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Thursday 2 October 2008

Jeudi 2 octobre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 octobre 2008

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Hindu prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR DES IDÉES D'AVENIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 1, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007 / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It's my privilege to stand here today for the one-hour leadoff, although I want to assure the members of the House that I don't think I am going to take it all. I can see the relief on the Deputy Premier's face.

I would like to preface the remarks I have with the chilling news that's been reported in today's Toronto Star. Many people will not have read it, because it's on the very last page of the business section, but it tells me everything about why we need to start investing more in our economy. In the business section, under the title "US Factories Weaken to Seven-year Low, Jobs Bleak," the body of that article talks about what is happening in the United States economy. It talks about the downward spiral that has resulted not just from the events of this past week in the stock market but from the ongoing weakness of the economy of that country over the last many, many months.

It stated for the record that some 8,000 industrial jobs were lost in the United States. In a country as large as that, that may not appear to be a huge job loss, but 8,000 really good jobs were lost in the United States in the month of September.

It went on to say that the unemployment rate in that country has now gone up to its highest level in decades, resides at about 7% and continues to grow. It goes on and, in a little-used analysis tool, it says the factory index has gone down from 49.9% in August to 43.5% in September. People may not understand this index, but it's a very simple one. It's set at 50. If things are expanding, it's above 50; if things are declining, it's below 50. In August we had a very slight decline to 49.9%, a very

small decline. In September we have a whopping decline. In September we're down to 43.5%, which is fully 6.5% below where things are normal, natural and stable.

So we can see what is happening, and for the first time there is a person you don't often hear from, but I think he said it pretty well. His name is Marc Pado, a US market strategist at Cantor Fitzgerald and Co. in San Francisco. He said, "For the first time, it's really starting to look like a recession."

Many people in Canada have been talking about that for some time. We know that jobs are being lost at a horrendous rate in the manufacturing sector in this province. We know as well that some of our key indexes, such as auto sales, have suffered hugely as factory after factory shuts down, lays off workers, or downsizes operations from three shifts to two shifts to one shift, or takes time off.

I had some opportunity recently in Oshawa to talk to some laid-off members of the Canadian Auto Workers. They had been off for months, and they are not sure if they are ever going back to work in what had been a fine job for them, a well-paying job, a good job, a steady job, a job upon which they and their families relied.

I looked as well in today's paper to see that auto sales for the Big Three in the United States have declined into the 40% range in the month of September. The only auto company that actually showed a very, very slight increase was Toyota. Every other one, including Honda, the foreign manufacturers—everything has shown huge declines in the number of people working, and as well is expected to go down. The new president of the Canadian Auto Workers, Mr. Lewenza, said it's very hard to produce cars when there are no buyers out there.

So it is against that backdrop that I look at this particular bill, Bill 100. I look at what the finance minister had to say. Of course, finance ministers are wont to talk in very flowery terms and say how wonderful their programs are, how many jobs they're going to create, and how much of everything else. This is what the finance minister had to say about this bill:

"This bill is meant to attract individuals with great ideas from all across Canada to set up their businesses in Ontario.

"It would help launch the next wave of Ontario's innovators by helping companies keep more of their income to invest and grow. It would also reinforce the critical role that universities and other public research institutes play in our economy and the next generation of jobs."

Would that that were so. Would that this bill was going to do anything of that kind. Would that this bill had

the opportunity to launch this new wave and to create tens of thousands of jobs in this province. Because, unfortunately—and sadly—this bill is not about that at all.

0910

When this bill was released, a member of our staff went to the Ministry of Finance with a very simple question. It took a day or two to answer, but the simple question was, how much is going to be expended if this bill becomes law? How much are we going to spend on trying to create jobs in the province of Ontario by use of Bill 100 and the provisions that it contains? From the outset, I have to say that this bill is not going to do very much. This bill had a potential. This bill could have done something, but the finance ministry, in setting up the parameters, has clearly indicated to me what is really going to happen. They've set aside for this fiscal year the sum of \$5 million to institute the provisions of the bill. To put that in perspective, that's about the same amount that is spent putting out flowers and maintaining this building; I think it runs around the \$5-million range. I'm happy that we put out flowers around Queen's Park. I don't want anyone to get me wrong; I'm very happy with maintaining the traditions of this building and everything that goes on in here. But that is about what's going to be spent on the creation of jobs across the length and breadth of this province under this bill. Next year, they are talking about \$7 million, which again, given the Ontario budget of closing in on \$100 billion, is an extremely, extremely small amount.

When you put that against the backdrop, what is intended here? What is intended is to get innovators to come to the province of Ontario. What is intended here is to get them to actually look at Ontario as a place to build a new industry and to bring in the smartest and the brightest and the best, and to get industry to be on top of the technological pile. But with the greatest of respect, I don't think that is going to happen given the provisions of the bill.

First of all, are companies going to come here for the \$5 million? This is the whole range of companies; are they going to come here for \$5 million? Well, you might be able to convince one company to come with \$5 million, but the amounts that are going to be given out—as we requested that too—were in the range of \$100,000 up to three quarters of a million dollars, which I think is the top level. We're looking at a very finite number of companies: 10 or 20 companies in total getting very, very insignificantly small amounts of money if they qualify for it. Quite frankly, that's not going to induce, in my opinion, very many companies to come here and start up an enterprise in this province when they could start it up literally almost anywhere else.

The tax rebate, the system that's been set up here: They're not going to have to pay taxes for some 10 years. We made some phone calls. We talked to those businesses that might potentially actually benefit from a program like this. We talked to them at some length to find out whether or not the kind of incentive that's contained within the body of this bill would actually incent

them to come to this province. They had some pretty chilling news for the researchers in our office. They said that it takes at least eight and sometimes 10 or more years to take the raw technology that is out there and that is being developed in our colleges, universities and our other places of higher learning, and turn it into a commercialized product that can be sold at a profit.

They tell us that in those eight to 10 years of a new company, they seldom pay any corporate tax. There is no tax that is paid, and therefore there will be no tax that will be rebatable. This program will not assist them, will not assist the majority of companies in bringing technology to this province. It will not make companies in the health and biotechnology sectors profitable. It will not speed up the process. It takes eight to 10 years of hard slogging to take an idea and turn it into profit. This means that a refund of the corporate taxes—zero in many, if not all, cases—won't give them extra dollars to reinvest in their business.

We questioned, why would the minister introduce a 10-year tax refund bill that won't actually help commercializers of research? The only thing we can figure out is that this is another photo opportunity for the minister and the government to talk about trying to do something in the face of the recession that is descending on us all too rapidly. It is a photo opportunity. In fact, it is not a bill that is going to do what it is meant to do.

We think that the tax breaks that aren't used don't cost the province a cent. That's why the limited budget here is a reality. That is why the government has set such a low amount—because they don't actually expect to spend anything. Ontarians are looking for far more than that. Ontarians are looking for real solutions. Ontarians are looking for real jobs, and the keeping of real jobs. They're not going to find it within the body of this bill, particularly when the amounts of money set aside are so minuscule.

We don't believe that this bill will create any jobs—I'm sad to say that. There will be little take-up on the program, and I think the minister knows that. There will be little government spending. The minister has already acknowledged that, and his staff have acknowledged that. New companies in this sector simply aren't profitable for 10 years to take advantage of what is contained in the bill. Those who invest in the new companies don't see the tax structure as a problem. They don't see the tax structure that is set up in this bill as a problem. That is not the problem to them; the problem to them is that there is not enough venture capital.

Now, we all know that venture capital flew south in the year 2000-01. That's sort of when the bubble burst, and it never really recovered from the meltdown of those years. Venture capital is not here in this province in sufficient monies to actually incent people to start up new industries, particularly to take the commercialization of new inventions and new thoughts and new processes and turn it into economic reality. The venture capital has simply dried up, and it's not there.

Now, what has been the government's response to something that would work and would create jobs? It has

been totally inadequate. They have created a \$165-million venture capital fund, which in reality is a token amount that industry insiders say will do little to help the circumstances. This measly proposal—\$5 million and \$7 million over two years—will do even less. The province could do things, but they're choosing not to.

I am, for the life of me, flummoxed and flabbergasted that the province is following a course of action to reduce the number of people who actually want to invest. There's a whole class of labour-sponsored investment funds out there—a whole class. The government's answer is to eliminate it—eliminate it. I don't know what the rationality behind all that is. It's being eliminated by the end of 2010. It was supposed to have been eliminated by this year, but the government saw fit to extend it another year or two, seeing that there was a continuing need for these funds.

I have a hard time understanding why the government would turn its back on the hundreds of millions of dollars that are available in the labour-sponsored investment funds and then come up with a bill that's going to spend \$5 million. It does not make any real economic sense to me. I'm sure it makes no economic sense to the labour-sponsored investment funds of labour unions and other progressive people who want to put their money into the economy of this province. I fail to understand the government's action. I fail to understand why former Finance Minister Sorbara was so hot to go down this road of cutting off those funds, which were probably the only thing left in venture capital after 2000-01. But he chose to do so, and the current finance minister has really not resolved that, has really not taken the steps to continue that pool of venture capital flowing. By cutting the credit, the government is signalling that it doesn't want everyday Ontarians to invest in small start-ups that create jobs in the long run. It has replaced what was a good and ongoing and meaningful policy of accepting those funds—with the tax breaks that came with them—with gimmicks. I think this bill is more of a gimmick than it is a reality. Having said that, I'm probably going to vote for it, because \$5 million is better than nothing. Anything we can do to help the economy is better than nothing, but I want everyone to realize that this is not, as my good friend from Ajax—Pickering said the other day, a cornerstone, or, as the finance minister said, a landmark. This is a very tiny, minute-natured bill that is going to do very little in terms of getting new jobs to this province.

0920

He has put the whole thing down to a photo op. I'm sure that Liberals across this province are going to run around at some point and say, "Look what we're doing; look how innovative we are; look at how we're spending \$5 million."

Hon. George Smitherman: Celebrating Ontario.

Mr. Michael Prue: Celebrating Ontario with \$5 million.

As my good friend and colleague from the former riding of Erie—Lincoln—I believe it's now Niagara West—Glanbrook—said so well yesterday, they are

spending some \$8 million on a tourism study. I guess it's a good thing to spend \$8 million on a tourism study, but it's quite obvious that what this is intended to do is minor in comparison, because the amount that is being spent is a great deal less.

This government has decided to put commercialization photo ops before the real high-tech growth policies. It's unfortunate, because the industry has put real proposals on the table. I certainly know from estimates last week. We had an opportunity, over many hours, to question the Minister of Innovation, and he was really quite excited about many of the innovative proposals that have been put forward. We're excited about those too. But the McGuinty Liberals have virtually ignored them all, prioritizing press releases and quick announcements. I think it's a shame, but I'm going to vote for this bill, and I'm sure my caucus will support me in voting for this bill, because we need to send this bill to committee. We need to send it to committee, and we need to get some assurances on many fronts.

One of the fronts that was raised by the Progressive Conservatives is that the innovation that is taking place can take place in places other than institutes of higher education, that it can take place in places other than universities, community colleges and other think tanks, that it can take place in a whole broad range of institutions and government and non-government services, and that they too should be included.

I'd like to take the other tack, because I think we need to discuss in committee the purpose of this bill and whether in fact it is heading in the right direction. I say that because we continue, in the New Democratic Party, to believe in basic research: the scientific study done to create new knowledge for the purpose of learning or finding truth. We believe in basic research. We believe in that because we think that is every bit as important as the commercialization of that research. We go back in Ontario and even to the University of Toronto—one of my two alma maters—and we have a look at the success of scientific research at the University of Toronto. Six Nobel Prize recipients have come out of that university—six of them.

Ms. Laurie Scott: That's amazing. Wow.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, six who have developed independent and scientific knowledge which was not commercialized. It was done for the pure benefit of science, for the basic research. Now, obviously some of that went on to be commercialized—Banting, with the discovery of insulin. He discovered it not for a commercialized purpose, but for the benefit of all mankind. That's what he did it for. I don't even believe he made any money off it. He didn't try to patent it. He didn't try to do anything else in terms of the insulin. He simply discovered it, worked on it, gave it away and benefited everyone. We believe, and continue to believe, in basic research.

The name RIM is talked about a lot in this province, particularly by people from the Kitchener-Waterloo area. It has been a huge success story—BlackBerries and all

the things that flowed out of that. I think we should be listening to people like Mike Lazaridis, the founder of Research In Motion, whom this government often trots out. I believe this bill is hoping to find another RIM; that's what it is, isn't it? My friend here shakes his head in ponderment, but I believe it is.

This is what Mike Lazaridis, the founder of Research In Motion, said about basic research; I think he said it very well: "The number one reason to fund basic research well and with vision is to attract the very best researchers from around the world. Once here, they can prepare Canada's next generations of graduates, masters, PhDs and post-doctorates, including the finest foreign students. All else flows from this." He went on to say that commercialization will happen—Canadian researchers will use the high-quality education, well-funded laboratories and their international contacts to design commercial applications to their discoveries—but it's a natural progression and doesn't need to be forced.

So I think we have to also question: If we are content with this bill and believe it is being done for the production of jobs, that's one thing. But if we also want to look at the other path, which I think is equally valuable in places like universities and educational institutions, it is to help fund them not only so they can benefit the private sector and the companies that are going to proceed with jobs, but also for the sheer joy of the basic research. It is for the foundation, so that the schools can develop and we can bring in the best and the brightest, not just to the places of employment but to the places in the university where they can study, where they can trade ideas, where they can meet with people from around the world, where we can have an intellectual hub. I believe this bill doesn't do that, and this bill should be doing that. It should be part of the bill that I'm hoping will be talked about in committee.

This province is putting a significant amount of resources into the commercialization plan with this bill and with others. They have put over a billion dollars on the table, telling researchers that there will be rewards for finding commercial applications for their findings. This is money that could go, and in part should go, to basic research.

We must ask ourselves, what discoveries are we sacrificing by diverting funds from this basic research? As I said earlier, we're trying to recreate a new Research In Motion, I guess. But that's not the way companies get started. It begins with smart people working in high-class institutions with top-notch professors, seeking answers to questions they may not have fully developed.

So the whole thing comes down to this: Is this bill sufficient to reach the commercialization of new ideas and create jobs in Ontario? The answer, quite simply, is no. It is set up in a way that companies are probably not going to get any money for eight to 10 years because of the tax regime that is set up with it, because they don't make any profit in those first eight to 10 years. Is this bill going to resolve the difficulties inherent between basic research and applied research? Probably not, and it's

probably not going to help the institutes of higher education, because they need to develop the ideas first, as Mr. Lazaridis so brilliantly put it—that's the first step, which has been omitted by this bill.

Is the government going to be spending enough money in this bill to make its application work? I would suggest that \$5 million this year and \$7 million next year is a pittance and is not going to bring the best and the brightest from around the world to develop here. It is not the kind of money that will make someone choose Toronto over San Francisco or Ottawa over Berlin; it's just not going to happen. It is not a realistic amount of money for the government to put forward.

0930

In a nutshell it all comes down to sending this bill to committee, to having the government look at it again, putting the resources into it and changing where the research money can come from.

I accept what my friends in the Progressive Conservative Party have to say in terms of other research facilities not being included. I hope they and the government will accept what I have to say around basic research, about funding the universities to look at things that may not be immediately commercially applicable. In the end, I'm hoping, when everyone has a chance, to make this bill into something that today it is not: a vehicle to produce jobs in this province.

We know that the people of Ontario are potentially in for hard times. We know what is happening in the United States and what has happened for the last several years across the length and breadth of this province, where manufacturing jobs are being shredded and shed on a huge and ongoing basis, where towns like Goderich woke up yesterday to the news that—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Five hundred.

Mr. Michael Prue: —500 of their best-paying jobs in their largest factory and their largest commercial warehouse are being shut down. That's really going to do damage to a town of 7,500 people. We know that that same thing has happened in Windsor, in Chatham, in London, in Welland, in Ottawa and in Toronto. We know that. I believe that every member of this House from every party has the obligation to do what we can to help create new wealth.

This bill, if amended, might be part of the solution. This bill, as it is presently constituted, will do very little. So, I await the government and I await everyone else, and I trust that they will send this to committee for review and will listen carefully to amendments that come forward to strengthen it so that it actually can do what the minister set out in his lofty goal to do. It will take resolve, and it will take money, and it will take ingenuity, but together I think this Legislature has an obligation to the people of this province to do something in these times of economic uncertainty and do it well.

With about half an hour, I think that's about all I need to say today. I look forward to further debate at third reading, when I can stand and talk about the successes of the committee process and how the government has

listened and done far more than use this present bill, in its course of action, as a photo op.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the member from Beaches–East York speak, for almost half an hour, about Bill 100. I was happy to see the member's kind of support in the end, because I think it's a very important step on a very important issue.

