies in that legislation and bring it more in line with the Labour Relations Act. I am quite pleased that we do have this act and I will be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? Are there any other honourable members who wish to participate in this debate? If not, the member for Richmond Hill has the right of final reply, if he chooses to do so.

Mr. Moridi has moved third reading of Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members for a 30-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for a deferral from the chief government whip, and as such, the vote will be deferred until Wednesday, October 1, at the time of deferred votes.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Smith has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1555.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
		Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldeep (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

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

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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