I was listening to him carefully when he was talking about researchers and scientists, and I agree with him: When people come to do research and science in Ontario, they don't look at the money; they do it because they love it, because they believe in it and because they want to serve humanity. Over the years, I met many different researchers from the University of Western Ontario and listened to them. They talk about their issues with passion and with love, because they care about their jobs and about their ideas. They want to implement them; they want to serve humanity. That's why I think this bill is a very important step to allow many researchers and innovators to come to Ontario to execute their innovative ideas.

He spoke about the money part. He knows very well that the money part is not the only element of the bill—he is a well-experienced politician; he has been around for many years. Most of the time, money is not the only thing; it's the rules and regulations that allow people to come and practise—it's very important when you break all the rules and regulations, all the barriers to people implementing ideas and their research.

I think this bill is a cornerstone for many researchers and innovators to come to this beautiful province, implement their ideas and benefit the whole of humanity.

He mentioned many different things and he knows our government's not just taking this economic challenge lightly. We do it in many different steps. I mentioned yesterday the innovation fund—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I would like to congratulate the member for Beaches–East York, the future leader of the NDP. Oh, I'm premature on that, I suppose.

He made an excellent point, that in the first six, eight, or 10 years start-up companies don't pay any taxes. So a tax rebate for a company that does not pay taxes is redundant. It's the kind of legislation that this government loves to bring in, something that gives them a photo op, something that gives them some press on this type of thing, but that has absolutely no results. It's either a hoax that they brought in this legislation, or they haven't thought through the process, they haven't thought through the effect of this. It's been poorly thought out, like so much of the legislation that they've brought in.

Don Drummond, vice president of the TD Bank, put out his analysis of the Ontario economy last week. There are some excellent pieces in that publication that talk about the direction that this government could be going in, what it could be doing to help the industry and com-

merce of this province. We don't see any of those kinds of things coming through this government.

Another point that the member made was that the venture capital and the angel financing of these start-up companies is where most of the new high-tech developments come from. They don't come out of major university learning centres. They come from people's garages. They come from small organizations that have a good idea. That's where Microsoft came from, that's where Dell came from, that's where so many of the places came from. They are being excluded in this legislation in this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to enter into this debate on Bill 100 once again. Our government has a five-point plan for the economy, and the opposition has often insinuated that they are not too sure what it is. This is part of it. It is part of our innovation strategy. It includes investing or creating an environment for innovation. The opposition often asks for tax cuts. Under this particular plan, a qualifying corporation would be exempt from Ontario corporate income tax and corporate minimum tax for the first 10 years—a fulsome 10 years. We are looking at new jobs and the next generation of jobs, and bringing those jobs here to Ontario. This is what the design of Bill 100 is all about.

We're talking about a new generation of ideas. We're looking for those innovators who will come to Ontario with fresh new ideas—totally new and unknown to any of us at the current point in time. What this bill would allow for is that the exemption would apply to corporations that commercialize intellectual property in priority areas, such as, but not limited to, the bio-economy, clean technologies, advanced health technologies, telecommunications, and computer and digital technologies.

Now, there's much to be said about this bill, but the intellectual property has to be developed in the course of study or employment at a qualified institute by one or more individuals. I don't see anything particularly wrong with that. It should not ever have been owned by another entity or one or more individuals other than the qualifying institute, including its students or employees—the qualifying corporation. What we have here is a total package of new and innovative ideas that we are seeking—

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

0940

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to comment on the speech delivered by the member from Beaches–East York about Bill 100, Ideas for the Future Act. I had the pleasure of sitting with the member from Beaches–East York in committee when we were asking the Minister of Research and Innovation some questions about the ministry.

One part, of course, was about what is now Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act: Who qualifies? How will it help? Have you got anybody who has applied, or when

you go out—I believe we’ve been to San Diego—to the conventions out there? Is this something that people from all parts of the world are looking at and saying, “Hey, let’s go to Ontario. This is going to be a break for us”? He seems to think—

Hon. George Smitherman: It’s a piece of the puzzle.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is?

It is certainly the headlines, the names of the bill—the minister does speak at length in committee, I have to say, in answering questions; he does have very long answers that are sometimes circuitous—but it is another photo op. The names are all good; the spin is good. What is actually going to be produced? What is the accountability? Is there going to be enough incentive?

Certainly, Ontario needs more solutions. We’ve had a rough economic patch. You can go on and on about the manufacturing sectors. There isn’t enough venture capital out there.

Also, the member from Beaches–East York was very correct in speaking about qualifying institutions, and why is it so narrow? When qualifying institutions, you exclude intellectual property developed outside the universities, colleges, non-profits and hospitals. Why is that so? That is a question that I’m going to speak about at length later on, but I congratulate the member from Beaches–East York.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened to my colleagues, and I thank all of them: the members from London–Fanshawe, Halton, Chatham–Kent–Essex, and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I think they all listened intently, because they all actually spoke about things that I had tried to raise in the bill.

For the member from Chatham–Kent Essex, though: I have heard the five-point plan. We have heard almost nothing but the five-point plan from the government benches since this Legislature returned, but I’m not sure that the five-point plan is working.

Every day, when I open up the newspaper, I see plants shutting down. Every day, I read about towns like Goderich, Welland, Ottawa, Smiths Falls and everything else, and the loss of jobs in those locations. The member talked about how the great, grand attempt of this bill was to exempt new companies for a period of 10 years of taxes. I don’t think he heard what I had to say, and I think perhaps he doesn’t understand what the ministry is trying to say: that these companies, in most cases, don’t pay taxes for the first 10 years of their involvement. They are start-up companies. They must, by the purpose of this legislation, be start-up companies; they can’t be existing companies.

They are brand new ones who come out with an idea, who try to get the venture capital, who try to put the nub of an idea into a commercialized product, and in the overwhelming majority of cases pay no taxes for the first eight to 10 years of their development, and in some cases longer. There is very little tax incentive here for them, and that’s the point that I was trying to make. If the gov-

ernment wants to incent them, it can’t be through this process. It must be perhaps a process of grants or something else, but not in reducing taxes which they already don’t pay.

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I will be sharing my time with the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

I’m pleased to join the debate today as it relates to Bill 100. I am happy to support Bill 100. We have been hearing for months now about the challenges that our economy has been facing. Soaring energy costs and the rising Canadian dollar have placed unprecedented pressure on Ontario’s economy. More recently, we have all watched events unfolding in the United States that have had negative impacts on Canadians, particularly those of us here in Ontario. We are facing some difficulties, no doubt, but I am proud to be a part of a government that is willing to take decisive action that will lead this province through the challenges that we face. That is what this bill is about.

If passed, Bill 100 will help attract individuals from all over the country to Ontario by providing a tax incentive to qualifying corporations to further the commercial strength of intellectual property. In short, this bill is about bringing innovative individuals from all over Canada to Ontario, which will strengthen our economy as we move forward.

I would like to take a moment to talk about an exciting company in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South called 6N Silicon Inc. 6N Silicon has developed an exciting new method that uses silicon to turn the sun’s energy into clean solar power. This process reduces the cost of the material and will help encourage the adoption and growth of solar power in Ontario.

The ideas behind 6N Silicon were first identified by Scott Nichol and were developed right here in Ontario. In short, this is exactly the type of idea and business that Bill 100 will help to attract in the future.

The Ontario government recently announced a major investment in 6N Silicon which will help them build a new manufacturing plant in Vaughan and will help create 84 new jobs for the people of Ontario.

As we move forward into the future, it is very important to ensure that Ontario is able to compete in a global economy. One way to do so is by finding new ways to help innovative companies thrive. We are proud of our investments in our training, colleges and universities, and I have no doubt that many innovative ideas are being developed in many of Ontario’s colleges and universities even as I speak.

These ideas are what will create the jobs of the future, which is why it is so important that we do everything we can to ensure that these ideas emerge from the classrooms and are put into practice.

This is what Bill 100 is about. It provides a direct incentive to firms that undertake the challenges of commercializing intellectual property, and it will also give these types of companies a refund of all Ontario corporate in-

come tax to reinvest in their businesses and ultimately to create jobs.

I am proud of the culture of innovation that exists in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. I have already mentioned 6N Silicon, but I have also met with representatives from 2Source and Amgen Canada, which are examples of companies that are playing leading roles in promoting research and development in my riding. These types of companies are creating well-paying jobs for my constituents and people throughout the province. This is why I am proud to be a part of a government that supports these types of innovators, particularly in these challenging economic times. This is also why I am proud to support Bill 100.

0950

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Let me thank the member for Mississauga–Brampton South for sharing her time with me today, and offer a few comments Bill 100 at second reading.

As others have mentioned today already, we talk on a regular basis and are proud on a regular basis to remind people in the province of Ontario about our five-point plan, and one of the planks in that plan is, of course, innovation. That's what we're discussing here today. That is in large part what Bill 100 is about.

For me personally, I can tell you on this front that I began to develop my personal interest in this issue some four years ago. Shortly after the election in 2003, I was appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. One of the particular topics for review that year, as chosen by the Provincial Auditor, was a program that no longer exists in the province of Ontario. The program was the old Ontario Innovation Trust. I think it had somewhere in the order of magnitude of \$700 million or \$800 million on an annual basis put into that particular program. As I've mentioned, that was one of the programs that we reviewed at public accounts that year.

As we reviewed it at public accounts, I came to learn of the magnitude of the financial resource that was put into it on an annual basis, and I remember particularly one day when we were in committee reviewing this particular program and offering some questions and some comments on my observation that most, if not all, of the resource regularly, annually, on a 100% basis ended up being committed and spent in southern Ontario. I posed the question at committee to the clerk, other members and the Chair as to why it was that none of this money ever found its way out of, for the most part, the GTA. It did migrate somewhat out of the GTA, but was for the most part centred here; as I've said, \$700 million to \$800 million on an annual basis.

I remember the comment very clearly that came back to me from one of the other members on the committee who, as it turns out, has become the federal finance minister. He was a bit surprised by my question and he said, almost in a very disparaging way, "Well, because that's where the researchers are." My comment back to

him was, "Well, you know, I think the researchers will follow the money." In other words, I was there advocating on behalf of my community, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and other communities in the province of Ontario that we needed to find a way to spread some of this resource around, that we could use this resource to establish different economies in other parts of the province. That was about four years ago.

Then what happened very quickly and in short order is that we saw the Premier develop a new ministry called the Ministry of Research and Innovation. He seized upon that, I think, at a very—it was a very wise move. In fact, recognizing the importance of the establishment of this new ministry, the Premier appointed himself as the first minister of the Ministry of Research and Innovation. Now we have Minister Wilkinson at the helm. The money that used to land in the Ontario Innovation Trust found its way into the Ministry of Research and Innovation.

The reason I offer that background is that I think it's very important. My comments at public account four years earlier had now fortunately found themselves to almost have some life in terms of way our government was moving forward and looking at the use of that resource. As the member from Mississauga–Brampton South has just mentioned, I have some wonderful examples in my own riding of the success and what we can do to expand economies and to create new economies in other parts of the province.

So the focus and the criticism, as I've said, have been specifically on this bill and its innovative qualities. I've listened to what the member of the third party had to say and some of the shorter criticisms from the members of the second party, the official opposition, but our work on innovation is much broader than what is simply contained in this bill.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I can quote for you quickly four or five tremendous examples. Number one: We developed the Atikokan Bio-Energy Research Centre. In the budget of 2006, I believe it was, the finance minister announced a commitment of \$4 million. Speaker, I can tell you that already we are beginning to see the results, the potential for a lot of good to come to my communities as a result of that commitment of \$4 million of resource. A lot of that resource—at least half of that \$4 million, if not more—is money that is being spent at Lakehead University in my riding, and also at Confederation College in my riding. I'm very fortunate to have both a university and a college in my riding. So there's an example of research money that formerly never would have found its way outside of the GTA now being spent in northern communities, creating jobs and being innovative in terms of the industries that it has to look at.

We've heard very recently that there is some potentially very positive news that can come out of the work that the Atikokan Bio-Energy Research Centre is doing, along with OPG, in terms of the potential for using biomass in our coal plants. It's a wonderful example of what we can do when we're innovative, when we broaden our scope and open our minds to the possibilities.

Genesis Genomics is a little company that was established about four years ago in Thunder Bay. A fellow I've known for a long time, Bob Thayer, an old high school football coach of mine, decided he was going to establish a biotech company in Thunder Bay when most people thought he had to be crazy, and he did it. I'm very proud that we supported, through programs in our government, the establishment of Genesis Genomics in Thunder Bay. It's a company that is developing precursor technology to identify cancers in people before they actually develop the cancer. That little company in Thunder Bay is already commercializing product. They're doing it in Thunder Bay, and they did it with help from our government in terms of financial resource.

There is a paleo-DNA lab established in Thunder Bay that has received support from our government. That paleo-DNA lab received international recognition when they did the work at their lab in Thunder Bay to identify the last unidentified body from the Titanic. The person, I think, was buried in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia. That work was done in Thunder Bay.

These are two very large and successful enterprises occurring in Thunder Bay. Innovative work is happening in our community as a result of financial resource committed by our government to the establishment of these things in my neck of the woods.

The Molecular Medicine Research Centre, in partnership with Sunnybrook, out of Toronto: \$15 million of financial resource from our government into the ridings of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Thunder Bay–Superior North for the establishment of a molecular medicine research centre. When would that have happened before? What government would have considered doing that?

When we took the money from the Ontario Innovation Trust and took the control of \$700 million or \$800 million of resource away from that group and brought it into government under the Ministry of Research and Innovation, that's when we had the opportunity to start flowing some of that resource to other parts of the province. It's having very real and tangible results for my community.

The Molecular Medicine Research Centre has now become the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, still in partnership with Sunnybrook. Just last week, we had a wonderful announcement: They are beginning their work with what is the newest wave of diagnostic technology, called HIFU, high-intensity focused ultrasound. We've just announced two machines in Thunder Bay—or one here and one in Sunnybrook; I'm not sure—with the announcement of 30 jobs in Thunder Bay associated with that development: high-tech, knowledge-based, growing-the-economy, diversifying-the-economy kinds of jobs that ridings like mine have needed and longed for, for a long time. We've always said this work can be done anywhere, and we're proving it can be done anywhere.

Those are four examples of what we've done on innovation.

In the budget of 2007, we announced CRIBE, an acronym for the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bioeconomy: a \$25-million commitment through the

Ministry of Research and Innovation into my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. I'm pleased to be sitting currently on a task force that is developing the terms of reference for that project. We are close to having that report finished. It will go to the Minister of Research and Innovation, and from that point we will move forward. A \$25-million commitment. Huge. The potential there for job creation in Thunder Bay–Atikokan is enormous, and I'm very excited about that.

These are all examples of what we've done just in my riding, and I'm sure many of the other members around the room have similar examples that they could share with us if they had an opportunity to speak on this.

We've hired two research chairs in Thunder Bay and provided resource for 300 more graduate students at Lakehead University—just a tremendous amount of work going on in innovation.

1000

As I said earlier, I have listened to a bit of the criticism from the Conservative side on this particular piece. It's interesting to listen. I, like many others, came into this place with a municipal council background. When we came in, in 2003, of the 103 of us I think 38 or so of us had a municipal background, and many of us, as first-timers in 2003, brought that municipal experience to this place. When we came in in 2003, what we also brought with us was a history of having a relationship, if you could call it that, with the Harris government. Many of us ran as a result of that lack of a relationship, I should say, with the Harris government. We witnessed probably the biggest tax shift in the history of the province, if not the history of the country, when they downloaded incredible amounts of responsibility onto the back of the municipal residential property taxpayer.

What I want to mention is what they did, because the Conservatives like to remind you that they are the great tax fighters. I come from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. In 1997-98, many people will remember, there was this big change in responsibilities for the education tax and the province taking over some responsibilities. They left northern Ontario behind. They had fully five or six years to address the inequities that existed in the business education tax rate, which became their responsibility. There were huge inequities in that tax rate in northern Ontario relative to southern Ontario. That wasn't their fault; that was the way it had evolved over years when the school boards had taxing authority. But when that changed and it came back under the auspices and authority of the Conservative government, they did nothing to level the playing field. So for the six or eight years that their government existed, they did not touch the business education tax rates. As such, businesses in northern Ontario were severely punished and taxed in a much heavier manner than similar businesses all across the rest of the province. Our government came in and fixed it. Not only are we making the playing field level; we are accelerating the reductions on the business education tax side for northern Ontario businesses, to bring it more into line.

My time is running out here, but I do want to read one piece that was in today's Thunder Bay Source about—

you could say that perhaps this is stretching it a bit on the innovation side, but not so much. This was in the Thunder Bay Source today: "Turbine Ready to Work at Terrace Bay Mill." As many will remember, this mill closed about three or four years ago. Our government, through our forestry programs—and we've brought a tremendous amount of resources to this sector. There are success stories in the forestry sector today even though, as we all know, there are incredible challenges. It reads like this:

"More than a year after its groundbreaking ceremony, a \$45-million condensing steam turbine is ready to be fired up at the Terrace Bay pulp mill."

I should mention that there are about 400 people working in that mill today who wouldn't have been without this program.

"The turbine will generate enough power to make the mill self-sufficient in terms of electrical energy, which makes up a large portion of the company's manufacturing costs.

"Buchanan Forest Products vice-president Hartley Multamaki said the company is expected to realize millions of dollars a year in savings.

"Wood by-products will fire the turbine

"Terrace Bay Mayor Mike King said the start-up is great news for the community.

"The provincial government kicked in \$22.5 million from the forest sector prosperity fund for this project.

"Hundreds of mill workers lost their jobs when Neenah Paper halted operations in 2006. Today, the facility is owned by Buchanan Forest Products and employs about 350 people," as it says here in the article.

That's an example of what we did on innovation through our forestry programs to incent forest sector companies that are still operating in Ontario to take on some responsibility, make long-term investments in their mills and in their communities, and we would help them to do that.

So I think we've got lots to be proud of on the innovation front beyond just the scope of the bill that we're here discussing today.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm pleased to rise and comment just briefly on what I've heard from the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the member for Mississauga–Brampton South, and particularly with reference to the stories that we've heard from my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We all have stories in our ridings about innovation and good work on the part of industry, and I don't quarrel with those at all. However, I also heard about what our government may or may not have done a million years ago. What matters is what's going on now and what's happened in the last five years. This is the watch of the McGuinty government.

So while the stories are interesting and while it is hard for me not to support—

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe the member for Thornhill is not in his seat while he's speaking.

Mr. Peter Shurman: That is correct.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. I hadn't noticed that. Perhaps you'd like to move to your seat.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Mr. Speaker, with apologies, and to my colleague over here, I hadn't noticed I wasn't in my seat either.

However, to continue my point briefly, it's hard not to support a bill like this, and so I'm sure that we will. But wouldn't it be nice, given the state of the economy, on a very broad basis, and very particularly in Ontario, to see to it that in a bill like this we take a broader approach and not look at things like a 10-year tax exemption for a relative few number of companies and, rather, look at a larger number of companies. I think that over time, and in discussion, if the members of the government are serious about addressing the needs of Ontario from an innovative perspective, they'll take some pointers from all parties and work co-operatively with us because this bill could be a very good bill if we bother to put the amendments in that are required to really see to the innovative abilities of Ontarians and the companies that we together operate, or could operate.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened again intently to the two speakers, and just on the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan: I listened and, yes, he was talking about new technologies and how they're being implemented in the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, but I fail to see how they address the meat or the purpose of this bill. The companies that he mentioned are all existing companies, therefore they are not eligible under this bill. They're not eligible, and they are not developing technology, they are using technology. Somebody else developed the technology that they are now using.

I commend them for using new technology, as we all do. I commend the members of this House for using BlackBerries which five years ago they didn't use. I commend people across this nation for using technologies that weren't there but somebody developed them.

There was a show on TV last night on the CBC about the pulsing windshield washer and how the guy had developed that. You know, he developed that and now we all use it. But that's not what this bill is about. With the greatest of respect, the companies he talked about are not new, they're not eligible, they're not developing the technology and they have nothing to do whatsoever with this bill.

My colleague, the other speaker, mentioned the resource or the industry—and I forget the name of it at this point—in her own riding. It's "silicon something." With the greatest of respect to that one too, it is not a company that would be eligible for the funding. They're already up and operating and it's not going to happen for them either.

So with respect, I don't know what the examples are supposed to prove, but they don't prove that the members who spoke on this bill are speaking to the bill, and that's the problem I have with it.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: Just having been in committee under estimates and having Minister Wilkinson go through what this government intends and what his program is for research and innovation in this province, I think it's a whole new cultural change. It hasn't happened all at once. It's something that was going on when the Premier was the Minister of Research and Innovation for the first year. I was very pleased in estimates to hear this because one of the shortcomings in Ontario and in Canada is that we do great research, of course, but then the commercialization of that good research—where it becomes real jobs—is not occurring. That's the expensive part. People say, "That research is only maybe 5% of the problem. The big part of the cost and the big part of the risks are in that commercialization."

1010

This new legislation, this act, proposes a 10-year exemption for new corporations and commercial intellectual property developed by qualified Canadian universities, Canadian colleges, Ontario Centres of Excellence, and other such research institutes. It's looking at those jobs that we haven't been getting. It's trying to incent the commercialization of our excellent research. This is going to really work in Ontario. These are the things we have to do, and I think that every community—Ottawa is a big high-tech area: We've got two great universities and the National Research Council. So we have to get together in teams. We're going to have to have businesses helping these institutions.

But to have a 10-year tax credit—any businessman likes that—is going to be a great incentive, and this is going to work for Ontario.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to comment on the comments from the members for Mississauga–Brampton South and Thunder Bay–Atikokan. I just want to share with everybody that the member from Thornhill is comfortable in whatever seat he's in on this side of the Legislature.

The member for Beaches–East York is correct. I'm sure we're all very proud of the innovations and the developments that have occurred in our ridings, and I've sat in estimates and heard the member for Mississauga–Brampton South speak proudly of the developments in her riding. But Bill 100 does not help them qualify. It does not apply to existing businesses or the merger of two existing businesses. It's no incentive for existing businesses to commercialize new intellectual property. It's not there.

You say this is a tax exemption. Really, you're going to have to fill out a lot of forms, a lot of paperwork, and then you get a rebate back on this bill. It's going to be, as my colleague for Beaches–East York mentioned, a lot of years before you get to this point. We're happy that it's a tax break, you could say, for the future, but again, to highlight the fact that it doesn't apply to existing busi-

nesses. There were no incentives for existing businesses mentioned by my colleagues across the way.

At least they're trying to get down the right path, the Liberal government, in giving some tax breaks, but I can't say that this is going to be the cornerstone or the landmark that the Liberal government is trying to portray. It's photo ops and good headlines, but really the proof will be in the pudding, and it's not an incentive we—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. A response?

Mr. Bill Mauro: Again, I want to thank the member for Mississauga–Brampton South for sharing her time with me and also the members for Thornhill, Beaches–East York, Ottawa–Orléans, and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

There have been many people here in the Legislature who have spoken specifically to this bill and what it is that we think it's going to help to accomplish here in the province of Ontario. We're very proud of the bill. We think it's absolutely a step in the right direction.

I'm happy to hear, as well, that it sounds like members of the official opposition and of the third party intend to fully support this bill. I think the fact that they're going to support it speaks to the fact that there is a lot of good in this bill. I guess I shouldn't presume that their entire caucuses are going to support the bill, but certainly those who were here in the chamber this morning have indicated that they will support the bill. I think that speaks fully to the fact that Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act, is in fact a good thing.

In my 15 minutes or so, I did think, though, it was very important that we remind the people of the province of Ontario that what our government has done on innovation is much broader than what is simply contained within Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act. In my remarks, I listed several examples of work that we have done in this particular sector that has significantly aided the community that I come from, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and I'm very proud of those particular ideas.

This is a good bill. It apparently has the vote and support of all three parties as we go forward. I think that speaks in and of itself to the fact that this is a good piece of legislation, but I also do think that it's very important that the people of the province of Ontario understand that what we're doing on innovation in this province is much broader and already has been for years much broader than simply what is contained in this piece of legislation.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's good to be here on this Thursday morning, October 2. I'm pleased to follow up on yesterday's leadoff from my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook, who is the lead on Bill 100, the so-called Ideas for the Future Act, 2008. I'm pleased to follow the leadoff of my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook yesterday on Bill 100, the so-called Ideas for the Future Act, 2008.

I mentioned earlier this morning in some of my comments that we had the Minister of Research and Innov-

ation in estimates—I think we broke it up into three different times, but for a lot of hours of questions. We were probing him about the various directions that he feels Ontarians need to go. One of the areas we were questioning on in the committee was based around the topic that we're discussing today; this is part of it. When we first started estimates, this bill had not been introduced; although it was outlined in the budget in 2008, this actual bill didn't come in until last week.

The Minister of Research and Innovation had been spending a lot of time talking about the so-called tax exemption since becoming the minister. And as I say, he talks at length in estimates. Not only do the Liberal ministers spend so much time and taxpayers' money making such announcements and re-announcements, posing for all those photo ops that go on, now we see the Liberal ministers spend a lot of time and taxpayers' money making announcements on policies that they hadn't introduced until last week; yet this started in the budget back in the spring.

After the minister went on for a few minutes about tax exemptions, I asked the Minister of Research and Innovation, Minister Wilkinson, about how many applications his ministry had received for this program, hoping that he would be able to attract businesses under this so-called 10-year corporate income tax holiday. The response was maybe surprising, to say the least. The technical details of this bill will be in the fall budgetary bill, so they're really not available as of yet. Not surprisingly, this was another Liberal minister who feels it isn't subject to a measure of performance. I quote the minister: "I don't see, really, where we are at this stage that we can show results." It sounds kind of familiar coming from the government side of the Legislature. This is how we measure; let's see our results. God forbid accountability and results be part and parcel of the Liberal policy over there.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Oh, Lordy.

Ms. Laurie Scott: See? Now I'm getting a response. I was just waiting for some more responses from the other side of the Legislature about headlines and photo ops. Just making sure you're awake over there. But photo ops and headlines aren't measures of success. It's about more than just ink and papers and websites.

Let me provide another example of what the Minister of Research and Innovation said. A program referred to as the Next Generation of Jobs Fund: We heard the minister go on about this right here in the Legislature, with stops along the tour of Ontario for photo ops and press releases. My colleagues in the Legislature on the Liberal benches over there will be surprised as well to hear that the number of jobs created under programs in the Next Generation of Jobs Fund is not a criterion for success. So believe it or not, the number of jobs created is not an official criterion for programs under the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. "Jobs" is right here in the title: Next Generation of Jobs Fund. But job creation is not a criterion.

So you're applying, you go through the paperwork, and you say, "How many jobs are you going to create?"

It's not a criterion. They don't really even ask that. So the government spends millions and millions of taxpayer dollars on programs under this fund, yet feels the very focus of what it's about—creation of jobs—just isn't something that bears the focus for them. As my colleague the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook said at the top of his remarks yesterday, this is a Liberal government that is "weighed down by ideology that says government bureaucrats and politicians are better at picking winners and losers than the markets or full-time, experienced investors."

So I think it's safe to say Ontarians should be concerned when, according to Bill 100, the Minister of Research and Innovation, who is the main guy—he's the guy who is going to basically pick the winners and the losers of those companies that come to him in the hopes of benefiting from the tax reductions offered. Ontarians should be concerned when the minister himself has indicated that other programs in his ministry, which are given titles to infer that they are creating jobs for the future, don't have job creation as the criterion for a measurement of success, which is shocking, but it leads me to another point I'd like to get on the record.

1020

Obviously, a program such as would be formed through Bill 100 is going to require administration—significant administration. Administration requires staff, requires salaries, requires benefits, requires offices—it goes on and on. But it costs a lot of money for the taxpayers. We, on this side of the Legislature anyway, believe that taxpayers' money should be used prudently. This makes even more sense after hearing the loss of faith of the Premier this week when he delivered the obituary for manufacturing and jobs in this province.

You may recall that up until October of last year, the Ministry of Research and Innovation was housed by the Premier's office. The 2007-08 budget for the Ministry of Research and Innovation—let's not forget this wasn't a stand-alone ministry until just a number of months ago—shows salaries, wages and employee benefits at well over \$10.8 million. Also of note is a 33% increase in employees over \$100,000. When we asked in estimates, I believe there were 137 employees in the ministry. So that's just shy of \$11 million. That's taxpayers' money; it doesn't come out of thin air. This appears to be—

Hon. George Smitherman: You're on that list.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm talking about the Ministry of Research and Innovation—a ministry budget that's growing immensely. I'm just connecting the dots of this bureaucratic paperwork and increased expenses that are going to occur with this bill.

I realize the Minister of Research and Innovation will tell us that the programs that fall under his perusal are a reallocation of resources from other ministries. So I wonder if the Premier—or one of his ministers, for that matter—would provide us with a breakdown of what programs were severed from other ministries to form this Ministry of Research and Innovation. It's pretty hard to follow all these trails. We've talked about silos in minis-

tries, and the Minister of Research and Innovation has said he wants more of a horizontal approach, but there have been cuts from other ministries, he says, to go into the Ministry of Research and Innovation. I just wondered if at some point we're going to be able to follow that trail and get that breakdown, and I wonder if the budgets for those particular programs are the same. Have they increased? Certainly, as I've commented, the overall ministry budget has increased significantly.

Let's also look at how Ontario's tax rate on new business investment compares to other Canadian provinces. We've said this for so long, and the present Liberal government doesn't seem to get it, but Ontario has the highest marginal effective tax rate on business investment not just in Canada, but in the developed world. It's astounding—the highest marginal effective tax rate on business in the developed world. A province that should be doing everything it can to encourage investment, a province that should be doing everything it can to tell would-be investors, “Come on over. We've got a business climate and tax structure you need to feel good about in laying down your dollars and creating jobs,” instead of doing those things, is telling people, “Hey, come on over because we're a Liberal government. We want your tax dollars. As a matter of fact, we want them so badly that we've got the highest marginal effective tax rate on business investment that you'll find anywhere in the developed world.” I don't think that's a very good sales pitch. It's certainly not something to be proud of.

In Canada, we have an NDP government in Manitoba, a Conservative government in Alberta and a Liberal government in British Columbia, and all offer lower effective tax rates on investment. Roger Martin from the Rotman school of business is a man who folks across the way like to lean towards when in need of third party support, and this is what he said: “In Ontario, we still have one of the highest marginal tax burdens on business investment in the world.”

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: In the world.

Ms. Laurie Scott: In the world.

Still, despite what is a clear message to make some important and much-needed changes, Ontario is governed by a political party that doesn't see the provincial tax structure as an important element and isn't sitting around the table saying, “We have to change our tax structure in Ontario to welcome more investment.” Other provinces are getting it. We in Ontario are, unfortunately, not getting it.

That makes Bill 100 somewhat ill-designed and of little or no benefit to businesses because it's not creating that much of an incentive.

Just a couple of weeks ago, John Tory and the PC caucus hosted an economic round table to come up with ideas, and where did they go? They worked with the experts in business and industry on how to deal with today's financial and economic struggles. We did it. The Liberals across the way, they won't do it. They remain steadfast in thinking they know what's best. Out of the round table came a number of innovative thoughts, one

of them being that we need incentives for business; that includes tax incentives. It means getting out of this overwhelming taxing of businesses that create jobs, move the economy and make Ontario competitive.

So we've got a bill before us here, Bill 100, introduced by the Minister of Finance, that says it's a 10-year corporate income tax holiday for commercialized intellectual property developed by research institutions to get technical. So let's see how another major third party group views this idea, not just us. The C.D. Howe Institute called it ill-designed. It said, “Tax holidays, also used in Quebec, are high-cost, low-impact policies, typically found in Third World countries and well proven to be ineffective.” That is from the C.D. Howe Institute, not a really positive endorsement of this bill.

Jim Milway, executive director of the government-funded Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, also criticized this government's decision to give a 10-year tax reduction to new businesses. He said that if the new technology becomes available, an existing business will have no particular incentive to develop it, even though an already successful firm might be able to do it faster and better than a start-up company could.

I make those comments to the members for Mississauga–Brampton South and Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who gave great examples in their ridings, but they're not going to qualify for this, which is what we're trying to tell the Liberal government. So you've got Jim Milway of the government-funded Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity—it's a government-funded institute, I want to say that again—saying that lowering overall taxes would be more effective and that it would do more for innovation.

This policy proposed by the Ministry of Finance is not allowing companies that are established to develop research and innovation, develop their companies—it's not doing anything for them. It doesn't allow support for a company that already exists to join ranks with a new company and provide support to get an innovative idea rolling. I wonder, in the criteria for successful applicants, if the number of jobs created has an influence? It certainly doesn't appear to have a basis for support, as I've mentioned, in other programs of the Ministry of Research and Innovation.

I know there are companies in my riding, existing companies—Armada Toolworks, for example, in Lindsay—that are trying to develop more innovation. They're looking to the government and saying, “What can you do to help us with research and innovation so that we don't have to move our jobs to Mexico? We want to stay here. We have a good workforce. We want to keep the jobs in Ontario,” in this case, in Lindsay and the Kawartha Lakes area, but they're not going to qualify for this program. That's a tragedy. I continue to be concerned, as my caucus colleagues are over here. Why does the Liberal government feel the strong need to punish such businesses as Armada?

My motion last week to provide would-be apprentices with more job opportunities for employment, after their

schooling, by lowering the ratio of journeymen to apprentices, was defeated by the members across the way. This would have been a huge benefit to businesses that can't afford to hire the three journeymen and offer jobs for apprentices. Again, where is the Minister of Small Business, which is a common question we keep asking. Where is he? Why is he not stomping his feet and saying, "What about my stakeholders, Mr. Premier? Why are you not working to represent them?"

As a caucus, we certainly support incentives for business. We support measures that reduce the tax burden, increase investment for businesses already here in Ontario, as well as businesses that are looking to invest in Ontario. We can't support policies that are ill-designed and serve special interests. I believe that's a strong difference between our party on this side and the government party across the way.

What does Bill 100 do to help our struggling agriculture sector? I've got some very forward-thinking, progressive farmers in my area in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, people like Lloyd Wicks, who are willing to move to innovative techniques and systems, thinking totally outside the box. What is our multi-cultural market for them in Toronto, in the big cities as well as globally? This guy has got awards across the world in the dairy cattle sector. He's not going to qualify for things in Bill 100. He's a pre-existing business.

1030

We've got our struggling auto sector who won't benefit from this bill. I have thousands of residents who are autoworkers in my area in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. It used to be probably the largest private employer in my area. I think I probably have more of them who are retired now, unfortunately, than are employed actively in the automotive sector. The south part of my riding is very close to Oshawa. They're not benefiting from this bill. As a matter of fact, I'm looking forward to participating in the debate. My colleague from Oshawa is introducing a private member's bill this afternoon which focuses on the auto manufacturing sector in Ontario.

I want to make the point that Bill 100 is only available to new businesses in the following government-identified priority areas, so the eligible commercialization businesses, which are advanced health technology, bioeconomy, telecommunications, computer or digital technologies production. We asked the Minister of Research and Innovation, when he was in estimates, about this narrow margin. Again, this is from the Roger Martin testimony to the finance committee, pre-budget consultations, who said: "... the high-tech sectors broadly speaking, represent less than 2% of the jobs in Ontario and only a slightly higher proportion of the wages or GDP contribution.... It is more innovative because it values, supports and expects innovation across the other 98% of the economy as well as the high-tech sector, and we don't."

That is saying this is really only applying to 2% of the jobs in Ontario. He said we've got to define and support innovation broadly. It's critical to upgrading our com-

petitiveness, our innovation and policy, and Ontario can't characterize innovation so narrowly as it does. He's saying, support innovation across all sectors, not so narrowly focused. In Canada, innovations that made Masonite, Four Seasons, Couche-Tard, Gildan, Magna and McCain global leaders would not be counted as innovation.

Ontario needs to recognize all sorts of businesses and innovations across all sectors of the economy in order to be globally competitive. This 10-year Ontario income tax exemption for new corporations is too narrowly focused. We've talked before about what's wrong with—it was mentioned on the CBC—the gentleman that made the intermittent windshield wiper. I've mentioned some small businesses in my riding, some highly progressive thinkers, that are not going to qualify under Bill 100, and that's not fair. This is too narrowly focused. It's going to take years before you get any results.

Again, my colleague from Beaches-East York was correct in saying there's not enough venture capital out there—there is not. Access to capital for small firms and start-ups is increasingly difficult, we're finding. The Liberal government cancelled the labour-sponsored investment funds, and they provided no adequate replacement. We believe that there should be more fairness. There should be more possibilities of where this intellectual property comes from. We don't really have many details of how much this will cost the treasury, because I think the criteria are so narrowly focused. There's not going to be much room for many companies to apply.

I have to wrap up. My time is closing, and I'll look forward to closing comments and remarks from the opposition.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Again I listened intently to what my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock had to say, and I think she hit most of the salient points: This bill will not help established companies, this bill will not help companies that seek to merge, and this bill will not help new start-up companies throughout the first 10 years of their existence, because most, if not all, of them pay little or no taxes in that period.

I listened to some of the jibes from my friends opposite while she was speaking, and the jibes are all about, "This is only one part of the plan," or "You're not talking about other initiatives that the government has taken."

Well, with respect, I think she talked about—and I defend her—the bill. If the government wants to talk about how good its other priorities are, I suggest they hold a news conference and talk about it. If the government members want to talk about how good this bill is, confine yourselves to what is contained within the body of the bill.

My friend from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock is correct in what she has had to state: that the bill will not do what many people are claiming is being done. The bill is narrowly confined; it has a budget of only \$5 million

this year and \$7 million next year. The bill itself, although welcomed, I'm sure, and I'm sure my colleague will be supporting it as well, needs extensive work if it is to be one piece of the puzzle that my friends opposite have talked about in numerous jibes.

I commend her for what she had to say, and she is correct in her analysis.

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Ideas for the Future Act.

I must say that when this concept of a tax holiday on commercialization of intellectual property was announced in the 2008 budget, that was probably one of the most exciting pieces for me that I saw in that budget, among many other things. In my riding of Ottawa Centre I've had the opportunity to speak about that particular item with researchers at Carleton University, which is in my riding, with lawyers who practise in intellectual property law, and with other companies which make up Silicon Valley North, which is how Ottawa is sometimes referred to.

There's a great sense of optimism and excitement about this kind of approach which we are introducing through this particular act. We all realize that we live in an extremely globalized economy, where the competition now is not within our own borders; the competition is not within companies in Canada. The competition is global. The competition is with companies from India, China, Brazil and South Africa. These types of out-of-box ideas are the ones our companies are looking for to have that step ahead, to ensure that we can compete globally and that we can commercialize those technologies which we can sell across this world and get these great tax advantages.

I'm very excited that the McGuinty government is introducing this act and that we are providing a tax holiday for our new companies which will be commercializing intellectual property that will be created in Canada. I look forward to voting in favour of this legislation.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'd like to first reassure the member from Ottawa Centre that I respond to my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock from my own seat.

Congratulations on an excellent presentation, first of all. I think it's rather interesting that when we deal with this bill, what we're looking at, as in so many cases here, is the Liberal government wanting to bring in a bill on innovation—and I congratulate them for that—but, as I've previously said, with limited support.

The problem is, it needs to be fleshed out more. It's almost as if the party governing Ontario these days likes to stick its toe in the water and say, "You know, that feels pretty good." My attitude is, "Well, come on in. Let's all take a swim together."

I have a long memory. I remember the halcyon days of Nortel, and I remember Mitel and I remember Corel, and

certainly we all know the story of RIM. Some of that story continues and some of it doesn't.

In referring again to my friend from Ottawa Centre, he talks about Silicon Valley North. Indeed there is one, and there's another piece of it adjacent to my riding in Markham, where there's an awful lot of development. But most of this goes on as a result of private investment, of brave souls—and I've been one of those myself—who risk their own money, go out into the world and say, "I think I can do something." Ontarians have that ability. We have so many people and so many ideas. We have the labour force, and yet we turn on the news on a daily basis, and what have we been looking at for the past three days? A delegation from the province of Saskatchewan, the Premier of Saskatchewan, looking to take jobs from Ontario and move them somewhere else.

1040

We need a broader perspective, as my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock suggests. We need a broader perspective that doesn't simply give a 10-year tax exemption but injects money into the economy and makes energy and taxation more palatable for people who are prepared to invest their money, prepared to hire Ontario workers and prepared to go forward and say Ontario is and can remain number one.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to have the members from Beaches-East York, Ottawa Centre and Thornhill, in his proper seat, comment on the 20 minutes that I spoke about Bill 100.

I'm hoping the folks across the way have finally begun hearing the ongoing cries from the business sector for tax reductions. Certainly the principle of this legislation is appreciated to that end. We know that Premier McGuinty smiles at every proposal to increase taxes and increase government revenue, but this is certainly a new direction for him. Obviously I don't think you'll be surprised upon hearing that I feel that this piece of legislation needs to be reviewed at committee.

I know some of my colleagues from across the way were saying it's just a piece of the puzzle, but how much longer do you have to wait? We need to get the puzzle together. Ontario is suffering. We're behind the rest of Canada. I don't want to assume anything, but certainly a government bill will be supported by enough Liberal members in order to get to committee. There certainly need to be some changes on some of the points that I mentioned.

My colleague the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook, who's the co-critic on this piece of legislation, and I are looking for the government to expand on its narrow focus, as I mentioned in detail in my comments. It's a narrow focus that exists in Bill 100. It needs to have more incentives for the private sector to have a much broader potential.

Our province certainly does need incentives. Our people need incentives to stay here. As my colleague from Thornhill already pointed out, Saskatchewan is here

poaching our great resources in Ontario of human potential and innovation, so we need to invest for people to stay here and to come to our province. It's our responsibility to encourage innovation that's open to the private sector as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Time for debate has ended.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to ask the House for unanimous consent for members to wear either the purple ribbon or the purple ribbon pin to mark October as national Child Abuse Prevention Month.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to introduce some guests of our pages who are here today:

On behalf of page Asha Collins, her mother, Anjani Collins; her father, Geoff; her sister Tara and her grandmother Kay Permomand are in the west members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Page Lauren Chan's aunt Victoria will be joining us this afternoon in the members' gallery.

MEMBERS' DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to just take this opportunity to say I visited the Integrity Commissioner yesterday to sign my disclosure statement. I just want to remind members that disclosure statements were due yesterday, and if you have not completed your disclosure statement, the Integrity Commissioner would very much appreciate those being handed in as quickly as possible. Any staff members who are watching the proceedings, please remind your member and minister as well of the importance of doing so.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Deputy Premier. It's in reference to the Saskatchewan Premier's presence at a Toronto job fair on Tuesday. In response to that, the Premier said that he would never discourage Ontarians from looking elsewhere in Canada for work. According to this week's report from Don Drummond of TD Bank, Ontario needs a bold new vision for its economy. But the Premier's response is, "Here's your hat; what's your hurry?" That's not a vision, that's a declaration of surrender. What's next? What can we

expect next, Deputy Premier? Changing Ontario's slogan to "Don't let the door hit you in the rear on the way out?"

Hon. George Smitherman: It's rather unfortunate that on a daily basis in this Legislature, the people of Ontario watching see of the opposition party here at Queen's Park a really sad sack attitude as it relates to the province of Ontario. It doesn't reflect well on the ambitions that Ontarians have for their selves, for their families and for our province overall. It doesn't reflect well on the facts either that unemployment rate in the province of Ontario is lower than when we took office, or that Ontario has created 60% of all the jobs in this country since January of this year. Yes, there are challenging times in the Ontario economy, and the people of Ontario know that we are a government that's willing to continue to work with them, to invest with them and in their communities, to build their strengths and the infrastructure that's necessary to sustain the economy. We'll continue to make these investments, reflecting the ambitions of the people of the province of Ontario, and not be drawn into the negativity of the opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Premier McGuinty is the Joe Btfsplk of the Ontario Legislature, and I'll explain that later.

According to the latest Stats Canada figures, Ontario is still recording a net out-migration of residents, particularly to Alberta, soon to be replaced by Saskatchewan. No doubt, a contributing factor is your government's failure or unwillingness to recognize and acknowledge the failings of your economic policies and take action. Instead, three years ago it was just a little bit of contraction; this year the Premier says, "This too shall pass." Now he's telling Ontarians, "If you want to go out west to do business, to find a job, I'm not going to try to convince you to stay."

Minister, that's the attitude of someone who's not up to the job. You have the advice of a range of economic experts on what you can do to minimize the damage to our economy. When will you act on that advice?

Hon. George Smitherman: We see from the Leader of the Opposition a remount of the mantra that he used when he was part of the Harris government, but it does not reflect well on the ambitions that the people of the province of Ontario have.

Of course, in Saskatchewan, where there are some opportunities that relate to resources which are in very high demand, the Premier would recognize, as an individual from a family, that for individual reasons they may need to pursue some of the opportunities that are there. But this does not speak to the fundamental confidence that we have about the capacity of Ontario and Ontarians to build an economy together for the future. We are struggling through some challenges, particularly in some sectors, and that's why we're making timely and important investments in the strategies that can lead Ontario forward. We have struggled through challenging times before, and we will make progress in the circumstances by working together and making the investments

in Ontario's people, in Ontario's infrastructure, to be able to build the economy of the future.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: If the Deputy Premier wants to be honest with Ontarians, he'll admit that their five-point plan is a sham, a hollow shell and a failure. Their fallback is to blame others and to ignore measures that experts say could minimize the damage and protect our future; and to then send the Premier out to suggest that the answer for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who have lost their jobs under his watch is that they might have better luck out west. It's a give-up attitude that Ontarians don't expect, or want, from their government or their Premier.

The record number of plant closings in this once-great province is draining the lifeblood out of our small towns. Minister, when is your government going to stop treating the great people and small towns of this province like some old dog you'd rather euthanize than try to keep alive?

1050

Hon. George Smitherman: I think the gentleman who bears the name "Mad Dog" has stretched just a little far as he reaches to drag Ontarians down—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the member to—let's be conscious of personal attacks on one another. Deputy Premier.

Hon. George Smitherman: I note that one should never carry on with the level of language that was offered by the honourable member, which reflects his lack of spirit and his lack of recognition for the resiliency and the capacity of the people of Ontario to work together and find their way through difficult economic challenges. This is not the first time that we've faced that, and nobody should question the government's commitment nor the resiliency nor the mindset and spirit of the people of Ontario in this regard. Our five-point plan has seen us cut taxes, make huge investments in infrastructure, give support for innovation, partnering with business and investing in the skills of the people of the province of Ontario, in whom we have complete confidence.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I remind the government that it was their Premier who said that parts of Ontario's economy were not coming back, and here are some of the names on the tombstone—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Here are some of the names on the tombstone of your failed economic policies and fatalistic attitudes: London, St. Thomas, Kitchener, Guelph, Windsor and now Goderich. These were once-mighty manufacturing towns, and they were laid to waste under your solution of a one-way ticket to Saskatchewan.

You said that certain sectors were not coming back. Is this your eulogy for Ontario's economy?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There is no doubt that too many families are struggling, too many communities have been hit by an international crisis in the manufacturing sector. I would remind the member that in spite of these challenges, employment growth is up 1.7%. There are 51,000 net new jobs this year. I remind the member that he voted against refunding the capital tax to manufacturers a year ago. Why did you do that? They needed cash and we got it into their hands.

I would ask the member opposite to say to the federal finance minister, "Don't talk Ontario down." It's unacceptable, and you shouldn't talk Ontario down. We are going to get through these challenging times, and we'll be stronger and better. What we don't need is that kind of nonsense from the Conservative Party. The challenge is here; it's real. We're addressing it—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Again, I would remind the Minister of Finance that it was his Premier, your Premier, the Premier of the province, who said that this province is finished, this province has parts of our economy which are not coming back: That's what your Premier said.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the government members to tone it down a little bit.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The fact is that there are many actions this government could and should take to chart a new area for Ontario, particularly for southwestern Ontario. First and foremost, a change of attitude: Show people that you care, and give them a reason to stay in this province, to stay in Ontario. Don't get on the bus for Saskatchewan.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government has made investments to attract manufacturers; you voted against it. We enhanced education funding to help retrain workers; you voted against it. We have invested \$9.9 billion in infrastructure. The cranes are up and down the highways. They are creating jobs, investment in this community; you voted against every single dollar.

We have talked up this province. We have acknowledged the challenge. We have acknowledged the issues. We have stood behind our families. You and your party, your Prime Minister, say that the fundamentals are there. They are in some sectors. You and your party have ignored Ontario.

The Premier of Ontario has stood strong and firm behind this province. It's the federal Conservatives that sell Ontario out, tell people not to invest here and say things like, "The glory days are over." They're not—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's absolutely amazing, this government; there's always someone else to blame for their problems. They're absolutely consistent that every problem that comes along is not of their making, it is of somebody else's making. As John Tory told the Ontario economic summit, the people of this province do not

accept the Premier's fatalistic attitude that Ontario is a helpless victim.

Don Drummond, this week in the TD Bank report, said, "Tax reductions need to feature" much "more prominently in the" Ontario "vision than they have in recent years." The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is telling you to reduce the apprenticeship regulations. Every family in Ontario is curbing spending. Why aren't you? Why are you acting like the coroner rather than the doctor? Why are you letting the economy die on the table?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: You know, the member, a question ago, said Ontario is laid to waste. We don't agree with you, sir. We completely disagree with you. The only thing laid to waste is the idea that tax cuts and deregulation are the answer to the challenges in our economy. And I would remind you, if you read Mr. Drummond's report, he advocates a nine-point approach which is almost identical, I would say, with respect, to our five-point plan: Invest in skills, lower business costs, invest in innovation, build partnerships, and Mr. Drummond identified, for the first time, that the figure is \$11.3 billion that goes out of Ontario to the rest of the country. If we had that money back, we could respond even more than we have. We need a federal partner. We need an opposition that will stand up for Ontario. Work with us, because the people of Ontario are going to get through this. Their government is going to see them through it—

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

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, in the March budget the government announced, with great fanfare, that the salvation of the Ontario economy would be a new second-career program. Seven months later, the minister admits that a grand total of 1,100 Ontarians have enrolled in the program. With less than 0.5% of recently laid-off Ontarians being served, when will the minister admit that the flagship program of your economic recovery plan has been a complete failure?

Hon. John Milloy: I want to thank the member for the question. I think members on all sides of the House are concerned when we hear about layoffs, but I know that the member would never want to leave the impression to this Legislature and to the public that second career represents the only opportunity for laid-off workers. In fact through the Employment Ontario network, our province deals with 900,000 people every year. Through the action centre, which is specifically set up to target laid-off workers, we've helped 53,000 people.

There are a variety of training programs which are available in this province. Over the summer months we've seen 3,000 people access training, 1,100 specifically for the long-term training which is offered by second career. Second career is a new program which offers long-term training, and when you look at those 1,100

stories, we're seeing a positive impact in the lives of Ontarians who have been laid off.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's nice to see the minister stand up and admit that only 1,100 unemployed workers are taking advantage of this program. It's not just the opposition that is sounding the alarm about Ontario's economic standing. Earlier referenced, Tuesday's Toronto Dominion report paints a grim picture of the future of Ontario's economy and a provincial government that has no idea of how to turn things around. Why won't the minister stand in his place and admit that the second-career program, along with the entire Liberal economic strategy, is a failure?

Hon. John Milloy: As I have pointed out, Employment Ontario deals with 900,000 clients every year. Action centres, which are specifically set up to deal with laid-off workers, dealt last year alone with 53,000 individuals. Over the summer months, the types of training opportunities that are offered in this province have seen 3,000 people come forward, 1,100 specifically for the type of long-term training under second career.

Let me give some examples. I met over the summer with Jason, laid off from the automotive manufacturing sector in the London area. He's begun a culinary management program at Fleming College and talked to me already about the job opportunities he has coming forward. Let me tell you about Jeff Statham, a 38-year-old father of two. He was laid off after working 18 years in the automotive industry, and after hearing about Second Career, has begun a program in law and security at Durham College. Let me tell you about Courtney, a 27-year-old single mother laid off from her—

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

1100

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's very simple. When the numbers are against you, you go to anecdotes. The simple reality is that in manufacturing communities all over this province, the jobs aren't there to be trained for. When will the minister stop putting his head in the sand and admit that this flagship program is a failure?

Hon. John Milloy: As we've said since the beginning of this program, we're going to work with front-line workers to ensure that it is as effective as possible and make any changes that are needed. But how dare he stand up here and talk about individual stories and dismiss them as anecdotes? He's dismissing Courtney, a 27-year-old single mother laid off from her telemarketing job. Second Career is providing her support for tuition and instructional costs, books and living expenses to gain the skills she needs to become a recreation leader in a hospital or health care setting. That is her dream. That is not simply an anecdote.

Let me tell you about Robert, a 45-year-old who was laid off from his job as a general labourer at a small powder and painting company in London. He has been accepted to complete his training as a certified welder. I

am proud of that individual. That is not some anecdote to be dismissed by the opposition.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A question to the Minister of Health: The most prevalent chronic disease for Ontario children is tooth decay, and the reason for that is hundreds of thousands of low-income children live in families who can't afford basic dental care. A year ago, your government promised to spend \$135 million to improve access to dental care for low-income Ontarians. Today, low-income people, many with serious dental illnesses, are still waiting for the money. Not a single penny has flowed. When will the government finally live up to its promise and implement the new program?

Hon. David Caplan: I'm very proud of the fact that in our last budget, the finance minister provided the funding to be able to provide a dental plan for low-income Ontarians. In fact, we are working with our public health units around the province on the implementation of this plan.

Speaker, I would note, because you would be interested, and I'm sure all members of the House, that this member voted against that plan. He opposed this government moving ahead on a dental care program for low-income Ontarians. That's quite shocking. The member seeks to lead his party. I would suggest he take the opportunity to work with us in a constructive fashion to be able to help and support some of the most low-income and vulnerable Ontarians. I know Ontarians expect a lot of great work, and working, especially with my colleague, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, we are putting together a comprehensive—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's always interesting when you hear an empty answer. It's an indication that things are not happening. As you know, now is not the time to renege on a dental program. As the recession deepens, more and more people are in need of this kind of care.

Will you, Minister, assure Ontarians that the \$135 million committed for the dental program, including the \$45 million for this fiscal year, will flow on schedule?

Hon. David Caplan: Unfortunately, the member wrote his supplementary question without listening to the answer to the first question, when in fact I indicated quite clearly that the money was allocated in the budget. We are working with our public health units to design and implement a program that will meet the needs of low-income Ontarians, as we had spoken to them about this time last year during the election campaign. In fact, that work is well under way. It is work that has been the subject of the cabinet committee on poverty reduction, I note chaired very ably by my colleague, the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

This government certainly takes investments in health care, education and the economy at our highest priority, but work on climate change and poverty reduction is its

equal. I can tell you, Speaker, the kind of determination and the kind of collaboration which has been a hallmark of this government are going into the implementation of this plan. I'll offer to the member—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That's the second time you had an opportunity to say that the money will flow this year, and you haven't made that commitment. You have not made that commitment. You continue to talk about talking with partners. You ignore the situation that people in Ontario are facing. Will you at least make the commitment that by January 1 of this coming year, money will flow and people will actually be getting the treatment they need? Will you make that commitment?

Hon. David Caplan: in fact, now the member's going to have to read Hansard to see that the answer was affirmative in both the answer and in the supplementary.

On March 18, 2008, the Premier announced the government will be developing a plan to provide dental service to low-income Ontarians and invest \$135 million over three years, starting in 2008-09. The press release at the time indicated, "The government will work with public health units, community health centres, dentists and dental hygienists to deliver prevention and treatment services for low-income Ontarians, especially children."

That's exactly as I have described. I'd be willing to work with the member opposite. It seems as though he has some preconceived notions, as he's indicated in his question and supplementary. But any Ontarian who would like to work with this government to alleviate the crushing poverty that—

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of Government Services. This year, Oshawa celebrates the 100th anniversary of the McLaughlin Buick. It all started with a \$50,000 interest-free loan by the city of Oshawa to Sam McLaughlin to locate his business, now General Motors, in Oshawa. We've seen the benefits for over 100 years, whether it's the contributions to the health sector, education, scouting, youth development, let alone the jobs that it's created over that 100 years. It was through that outside-the-box thinking that Oshawa, Ontario and Canada have benefited because of Oshawa's vision.

Minister, we've seen some investment, but the jobs are still leaving in the thousands. What is your ministry doing to think outside the box to keep the auto and manufacturing sectors in Ontario?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Good question.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: It is a good question, and I want to begin by thanking the member for Oshawa for talking up Ontario, not talking down Ontario.

Our government's auto strategy is to create and protect jobs all across Ontario. Without it, the issues facing the

industry would have been much, much worse than we're seeing now. In fact, in Ontario today, we're the number one producer, thank goodness, of cars and auto parts in North America. That's something to be very proud of, and I know it's something the member opposite is proud of.

The government is telling automotive companies from around the world that Ontario is the best place to build automobiles and auto parts, and we're putting our money where our mouth is. We've brokered \$500 million of investment to create over \$8 billion of auto sector investment in this province, and we're proud of that.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: This afternoon, I have a bill that's a bit of an opening for outside-the-box thinking. It essentially formalizes the unwritten policy by the province for the procurement of government vehicles, but adds a new component where renting and leasing vehicles would also require that those individuals, paid for by the taxpayer, would then have to seek that same process. The hope is twofold: one, to expose those individuals to Made in Ontario, as well as hoping that the rental and leasing companies would expand their fleet of Made in Ontario products.

Should this bill pass today—and I'm getting some sense that there is some support from all sides—we have some concerns. We want to make sure that it comes before committee so that the auto sector and the manufacturing sector can come forward and present their ability to say how they see that outside-the-box thinking can aid their sectors and move Ontario to the forefront in those sectors once again.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Again to the member, I really do appreciate the thrust of your question. I think it's a helpful thrust. I want to say that our government has arrangements with major auto manufacturers in Ontario to supply approximately 1,500 new vehicles each year for the government's fleet. In April and May 2008 alone, the government purchased over 500 new vehicles from Ontario-based production facilities. For the 2008 model year, 71.5% of all vehicles purchased were manufactured right here in Ontario. This is up from roughly 66% the previous year. So we'll move ahead. I know all members of the House will want to give some serious reflective thought to the member opposite's private member's bill—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. The member from Nickel Belt.

1110

LABORATORY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Since 1997, the hospitals in Huntsville and Bracebridge have been part of a pilot project of 12 community-based lab programs as an alternative to sending this work to private labs. Your ministry conducted the laboratory pilot project review. The review clearly shows that the pilot projects are a success and should be continued and expanded. In

light of that, how can the minister justify his decision to cut funding for the community-based program from Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, sending nine laboratory technologists to the unemployment line?

Hon. David Caplan: It's unfortunate the member would make that kind of an allegation, which is simply not the case. These, in fact, are through the local health integration networks, decisions that are made to provide hospital services and health care services in the district that they serve. In fact, I can tell you that medical laboratories are quite important. I just had the occasion to be at the former Branson site, which is a sharing arrangement between three particular hospitals in Scarborough, North York and East York, a shared medical laboratory service which will serve literally hundreds of thousands of patients with test results.

I want to reiterate that it's unfortunate the member has characterized things in this way, because that is simply not the case.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Those services are being cut. The LHINs have nothing to do with it and this minister has everything to do with it. For nine years, the community-based lab program received no funding increase whatsoever, but the private lab received a 28% increase. Lab work done in the hospital costs \$22 to the taxpayer. When done in the private sector it's \$33 to the taxpayer. Hospitals in small communities need the critical mass of tests and qualified technologists to maintain best practices and offer 24/7 coverage. Physicians prefer to have the tests done in the hospital so the results are readily available. Boards, executives of hospitals, unions, patients, physicians and providers all agree that this minister's decision is indefensible. Will the minister agree to an immediate moratorium on the closing of the community-based labs pilot project?

Hon. David Caplan: The lab project was undertaken in 1997. In 2007, a review was undertaken by an independent outside consulting firm to assess the service delivery model and what was in the best interest of patients in the area. Upon the consultation and the review by the ministry, by the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare hospital and by Gamma-Dynacare medical laboratories, they together determined that the best option to maintain local service was to accept the review's recommendation to adopt the same model of community laboratory services used right across Ontario.

That's why the ministry is working closely with the community lab provider, the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare hospital in the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network, in the transition planning process to ensure that all residents of the pilot communities of Bracebridge, Huntsville—

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

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Government Services. We have heard a lot of criticism

about Ontario's public service from members of the Progressive Conservative Party and their leader, John Tory. The member from Leeds–Grenville has said that this government is bloating the bureaucracy. John Tory said that some of our public servants are simply “breathing each other's exhaust and sitting around, analyzing each other's papers.”

With criticism like that coming from our colleagues, it can be difficult to encourage some of my constituents from Ottawa Centre to gain employment with the Ontario public service. Since he is responsible for this issue, can the minister offer some positive encouragement for my constituents so we can continue to attract the best and brightest to the public service?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank the member opposite for his question and say today that I'm thrilled to share with the House that the Ontario public service has recently been selected as one of Canada's top 100 employers. This is a prestigious award that has been presented for the past eight years by Mediacorp Canada and recognizes those private and public sector organizations across the country that have the best-in-class employment services. More than 2,000 employers were considered.

I'm extremely proud to say this is the first time in the history of this nation that any public service anywhere in this country has been named to this list. This is an important award that puts us in a unique position to be an employer of choice, a great place—

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very pleased to hear that the Ontario public service is getting such great recognition for its employment practices. Every public servant should be very proud of this award.

But while I'm happy to hear that the Ontario public service is one of Canada's best employers, I still hear criticism from the opposition about its effectiveness. When speaking about some members of the public service, PC leader John Tory has said that “there hasn't been enough attention paid to looking at whether those people are really making a productive contribution to the effective delivery of public services.”

Minister, Ontario's public service may be one of the best employers, but does it in fact effectively deliver public services to Ontarians?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: It does. I'm pleased to say that the Ontario public service—

Interjections.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —it may come as a surprise to some members opposite—is arguably the most efficient, professional and cost-effective public service, not just in Canada, but in the entire world.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has committed to reinvesting in critical public services that were, in many cases, decimated by the party opposite. Many of these employees deliver key services to Ontarians. They make sure our food and water are healthy, that our streets are safer, that our natural environment is protected. They

prepare our students for success and they also work to reduce hospital wait times. We all rely on public servants for their advice, professionalism and expertise.

I'm proud of our Ontario public service. It is the best public service in the world and we should take time today to—

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

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. Last Thursday, you voted against a private member's resolution to change the apprenticeship ratios in Ontario from three journeymen to one apprentice to, like most other provinces in Canada, one journeyman to one apprentice.

Can you explain why you want to limit opportunity for our young people to learn a trade and for our small businesses to develop skilled workers?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I appreciate the interest on all sides of the House in apprenticeships and the need for more skilled trades in our province.

I'm very proud of our government's record. Since we've taken office, there are 50,000 more apprentices learning a trade than when we came to office.

The member opposite, we've had a number of discussions about ratios. He's aware that ratios are set—we look to the industry for their best advice. I think he's also aware of the very thoughtful work that was done by Mr. Tim Armstrong, a noted labour expert. What Mr. Armstrong recommended was that there were a number of reforms that needed to be brought to the apprenticeship system, and he suggested that we put forward a college of trades, something we're undertaking right now, putting the groundwork together for potential legislation to come before this Legislature. This college of trades would strengthen our apprenticeship system. We'll look at a variety of issues, including ratios, and ensure that the success we've seen with apprenticeships and skilled trades in this province—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: My question was very specific to the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services about why he didn't support small business and opportunity for our young people, so I don't know why he's passing the question off.

Minister of Small Business, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business points out that 98% of all businesses are small businesses and 43% of qualified labour shortages in Ontario are in jobs that require apprenticeship training or college education.

Why are you limiting opportunities for our young people by denying them the opportunity to apprentice by limiting available apprenticeship options and positions?

1120

Hon. John Milloy: Once again, I find it passing strange that the Progressive Conservatives talk about not making progress in terms of skilled trades. Maybe I should remind the member that when his government was in power, approximately 37,000 new apprenticeship registrations took place in their first three years. Let's look at our first three years: 60,000 new apprentices were registered in our first three years. Let's talk about that party's second mandate. They increased annual new apprenticeship registrations by just over 3,000 during their second mandate. Today we've doubled the number of annual new registrations to over 6,000 in just our first three years.

I'm proud of the progress we've made in increasing the number of apprenticeships in this province, and I'm proud of the work that's being done to by Kevin Whitaker and Tim Armstrong to further enhance and modernize the system so that we can meet the growing demand for skilled trades in this province.

CORONER'S OFFICE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The Goudge inquiry report came out quite clearly yesterday to say that the coroner's guidelines are not being followed when it comes to investigating deaths on reserves, and in fact it is the norm that the coroner actually doesn't go and do that investigation. My simple question is, how long have you known that this is the case?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to thank the member for the question. I also want to thank Commissioner Goudge for his very, very in-depth inquiry and his recommendations. Clearly, our ministry is already actively looking at ways to ensure that we can prevent what happened from ever happening again.

I want the member to know—and I answered this question yesterday at the press conference—that we understand that aboriginal and remote communities are faced with unique challenges, we appreciate the recommendations, and we will actively work at implementing a system in place so that there will be fairness in treatment in aboriginal and remote communities

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, clearly there is no fairness; there's no equal treatment when it comes to investigating deaths on reserves. Saying that in some cases the police should do it—as you know, it's not their job; it's the coroner's job. My question to you, and I want you to answer, is: When did you find out that this is the case? Did you just find out yesterday?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: As we move forward, we will ensure that we consult with our First Nations communities. We are very, very anxious to continue that involvement. We will ensure that there is full dialogue.

Interjections.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: There's no shame attached to how we're going to move forward. There is shame

attached to what we did previously. All parties were responsible. We are moving forward in a very positive, effective way to ensure that what we have in place in the future is much stronger than we had in place in the past.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. In my riding of Richmond Hill, and indeed across the province, the economy is facing a number of challenges. The economic slowdown in the United States, the high cost of oil and gas, loss of jobs here in Ontario, and increased competition from countries like China, India and Mexico are presenting challenges to our small and medium-sized businesses. I wonder if the minister would tell us just what this government is doing to ensure that Ontario businesses will continue to thrive amidst new challenges.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member from Richmond Hill for asking this question. He has already laid out some of the challenges that our small businesses are facing.

I had the chance to actually go and visit India and a couple of countries in the Middle East, and one of the things I found was that some of our companies, in spite of great products and services, were not being represented well in international markets or on a global scale. When I came back, I advocated that we should come up with an export development program that would encourage companies to showcase their products in the global market.

In last year's budget, we gave about \$5 million to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce for the export market access program, which will help our companies to showcase their products abroad.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I thank the minister, and also congratulate the chamber for the work they are doing.

From my experience, the global expansion program sounds like an initiative that my constituents would be interested in. It appears that there are many opportunities that I would like to tell my constituents about. Would the minister tell us exactly what types of activities are supported by the global expansion program, and what sort of help is available to businesses?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I think this is a great program. It's a 50-50 cost-sharing program with the companies in order for them to showcase their products and services abroad.

There are basically four areas covered. One is to enable them to make direct contacts abroad by going and visiting their companies or contacts abroad. The second is to help them to develop promotional material if they want to translate it into different languages, so that they can go and present those materials in the language of the country in which they want to do their business. The third is to do market research, if they want to do some market research of the company where they plan to do business. And the fourth one is to assist the companies to make foreign bids.

Those are the four areas this program concentrates on. I think this will help our small companies to showcase their products and services, and to visit the countries they want to do business in. We really want to focus on the markets that they have not developed before.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In the last few days, families of preschool children in Innisfil and Barrie were told that Simcoe Community Services has to close the Early Years centre in Stroud. They also have to shut down the toy lending van, both because you have refused to increase their funding since 2003. Minister, why are you forcing this centre to close?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. Let me first say that we are, as a government, committed to the development of kids. We have invested tremendous amounts of money and effort into making sure that kids have the best opportunities possible.

Early Years centres were established several years ago, under the previous government, as you will recall, with one per riding. We have continued to fund Early Years centres. But we've also continued to build other supports for kids in the communities. As we go forward, we're committing to increasing the numbers of parent and family literacy centres located in schools, to make sure that kids get the very best start possible in life.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Minister, over the last year, 857 children and babies visited this centre, along with their parents and caregivers. These include people such as Jamie Grant and her 3-year-old daughter, Ella, from Barrie, who came to the centre in Stroud because the one in Barrie is full; and parents such as Nicole Goodfellow and 10-month-old Brady.

Minister, what message do you have for these families, who will lose their centre at the end of November?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This government's commitment to kids in this province is something that I think is undeniable. But we lost a very important partner and that was the federal government. As you will recall, the Stephen Harper government cancelled the Early Years agreement. That took \$1.1 billion out of child care in this province—\$1.1 billion out of child care.

So our commitment continues. We are very much looking forward to the report from Dr. Charles Pascal on the early years. As you know, he is working and consulting across the province on this issue.

In this particular case, I do want to say that the regional office is looking for other opportunities for that particular OEYC.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN did not hold public consulta-

tions—as was reported yesterday by the acting minister—on the McMaster ER closure. Two city councillors invited the private corporation, Hamilton Health Sciences, to make presentations at two meetings in their wards: Dundas and West Mountain, not Hamilton West. The LHIN, the decision-maker on this, did not hold any public consultations on this issue. There is no evidence that any feedback from these presentations went to the LHIN. I, the sitting member, was not invited. The member for Hamilton Centre was not invited.

As the LHIN did not hold any public consultations but the minister says that it was a decision “we made,” then the minister can direct the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN to go back to the drawing board and engage the public in open, accessible consultations in all of the communities directly affected by this proposed—

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

1130

Hon. David Caplan: I'm advised that the hospital began consultations back a year ago. I'm surprised that this member wouldn't have taken up the opportunity of McMaster and Hamilton Health Sciences to be able to do that. In fact, the local health integration network directed Hamilton Health Sciences to continue to consult with the community, as they've done. They've also put in place an internal monitoring group to monitor the implementation of the plan that Hamilton Health Sciences put forward.

This member would be or should be aware that the city of Hamilton has stated that it is their goal that Hamilton be the best place in the world to raise a child. I know that health care plays a very important part in that. That's why I know that Hamilton Health Sciences and the local LHIN are very much engaging local community medical staff and others who are very—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: That makes sense: Close a hospital; we'll get good service. Again, a verbal dance with no substance. The professionals in Hamilton who will be affected by the closure have not been heard—the paramedics who will need to drive a greater distance to take their patients to an emergency room in the centre of Hamilton, the doctors who have spoken out against this move and the people in my riding who have to go further for emergency care. My riding's only emergency room, serving a significant part of the Hamilton community, is open from 8 in the morning until 12 at night.

Will this minister intervene to reverse the ill-advised decision, suspend the activities of the LHIN and direct the program audit of this dysfunctional, out-of-touch organization that they appointed?

Hon. David Caplan: I think we should strip out the rhetoric that we just heard. First of all, a hospital is not being closed in Hamilton. In fact, services are being provided—

Interjection

Hon. David Caplan: Well, I'm afraid, sir, that you're all rhetoric and no substance whatsoever, related to any

of the question that you asked. I've been assured that there have been a number of open houses and meetings with health care professionals, unions and a variety of others completed as a part of the process aimed at improving the overall care being offered to residents of Hamilton. In fact, Dr. Salim Yusuf, professor of medicine at McMaster University, vice-president of research at McMaster, says, "Although the general public may be afraid of losing an ER in their neighbourhood, they'll ultimately benefit from the move.... In the end, it's the health of the people of Hamilton that matters."

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he just made—

Mr. Paul Miller: Grudgingly withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. Withdraw the comment.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw.

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

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: My question is for the Minister of Education.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I now proceed with my question to the Minister of Education. Minister, I had the privilege recently of touring a high school in the great riding of Etobicoke North and, of course, I had the opportunity of speaking with students who shared with me their excitement about the specialist high skills major program. I understand that we now have approximately 14,000 students participating in 14 majors in almost 500 programs in 340 secondary schools. Some of my constituents, however, are concerned that such programs are making school, as they say, easier, by taking the focus away from traditional academic subjects and the credits earned. Minister, I ask you to address these concerns of the residents of Etobicoke North and Ontarians broadly.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The specialist high skills majors are really a very innovative part of our student success strategy. They allow students to bundle together academic and technological credits that allow them, when they graduate from high school, to enter the workforce or enter a college or university program that is very specific. Whether it's in construction, in arts, in culinary arts, in manufacturing or in IT, they have an opportunity to go into further training having had experience in the workplace and in their schools.

These programs are designed to help our kids be smarter, not to make school easier. We believe that if we can capture kids who maybe are disengaged from school and get them interested because of one of these very specific programs, they'll stay in school, they'll graduate and they'll be a functioning part of our economy.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Constituents of mine view a high school graduation diploma as central to a successful and

productive life. Our research tells us that the unemployment rate for non-graduates trying to enter the workforce is 33% and they earn on average 70% less over their working lives.

When we came to office in 2003, a full third of our secondary students were failing to graduate from high school. Clearly, that speaks volumes about the previous government's legacy in education—a legacy of antagonism, cuts and withdrawal of student supports.

Things, of course, are improving. We now have 10,500 more students graduating every year, and it appears even the opposition is recognizing this. As the member for Simcoe North said in 2007, "One of the things I want to put on the record ... is the number of very positive things that are happening in our schools and some of the neat things that are happening in ... schools I've visited," and he's appreciative of that.

Minister, would you enlighten this chamber about what other initiatives we are undertaking to support student success?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I visit schools around the province—and obviously the members opposite are having the same experience—there are some wonderful things happening that are new and innovative. They have been developed by teachers in the schools with the help of the ministry, and that's why they're working, because people on the front lines knew that they were what kids needed, and we have been able to support them.

So, things like our increased co-op: We heard from the sector that kids needed more co-op credits, and we have allowed that to happen; they've flourished. Dual credits: This morning, I was at the Ontario economic summit, and the members of industry and the post-secondary institutions who were sitting with me raised, unsolicited, the idea and the fact that the dual credit system is helping kids who might not think about post-secondary at all to have an opportunity to think about what it would be like to go to college, because they're getting a high school credit and a college credit at the same time.

The student success strategy is working. More kids are graduating—

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

C. DIFFICILE

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. As the minister knows, her government has made it impossible to get accurate reporting on the number of deaths we've had as a result of C. difficile. We know the figure is around 500 and we know it tends to affect mostly people with depleted immune systems, mostly seniors. I had surgery myself in a Toronto hospital recently and my surgeon told me that he wasn't worried about me because I was a fit 60-year-old man, not a 90-year-old frail senior.

With their inaction, the McGuinty government's cavalier attitude is telling Ontarians that they are willing to accept the 500-plus senior casualties. Minister, are seniors of so little value? Is your government's cavalier

attitude on C. difficile a form of age discrimination against our seniors, the very people who built the province?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I'll refer that question to my colleague the Minister of Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: The premise of the member's question is quite incorrect. An independent officer of this Legislature, the Auditor General, found—and you'd only have to look at his recent report—that the ministry has introduced several encouraging initiatives to help prevent and control infectious diseases in hospitals. He goes on to point out information on a number of types of hospital-acquired infections and a number of steps that this government has taken: starting in 2004, under the leadership of my colleague, the establishment of the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, getting expert advice on what we could possibly do, all of the particular measures that would need to be in place to be able to protect Ontarians. This government has shown the leadership necessary by taking that expert advice and turning it into action.

The Just Clean Your Hands campaign is another example. The provincial infectious disease control network—

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

1140

Mr. Peter Shurman: I can't believe that I got the answer I did from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I was asking the question of the minister responsible for seniors because this is not a question about C. difficile; it's about a possible age discrimination issue.

I can't really believe that any government would stand idly by, like the McGuinty government is doing right now. I have a hard time believing that they are truly concerned about the health and well-being of the people of this province. In fact, I believe that if this terrible disease affected a younger demographic, the McGuinty government would be jumping through hoops to find out how to stop the spread of the infection—and rightly so. But all we get now is this daily stonewalling, excuses and platitudes.

Minister, tell us and tell Ontarians the truth: Is this a form of age discrimination, or are you simply not moved by the painful deaths of hundreds of Ontario seniors?

Hon. David Caplan: Unfortunately, the premise of the member's question is not only insulting to the hard-working nurses, doctors, hospital administrators and many, many others who are working in a concerted and collaborative way to contain hospital-acquired infection, but in fact to the experts we have engaged—Dr. Michael Baker, Dr. Michael Gardam and many others—to be able to protect Ontarians. This member and his party cavalierly throw these things out—unfortunately, ill-informed as they are—about the actions which have taken place.

Ontario rates compare, so far, quite favourably with other jurisdictions that are measured around the world. Ontario, in fact, is the second province in Canada to begin publicly reporting. We are, as I said, taking that

professional advice; we're turning it into action. We are ensuring that we have support for our front-line medical—

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

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Earlier this week, the Premier told us that public health units are taking care of breastfeeding in this province and that everything is fine and dandy. Well, it isn't. Ontario is one of only two provinces without a breastfeeding strategy. In Ontario, only 20% of moms breastfeed exclusively after six months. The target is 50%. Will the minister admit that the low rate of breastfeeding in Ontario is a serious health risk?

Hon. David Caplan: I want you to know that this government, myself and all members of the government, believe that breastfeeding, prenatal and early childhood experience—we understand that they have a profound effect on health and well-being, particularly later in life. That is why the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health Promotion support public health's reproductive and child health mandatory programs.

A number of things and a number of initiatives that are ongoing that I know the member would want to be aware of: information lines—24-hour advice lines that mothers can call; 48-hour follow-ups by nurses to new mothers; group parenting sessions on a range of topics, including breastfeeding; breastfeeding support during home visits through the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program; and working within the community to develop supportive environments for breastfeeding. That is a comprehensive plan, and that is comprehensive work that we are undertaking, in turn with partners in public health units and—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I agree that the health units do good work on breastfeeding, but they lack the funds and staff expertise to fully support new mothers with breastfeeding. Furthermore, the critical stage of breastfeeding initiation is when a woman is still in the hospital, but many hospital nurses have no training in lactation management. This forces women to find support elsewhere. Often, they just give up, to the detriment of their baby.

Will the minister develop a breastfeeding strategy based on the World Health Organization's baby-friendly initiative that would ensure that hospitals adequately train staff to help every mother breastfeeding succeed?

Hon. David Caplan: The facts of the matter are that it was this government, through the work of my predecessor and several colleagues in finance, who uploaded a number of the public health programs and funding from municipalities to the provincial government. In fact, 75 cents of every dollar that is spent in public health is provided through the provincial treasury—after, in fact, they began the downloading, the New Democrats, of public health onto municipalities. I think the member

would do well to acknowledge what the history and what the context is.

Additional dollars are being put into these kinds of programs, into breastfeeding, because we do understand the importance that getting off to a good start in life plays in prenatal and in maternal and early childhood experiences. We require public health units to provide breastfeeding programs and to be able to provide the funding to do so. The Ministry of Health Promotion's child health program—

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

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: My question is for the Minister of Culture. Building healthy, vibrant communities is important both for the residents of my riding of Brampton–Springdale and people across Ontario. It's important that we build strong communities so that Ontarians can lead active lives and can enjoy the best quality of life possible. Ontario can achieve this by investing in the arts and culture, the environment, sports and recreation and social services.

Can the Minister of Culture explain to this House what programs are available to assist our communities in delivering positive initiatives for the residents of my riding and the people of Ontario?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I thank my colleague for her excellent question. The McGuinty government recognizes that we need to invest in our communities if we want to foster a healthy Ontario with a high quality of life. That's why the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of my ministry, shares knowledge, provides advice and makes over 1,000 grants to communities across our fair province. These Ontario Trillium Foundation grants help not-for-profit groups, charitable groups, to build and strengthen their respective organizations in each and every one of our communities. It's because of these grants that over 200,000 volunteers last year contributed more than six million volunteer hours, which is quite a record, to build our healthy, vibrant communities.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity—it's always nice to have somebody's mom in the House. On behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Monique Smith, we'd like to welcome Marthe Smith here to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

PETITIONS

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 add my name to the petition, and I pass it to Timothy.

BABY'S BEST START

Mr. Paul Miller: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“That the Legislature reinstate the program Baby's Best Start, which provides prenatal postnatal information, advice, nutrition and health.”

I hereby sign my name to this, and I agree with this petition.

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 to the table by way of page Connor.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and their grandparents; and

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

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

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“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

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

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and their grandparents.”

BABY’S BEST START

Mr. Paul Miller: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Baby’s Best Start program provides prenatal and postnatal information, advice, nutrition and health; and

“Whereas this program gives each and every one of us moms the knowledge that helps us with our infants; and

“Whereas the knowledge helps our babies, it also helps us in caring for them;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reinstate the program Baby’s Best Start in Hamilton.”

I hereby affix my name to this. I agree with this petition, and Michael will take this.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Etobicoke North.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. I have a petition here addressed to the Ontario Legislative

Assembly regarding western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre. 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 agree, affix my signature and send it to you by way of page Imaan.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“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 of the hospital 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’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition and pass it to Timothy.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I would like to add my voice to those who have been petitioning the Legislature for the

ambulatory surgery centre in western Mississauga. The petition reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to add my signature to this petition and to support it, and I ask page Connor to carry it for me.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition. This one comes from the Embassy on Taunton Road. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the previous Progressive Conservative government determined sex change operations were not a medical spending priority and instead chose to invest in essential health care services; and

“Whereas Premier McGuinty said in 2004 that funding for sex change operations was not a priority of his government; and

“Whereas the current Liberal government has eliminated and reduced OHIP coverage for chiropractic, optometry and physiotherapy services; and

“Whereas the present shortage of doctors and nurses, troubling waiting times for emergency services and other treatment, operational challenges at many hospitals, as well as a crisis in our long-term-care homes signify the current government has not met their health care commitments;

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

“That the government of Ontario does not fund sex change operations under OHIP and instead concentrates its priorities on essential health services and directs our health care resources to improve patient care for Ontarians.”

I affix my name in full support.

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, residents of Lowertown, Ottawa, urge the province of Ontario to enact safer communities and neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation in Ontario for the benefit of our neighbourhoods and communities.”

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

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mario Sergio: I have received another petition with respect to firearms in vehicles, which I’d like to read to the House, and it pertains to Bill 56.

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

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, 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 do concur with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There appearing to be no further petitions to be presented, this House stands adjourned until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1158 to 1300.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Peter Shurman: Not a day goes by that my office is not approached by a parent seeking help for a child afflicted with autism. Autism destroys marriages,

tears families apart, overburdens sometimes elderly parents and often puts the safety and health of all family members at risk.

Sadly, all too often the only thing we can say to the families that turn to us for help is, "Wait in line." Time is a luxury too many cannot afford. Waiting in line is simply not an option.

I know that many members of this House feel compassion, but also a sense of helplessness and frustration, as they hear stories of impossible situations that families affected by autism must overcome.

Today, I am here to tell you that our compassion and empathy, while noble, are simply not enough. Someone once said, "Concern should drive us into action, not into depression." "Wait in line" just doesn't cut it.

We, the members of this House, are elected to cure the ills that afflict our society, not aggravate them. Today, I call on all my colleagues from all parties to rise to that challenge and prove to our constituents that the confidence they placed in us as they cast their ballots on October 10, 2007, was not misplaced. Let's put our best thinking caps on and come up with real solutions that will lift the burden Ontario families dealing with autism can simply no longer bear.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Paul Miller: Yesterday and today, I asked a question of the Acting Premier and the minister about the dysfunctional Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN. The answer that was given was deflective, and stonewalled the issue. The Acting Premier said that clinical leaders were consulted. Perhaps some selected senior clinical leaders were consulted, but they did not represent the view of the majority of clinical leaders, health care workers and the public in the Hamilton health science catchment area. Also, the MPPs who live in and represent this area were not consulted.

I encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to take a stand for the people of greater Hamilton and rein in this out-of-control LHIN board. When one of the board's own members, Stephen Birch, felt compelled to resign because, and I quote, "the public was not given a voice," it speaks volumes about how this board does not understand its community responsibility but acts as though it is directed by the private corporation, Hamilton Health Sciences. The real issue is that with this change, Hamilton Health Sciences reduces its cost at the expense of the public.

The minister must initiate some good faith for the people of greater Hamilton. I'm calling on him to rescind the appointments of the current LHIN board and open the appointment process to all residents of the community within this LHIN, not just those in professional categories.

The mandate for the LHIN must also be rewritten to enshrine the duty to perform full public community consultations on all proposed changes to the delivery of

health care. Perhaps we can then have some confidence that the views, concerns and wishes of our communities will be heard and represented.

AJAX FIRE STATION

Mr. Joe Dickson: On Tuesday of this week in my riding of Ajax-Pickering, the municipality opened the first new green, LEED-certified fire station in Ontario. I had the pleasure of introducing Ontario's Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, who officially opened the new, \$12-million station in concert with Ajax Mayor Parish, Ajax council and Ajax Fire Chief Randy Wilson. Minister Gerretsen also brought greetings from our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, on this environmental breakthrough.

I, as a member of Ajax council, prior to being elected MPP, had the pleasure of speaking on and voting in favour of the new fire hall and having it proceed with the LEED roof and many other environmental improvements.

This new complex will save some 112 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year, equivalent to taking 23 cars off the road each year and eliminating 1,150 cars over the building's lifespan. It is also equivalent to protecting 100 acres of forestry per year and nearly 5,000 acres of forestry during the building's lifetime. The new Ajax fire station will also realize natural gas savings of 66.2%. In comparison to the old fire station, the new Ajax fire station is 55% larger and will use 58% less energy at 58% of the cost.

Well done, Ajax Fire and Emergency Services. Thank you.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This week 500 workers at the Volvo road grading plant learned they were losing their jobs. This is just the latest layoff in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Not long ago it was the CanGro plant in Exeter that was announcing their closure. When that closure was announced, my colleague from Niagara West-Glanbrook and I wrote to the Premier and asked him to do anything he could to try to save the plant and the many jobs, both in the factory and the agriculture industry. We couldn't convince the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier to take any action. I might have thought that the member from Huron-Bruce would have been able to convince her party to do something, but she too appears to have failed.

Now it's the Volvo road grading plant in her riding. This plant was known for producing some of the top road graders. Ten years ago, Volvo thought it was good enough to invest in, and now, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, this plant is closing.

Yesterday, my colleague the member from Halton came into the Legislature and questioned the Minister of Finance on what the government had done to try to keep this company here. In this Legislature, the member from

Huron–Bruce always has lots to say when the opposition is speaking, but she hasn't questioned the government about what they are doing, and going to do, to save these jobs.

Hopefully, before we have any more plant closures, the members on the other side of the House will speak up, and hopefully, the Premier will listen to them and save the jobs for these Ontarians.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Phil McNeely: It is with great pleasure that I rise today to share with this House and all Ontarians the McGuinty government's commitments to helping displaced workers and communities get back on their feet.

The cornerstone of this commitment is second career, an innovative program to assist those workers who have been laid off. Second career will help individuals get the new skills necessary to compete and succeed in the new economy.

In June, the McGuinty government launched second career, which will provide \$355 million to help 20,000 laid-off workers train for long-term, high-skilled occupations that are in demand in their communities.

This investment also partners each of these participants with an Employment Ontario counsellor who can provide one-on-one, individualized counselling to establish a return-to-work action plan that reflects the needs, experience and education of each participant.

The McGuinty government's commitment to workers and their families is also seen in the \$500-million advanced manufacturing fund, which has maintained and created 4,000 jobs since it was implemented.

These new job growth strategies are just a couple of examples of this government's commitment to workers throughout this province. We understand the challenges of the new economy and will continue to work with Ontarians to succeed in it.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Toby Barrett: Is the environment minister going to ride the rails as the Flick Off express train leaves the station this month? Before climbing aboard the train, he should be reminded that the Flick Off campaign cost his predecessor her job last year.

Media report the Premier has no problem with this campaign—a campaign that uses phrases like “Go flick yourself,” “Are we flicked?” and “Flick Fest,” which this government proudly describes as edgy and progressive.

Question: Will people once again become incensed by the suggestiveness of these slogans? If so, will the present minister also find himself derailed?

How much money is this government shovelling into the Flick Off train? The minister says in this House that much of what he does is for children. Flick Off insults young people and is offensive to those very children.

Is this play on foul language the only way to get children's attention? Are there not better ways to highlight

climate change? And I'm not referring to a cap-and-trade deal with Utah. Some feel that makes about as much sense as cap-and-trade with Arizona—something that actually has been done.

Is the minister packing his bags to “rock the rails with the Flick Off express”? My advice: Stay at the station. Forget the gimmicks. Put your efforts into developing real public policy on these very serious issues.

FIRST NATIONS REVENUE SHARING

Mrs. Van Bommel: I rise today in the House to share with my colleagues and all Ontarians the great strides this government is taking in terms of improving the quality of life for Ontario's First Nations communities.

On February 7 of this year, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and First Nations chiefs from across Ontario announced the ratification of a historic agreement worth over \$3 billion.

The agreement, which is based on an agreement-in-principle signed by the province and First Nations in 2006, draws on provincial gaming revenues and provides the long-term revenues that First Nations can use to improve their quality of life and to help strengthen their communities. This also builds on the McGuinty government's new approach to aboriginal affairs, which emphasizes a co-operative relationship between the Ontario government and First Nations and is focused on shared goals for long-term positive change. As Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse said, “Ultimately, this is a success story for both the province and First Nations communities.”

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This has certainly been welcome news for the First Nations communities in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I strongly encourage my colleagues and all Ontarians to learn more about this announcement, as well as the overall approach this government has chosen as we work with our First Nations, Inuit and Metis people.

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to praise the work of the organizations located in the riding of York South–Weston which are helping Ontarians get the training, education, skills and experience needed to achieve their goals. These include Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services, MicroSkills, COSTI and the Learning Enrichment Foundation.

During these uncertain economic times we are experiencing, another vehicle which residents are finding to be very useful is Employment Ontario. Its services can be accessed online by phone or in person in one of their offices located across the province, making it easy for everyone to find information on services in their community and get the assistance that they need.

Employment Ontario alone provides almost \$1 billion in integrated training, apprenticeship and labour market services, bringing together approximately 1,200 service

providers in all regions of the province. Employment Ontario offers in-depth information to employers, employees, apprentices and job seekers. For example, if you are an employer, you can access information about tax credits, training boards and labour market information. This type of information can be critical when a business is just starting up or has a desire to expand and to grow. If you are an employee, you can find information about literacy and basic skills programs, training, and even how to start your own business.

I would encourage all Ontarians to use the Employment Ontario network to help achieve their goals and strengthen our province.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Mike Colle: For too long the hard-working people in communities across Ontario have been gouged by the federal government's equalization program, which takes over \$23 billion out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and sends it to the equalization program in Ottawa.

Recently, even the TD Bank came to the defence of these hard-working Ontarians and joined the call for Ontario citizens to receive their fair share of the federal government's equalization program and the money it takes out of taxes from the people of Ontario. Drummond said that Ontario is owed at least \$11.8 billion—that's owed to the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario, frankly, are sick and tired of paying all this GST, personal income tax, business tax and corporate taxes. They work hard, and where does the money go? It goes to Ottawa's equalization program and goes to have lower property taxes in other provinces, more programs in other provinces. Yet the people of Ontario are the ones doing the work, paying the taxes and trying to make a living.

Prime Minister Harper and Jim Flaherty don't stand up for fair treatment of Ontario taxpayers. All they want to do is to keep some of their own money in their pockets in St. Thomas, in Welland, in St. Catharines. Why should we have to ship it to Chatham, New Brunswick? Let's keep it in Chatham, Ontario. That's what I ask for.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I beg leave to present a report on the review of the standing orders from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move adoption of the recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Balkissoon presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Just to report to the House that the committee met several times during the summer. Although there might not have been total agreement on some of the changes being recommended, I think the members of the opposition party and the third party have submitted their own opposing opinions. In the end, the committee voted on some recommendations. The report is before you, and I move adjournment.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Balkissoon moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES COLLECTIVITÉS ET DES QUARTIERS

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods / Projet de loi 106, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers.

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. Yasir Naqvi: The purpose of the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act—SCAN in short—is to enhance community safety by targeting properties that are used for illegal activities.

The bill, if passed, provides a mechanism to deal with properties that are habitually used for specified illegal activities and adversely affect—that is, negatively impact on the health, safety or security of—a community or neighbourhood.

This bill fosters a partnership between municipalities, neighbours, tenants, police and community associations to make our neighbourhoods safe.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member as well for shortening the explanatory note that was actually part of the bill—much appreciated by all members.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Deborah Matthews: October is Women's History Month. It's a time to honour women of courage, of conviction and of commitment.

This special month was first designated in 1992 by the Canadian government. Since then, it has given us an opportunity to acknowledge all the women of Ontario who have changed our lives for the better in every aspect of life and in every community across this province.

This October, we celebrate women in the lead. They are strong women who have created and continue to create strong communities, and they are courageous women who have shaped and continue to shape our history.

Over the years, women in Ontario have championed justice, broken down barriers and created opportunities. They have left their footprint in every walk of life, from science, medicine, the arts and business to public administration, education, sports and politics.

There are so many from the past to celebrate; for instance:

—Mary Ann Shadd, an anti-slave freedom fighter who moved to the Windsor area and became the first female newspaper editor in Canada, establishing the Provincial Freeman.

—Elsie Gregory MacGill, one of Canada's leading aeronautical engineers and the first woman to receive an electrical engineering degree in Canada.

—Dorothea Mitchell, the "lady lumberjack" who was the first single woman to be granted homestead rights in Canada in 1910 and went on to become Canada's first female independent filmmaker.

These are just some of the "first" women of Ontario, women who have helped open up the doors of freedom, justice and opportunity for all the others who have come after them.

We have other modern-day "first" women in virtually every field, women who believed there was no frontier too far and no limit to commitment and conviction, women like:

—Dr. Roberta Bondar, Canada's first female astronaut.

—Lynda Powless, an entrepreneur who is the first native woman to own and operate the only native weekly newspaper in Canada, Turtle Island News.

—June Callwood, whose name is synonymous with social justice, social activism and caring in this province, who founded Canada's first AIDS hospice, Casey House.

There are so many others. Some are well-known names. Others may be lesser known but are equally inspiring.

Through the latest round of our own Leading Women/Girls, Building Communities Awards, members of this Legislature nominated 70 women and girls who are taking the lead in their communities.

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This October, the words of the first female mayor of a major Canadian city come to mind. Charlotte Whitton was the first female mayor of Ottawa, a feminist and a staunch advocate for children. "Action," she said, "makes more fortune than caution." The courage and accomplishments of so many Ontario women are testament to the truth of her words. Because so many dared to dream, dared to challenge and dared to act, Ontario is second to none in the world.

During this month, I urge each of you to visit the Ontario Women's Directorate website at www.ontariowomensdirectorate.gov.on.ca to learn more about Ontario's first women. I'd like to thank them for all they have done and for all they have given to each of us, our families, our communities and our province. I'm privileged to work with the many women and men of Ontario who are following in their footsteps to advance opportunity, justice and dignity for the women of Ontario and the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: On behalf of our leader, John Tory, and the Progressive Conservative caucus, we are certainly very pleased to take this opportunity to recognize the very significant women who have taken a leading role in the history, not just of our communities and our province, but of our country. Hopefully, this will be an opportunity for people throughout Canada to take a look at women who have made contributions to Canada and recognize that women have indeed played a very, very important role in the history of our country.

We want to acknowledge women, whether they're in science, whether they're in politics, whether they're in the arts, whether they're in business, public administration, education, whatever field it may be. We know that there are leading women who have certainly provided a role model for others to follow and we congratulate and we thank these women.

This year, we are focusing on the theme of leadership, leading women. The women who have gone before us have opened the door for all of those who follow. I just want to focus on a few people who I believe have made a difference; there are so many, many more.

Last night, I was at the 20th anniversary celebration of Focus for Ethnic Women in my community. This is a group of women who, 20 years ago, decided that they were going to help and support the immigrant and visible minority women who came to Canada and make sure that they had an opportunity to become familiar with the Canadian way of life, to learn the English language, to build on the skills they brought to this country, to become women who could provide for themselves and for their family and to proudly take their place in Canadian society. I want to congratulate the people at Focus for Ethnic Women. They've had a tremendous impact on

many, many women in my community. It was quite heartwarming last night to hear the personal stories that they told about the impact that Focus for Ethnic Women had on their lives. They had helped them to break down the barriers, they had helped them to gain the self-confidence and the language skills that they needed, and they had certainly helped them to ensure that they had opportunities for providing that better life.

One person whom, for whatever reason, I remember, when I was first considering becoming a politician, was a lady by the name of Ellen Fairclough. She actually signed a certificate that I have at one time. She was the very first female member of a Canadian cabinet. In 1957, she was appointed by John Diefenbaker to the position of Secretary of State of Canada, and then in 1958 she became the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As I said, when I became a Canadian citizen, she actually signed my certificate. Sometimes you wonder, "Who is this person?" She actually was the first female acting Prime Minister of Canada as well, in 1958. She was granted the rare honour of having the Right Honourable bestowed upon her in 1992 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. So she was a significant role model for all of us who choose to follow the political path.

Another individual that I think provided outstanding leadership was Dr. Sheela Basrur. You just can't say enough about Sheela. We all remember that voice of reason during the SARS crisis, how she was able to restore calm during a very troubling time, and give reassurance to a very nervous population. She had a long history of accomplishments in the field of public health. She was inducted into the Order of Ontario and she has received so much recognition. Certainly, she is a woman who made a difference not only in the public's eyes, but I know that she was an outstanding role model for her daughter as well and for the community.

These are just a few of the women. As I say, there are women everywhere who are making a positive difference, and we congratulate them.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

M^{me} France G linas: It is my pleasure to rise today to recognize Women's History Month. The history pages are dominated by men—actually, very much like this Legislative Assembly, and assemblies in every other province in Canada. However, in October, we are given the opportunity to look at women's impact on history.

Since the creation of Women's History Month in 1992, we've celebrated the opportunity for Canadians to learn about the many and significant contributions of girls and women in our society. This year's theme is "Women in the Lead." It looks at women in Canada that have opened doors for women worldwide. It gives us a chance to recognize women's contributions, from the Famous Five, who worked tirelessly to get Canadian women to vote—in French we call them "les suffragettes"—to astronaut Roberta Bondar. This month allows us a chance to recognize the achievement of diverse women as a vital part of our Canadian history. But it is

crucial to use this month to learn from our past mistakes in representing women's interests. We need to look at the future and how we can make a difference to improve the lives of women in Ontario.

This month encourages all Canadians to take the lead and recognize the efforts of great Canadian women. Every day, we should celebrate the great Ontario women who are marginalized by inadequate policies, but who continue to work hard to better their lives for themselves, their families and their community. I'm thinking of women that have to re-mortgage their homes to pay for IBI therapy for their children that are autistic, because there are no policies that support those children and allow them to receive the care they need. All we have are long waiting lists. Those women are champions.

On September 17, which happens to be 71% into the year, we celebrate Now You're Working for Free Day. That's because women work for 71% of a man's wage. This is a campaign that has been launched by our labour friends to try to reduce this income disparity between men and women, because for work of equal value, women get paid 71 cents on the dollar. Although the Pay Equity Act has been in place for 20 years, the gap is still there. The resulting 29% gender pay gap means that women are effectively denied their fair pay from September 17 to December 31, each and every year.

In 2005, women in Ontario counted for two thirds of the people working for minimum wage in Ontario. When the NDP advocates for \$10.25 an hour now, we're advocating for women so that they have a chance to live above the poverty line. Mothers working multiple jobs on minimum wage to create a better life for their children, women in aboriginal communities taking the lead to improve their communities, disabled women challenging stereotypes and seeking gainful employment every day—in our books, all these women are leaders.

1330

We need more court certification so that those two thirds of people working on minimum wage can get organized so we can start to get them better wages, better benefits, better jobs. That would help women, but it is not being supported by this government. Women have lost their jobs, either in the forestry or manufacturing industry, because this government has turned their backs and let them down. They haven't supported them, and these women are now either running out of employment insurance or going on Ontario Works altogether.

I want to talk about women's health issues. They are at the bottom of the list. I have been advocating for breastfeeding support, an Ontario-wide strategy. I get told, "Things are fine and dandy." Ontario doesn't have a breastfeeding strategy. We are at the bottom of the pack. Every other province but one has a breastfeeding strategy, but not Ontario. Why is women's health at the bottom of the pack?

We must take the lead and make strides to open more doors for women by helping them out of the poverty cycle, improving their opportunities for work outside of minimum wage, and improving ODSP for women on disability.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**SIGNAGE TO PROMOTE ONTARIO
GROWN AGRICULTURAL FOOD
PRODUCTS ACT, 2008**

**LOI DE 2008 SUR L'AFFICHAGE
VISANT À PROMOUVOIR
LES PRODUITS AGROALIMENTAIRES
CULTIVÉS EN ONTARIO**

Mr. Hardeman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to promote the sale of Ontario grown agricultural food products by amending the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act/ Projet de loi 98, Loi visant à promouvoir la vente de produits agroalimentaires cultivés en Ontario en modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Hardeman has moved second reading of Bill 98. Pursuant to standing order 97, Mr. Hardeman, you have up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This bill is about supporting our hard-working farmers, helping Ontarians find local food and strengthening our rural economy. Everyone knows that the best food in the world is grown by farmers right here in Ontario, and it's even better when you can get it straight from the farm. Every summer people across Ontario look forward to buying freshly grown products from farmers at produce stands and local farms. Consumers watch for the signs advertising fresh strawberries, corn, apples, tomatoes and other products, then follow these signs to the farm.

For farmers, on-farm sales are an important source of additional income, and they depend on signage to alert consumers to when produce is being harvested and generate a significant amount of those sales. Many farms are located on country side roads with very little traffic, so farmers need the ability to place these signs on well-travelled highways where they can reach more people. However, current legislation prohibits signs within 400 metres of a highway unless they display the name of the premises, the name of the owner of the premises, or that a ministerial permit has been granted. If a farmer applied for a ministerial permit when the strawberries were ready, the harvest would be over before he got his sign up.

This bill creates an exemption that would allow farmers to post seasonal, directional signs on land adjacent to highways. The sign must be on privately owned, agriculturally zoned land and can only advertise food that was grown by the owner of the sign. It is a simple change, but one that is needed to support our farmers and allow them to maintain and increase farm sales.

I am very pleased at the support that this bill has received from farmers, agriculture organizations and hopefully, this afternoon, from this Legislature.

Brenda Lammens, chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, is here today in the gallery and I want to thank her for her support. She said, "The ability to erect a directional sign on privately owned agricultural zoned land makes sense for farmers and consumers. The intent is simple: to link consumers with fresh, locally produced food that might otherwise be hard to find on our country side roads."

One of the challenges for farmers is that the prohibition on signs has been enforced inconsistently across the province. The Renfrew County National Farmers Union said, "In Renfrew county local farmers experienced problems trying to advertise their product at the gate."

In Norfolk, several farmers were forced to take down their signs. One of these was Charles Emre, an asparagus farmer, who estimated that when he removed his sign, his sales dropped 50%. After a lot of media attention, the Ministry of Transportation quickly agreed to allow the fresh asparagus signs for the rest of this harvest season.

Across Ontario, farmers don't know when, or if, they will be forced to take their signs down. Given that the time period when the fresh produce is available can be so short, farmers can't afford this uncertainty. Charles told me that after all the trouble he had with the signs, he considered getting out of the asparagus business until a local worker asked what would happen to her job if he did. Every spring, Charles hires local people to pick, package and sell asparagus. These are jobs that would disappear if farmers like Charles aren't allowed to post signage and bring consumers to the farm. I want to thank Charles for his work on this issue and his contribution to this bill.

At a time when Ontario is facing economic challenges and every day we hear about more job losses, shouldn't the government be doing whatever it can to preserve and create jobs, especially in rural communities and in the agriculture industry?

More and more people are recognizing the importance of local food. They recognize not only the great taste and freshness of Ontario-grown food, but also that by buying locally they are supporting our farmers. Every week there are media articles talking about the 100-mile diet and the great food we grow in Ontario.

The Muskoka medical officer of health, Dr. Charles Gardner, recently wrote a column encouraging people to buy locally. He pointed out that "heat- and light-sensitive vitamins like A and C tend to break down when foods are transported or stored for any length of time." His recommendation is: "Buy direct. Take your family on an outing to local farms that sell fresh produce and ask farmers about their products and farming practices."

I want to commend those Ontarians who are trying to eat more locally grown food. But how are people supposed to find the farms and know when produce is harvested unless farmers can put up signs to promote their food products?

As the demand for locally grown food continues to increase, there are great opportunities for our farmers. We need to ensure that red tape doesn't stop them from meeting that demand. We need to do more to connect farmers with the people who want to buy their produce. It's not good enough to sing about how great Ontario-grown food is or spend money on slick advertising campaigns. We need to take real action to help our farmers to ensure that our agriculture industry can not only survive but grow.

When I talk to farmers about what we need to compete internationally, one of the concerns I often hear is that we have too much red tape—rules that are inconsistent or serve no purpose. That's what red tape is. This bill is a small but concrete step toward addressing one of these problems. In fact, the Canadian Farm Animal Care Trust said, "I am surprised the Ontario government hasn't recognized the importance and necessity for what the bill will do to help our farmers survive in these difficult days."

Many farmers in Ontario are struggling to make ends meet and hold on to their farms, such as the young farmers who were missed by many of our government's programs. Tender fruit farmers are worried about markets for their produce now that CanGro has closed.

I recently received a letter in support of the bill, which said in part, "The Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association acknowledges the difficulties facing growers who wish to promote on-farm sales and the problems caused by inconsistent enforcement and overregulation by government. Growers need to be freed from red tape and be allowed to market their crops in ways that are profitable."

When farmers are struggling, they look to the government, not for overzealous enforcement of red tape but for fair, reasonable solutions. They want the government to work with them. For some farmers, giving them the ability to increase on-farm sales may be the difference between keeping and losing the farm, or it might be enough to hire one more person.

This coming Monday marks the beginning of the 10th annual Ontario Agriculture Week. I would like to point out that Agriculture Week was created by another Progressive Conservative private member's bill in this Legislature 10 years ago. It makes this a particularly good time for us all to work together to support Ontario's farmers. We can demonstrate that support by giving this bill second reading and immediately holding committee hearings to keep this bill moving forward.

These are a number of quotes we have from people who have been writing in supporting this bill since we announced that we were introducing it. Grant Robertson, of the National Farmers Union, said: "We would encourage all members of the Legislature to vote for passage of private member's Bill 98. For these members who are willing to stand with you and Ontario's farmers, it is a small step to say we recognize the important contributions farm families make to our economic well-being and the health of Ontarians."

1340

Kevin Schooley of the Ontario Berry Growers Association said, "Our industry has a great tradition of on-farm sales, and this bill would help ensure the tradition continues. The OBGAs would like to support your pursuit"—and this is written to me—"of this bill and wish you success in obtaining this valuable bill for all produce growers who rely on on-farm sales."

Dave Mackay of the Renfrew County National Farmers Union says, "We in the NFU hope that Mr. Hardeman's bill around highway signage manages to get past partisanship and passes at the legislative level."

Allan Burn of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency says, "As an industry that relies on farm gate freezer trade, we the board support your bill and its intentions to make it easier for our 3,900 producers to use farm advertising signage."

And Charles Emre, whom I mentioned earlier, an asparagus grower from Norfolk, said, "I was very pleased to hear Mr. Hardeman was introducing a private member's bill addressing the issue of signage to promote agriculture. I believe this is a positive step to support agriculture, Ontario farmers and the economy, as well as making fresh produce more available to all Ontarians."

Anne Howden Thompson of the Ontario Farmer said, "The unique challenge for farmers seeking seasonal sales is that many aren't located on the well-travelled provincial highways, and so both farmers and consumers have come to rely on directional signs that will help people find when crops are being harvested and where they are available."

I hope the members on both sides of the House will support this bill so that we can help our farmers and Ontarians to let them once again follow the signs to discover the great locally grown food straight from the farm. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to introduce this private member's bill.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm going to share my time with the honourable member from Welland. I'm going to take a couple of minutes on this.

I'd like to commend the member from Oxford on Bill 98. This bill is long overdue. It's a good bill. As NDPers, when it comes to what's good for the people in Ontario, we're non-partisan. Honourable member from Oxford, we would like to tell you that we will be supporting your bill. We find that the farmers of this province have been almost overtaken with goods from other sources, from South America. For example, in the Niagara region, recently we had farmers destroy thousands of peach trees through frustration because the last canning factory in the Niagara region—one of the last canning factories in Canada—had to go under. That was debated to a great extent in this House. It was a shame.

When we see these products coming in from other countries, we have concerns about the content, for example, the recent situation with milk in China, other products have been filled with lead, things that are

coming into our province that have been dangerous. I personally feel much better getting food from Joe Smith up in the country above Hamilton than I would taking my chances on some of the food products that come from other countries, not knowing where they came from, who grew them, what content and are they safe to eat.

Our farmers grow quality goods. We have great milk. We have great food in this province. It should be dealt with. Nothing irritates me more than to see things go to waste. When I see peach trees being destroyed and other goods—tomatoes piling up in piles rotting because they don't have a market for them—it's really disheartening. It's time we started to buy Ontario. It's time we gave our farmers the ability to advertise on their own farms down their lane. Farmers struggle at the best of times, especially when there are bad crops when they have a real problem getting by that year. Subsidies don't cut it. If these farmers stop farming because they can't sell their products, this province is going to be in dire straits. I am more than pleased, as an NDP member of this House, to support this bill, and I wish the member all the best.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: It is a real pleasure for me to be in the House this afternoon to indeed enthusiastically support Bill 98, which has been presented by my good friend and colleague the former agriculture minister of the province of Ontario, Mr. Hardeman.

It's interesting; we have really taken this initiative—I see my friend the member from Victoria–Haliburton–Brock is here today. Between our ridings, we launched a number of years ago the Kawartha Choice branding, which was an opportunity for farmers in Victoria–Haliburton–Brock and Peterborough to come together with their respective chambers of commerce to initiate Kawartha Choice branding. So when the good citizens of Victoria–Haliburton–Brock and Peterborough ridings tour the back lanes in our ridings and see that Kawartha Choice symbol, they can go into those farms and purchase everything they want in terms of fresh produce.

Each Saturday morning, I always feel that it's a great sounding board to go to the Peterborough farmers' market. There are about 200 vendors there supplying a wide range of very fresh goods. I want to have a paid advertisement today. My good friend Joyce Millar and her husband have an egg operation in the municipality of Otonabee–South Monaghan, which is in my riding, and I'm a faithful purchaser of eggs from Joyce. I visit and chat with her each and every Saturday morning, and she really appreciates the opportunities for the local folks to—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I'm getting some heckling from my own party here today—visit and chat with her and to understand the challenges that are faced by the farm community today.

I'd also like to get on the record Ms. Erma Van Beek, who is the president of the Peterborough County Federation of Agriculture, who does a great job and meets

with me and her colleagues periodically to share with me the challenges they're facing.

I know the member for Oxford would be interested in this newest development here in Peterborough. Just to the north of the city of Peterborough, we now have the McLean Berry Farm. They've been involved in the last number year in growing and distributing the ever-bearing strawberry. These are strawberries that are grown in late August, September and October, so you go to the Peterborough farmers' market and continually get fresh strawberries. It's a favourite of my son Braden. Braden and his buddies like to make smoothies. He's 10 years old. They get the fresh strawberries, add a little bit of vanilla ice cream and 1% milk, and churn it all up. That's the favourite snack of my kids.

What's important about that is that they take that recipe to their colleagues at school. He's in grade 5 at St. Anne's school in Peterborough, and that's one of the favourite snacks for the kids there. But what does that do? It allows our kids to (a) have an appreciation when it's grown locally, (b) support our dairy farmers by consuming both milk and ice cream. These are the kinds of positive things I know my good friend the member for Oxford wants to promote through this bill. This really is an opportunity for all of us to come together—the government, the official opposition, the third party and the independent party—in unison to support something that we feel will have a very positive impact for farmers not only in Oxford but in Peterborough and right across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you've received a call from your wife from time to time, unexpected friends drop over for dinner, so if you see a farmer's market stand, you can just go in there and grab some corn and fresh beans and other things to assist—and I know you do—with that family dinner.

On behalf of the citizens in the riding of Peterborough, we wholeheartedly, 1,000%, support the private member's bill from my good friend from Oxford to make this a reality.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Excellent, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I'm pleased to offer my full support and take a few minutes to comment on the legislation brought forward by my colleague the member for Oxford; he's also our critic for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The member for Oxford has been up to my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock several times in the last year and a half to have round table discussions with local producers. The last day he even came up to the Lindsay agricultural fairgrounds, our new fairgrounds, the second fair that they've had there, and had a great tour. They celebrated a wonderful fair just a couple of weeks ago. So he knows my local farmers and producers, and they certainly respect his ability and knowledge in the industry.

1350

This Bill 98, An Act to promote the sale of Ontario grown agricultural food products by amending the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act—when my colleague from Oxford first introduced the bill in June, I was actually shocked that this province, which has such a reliance on and supposed fondness for our farmers, had an unfriendly policy such as what currently exists that removes the signs directing consumers to buy local produce. In fact, the member from Oxford got a great headline: “MPP Ernie Hardeman Wants You to See the Signs.” That was the headline in the National Farmers Union-Ontario. They did a great write-up on the introduction of this bill.

So, good things do grow in Ontario, and we have to tell more people and direct more people to buy them.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Sing it; come on.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We could sing it, but I’m telling you, I don’t think you want me to sing it.

Why we are allowing regulations such as this—doesn’t seem to have any real substance. We’re allowing policies that force red tape and cut off some of the lifelines for our hard-working farmers and agricultural professionals.

So when the bill was introduced, of course we immediately jumped on the bandwagon, supportive of our farmers, the directional signs that we have. I know that the member from Peterborough mentioned Kawartha Choice that was developed through the chambers of commerce and farm communities in both our ridings. They have those labels not only on their end-of-farm gates, on the sides of the roads, but there are also bumper stickers that they can get and signs in the stores that educate people about and build awareness of locally grown produce. Certainly, that has been of great benefit.

The Farmers Feed Cities! campaign—my nieces were wearing those T-shirts in the local Bobcaygeon fair parade this past weekend—was also initiated by some of the great folks in my riding.

Last winter, we had a meeting with the local chambers of commerce in my community and some of the community improvement groups as a way of dealing with the high Canadian dollar of that time. We got together to say, “Okay, we’re suffering here. These are challenging economic times. What can we do?” From that meeting, the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce came out with a marketing and promotion program, fittingly called Shop Locally. It’s a great example of the local support of the merchants and farmers. I know that Gayle Jones, the manager of the Lindsay and District Chamber of Commerce, has been credited with further advancing the Shop Locally campaign. They also provide marketing tools, which is the signage, and the goal of this signage is to clearly identify local products for consumers.

As in my riding, as mentioned by my colleagues, most rural areas and most farms are off the beaten path of the highways. People need to have the signs to direct them off those trails. In my younger days of crop cruising—maybe now it’s a different form of crop cruising—they’d

actually go and find end-of-farm-gate produce to be bought.

Laughter.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know, some of the members are getting that.

The legislation does provide some help for our farmers.

I must credit the member from Oxford for picking up this flaw that we have in our policies, making the changes that go forward, and supporting our agriculture industry.

Thank you for this time.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: This bill, sponsored by the member for Oxford, Mr. Hardeman, is smart, timely, effective and would be implemented at no cost whatsoever to the taxpayer.

Down where I come from in Welland—you’re familiar with the riding—there are parts of Welland, just like there are a few other parts in the province of Ontario, where, based on newspaper reports of police activity, it seems the largest cash crop is marijuana. I’m not sure that Mr. Hardeman had that in mind, and I’m not sure that those folks necessarily want signage. My fear, though, is that because of the ongoing assault on agriculture in this province, the only cash crop that may be left in the course of the next decade could be marijuana.

My cousin Jozef Kormos is visiting here from Slovakia. He’s from Haniska-Presov. He was born in the family village, a small village, called Bajerovce, in the mountains. He’s been proud to show me Slovakia, a very agricultural nation. He’s been proud to show me and feed me—and look at me, I’ve been well-fed; it’s been a long time since I’ve been hungry—the produce that Slovak farmers grow. But I drive him down to Welland on the weekends, and I tell you, my cousin Joe is amazed as we pass the vineyards—huge, huge vineyards—as we pass the peach and cherry orchards, as we stop off down on Regional Road 24, the Vineland cut-off, with the fruit retailers there, and buy fresh apricots and fresh blueberries and, of course, peaches. He missed the cherry season. I apologize to him for that. I’ll try to have him back next year or the year after.

But I’ve got great fear because this law—and I hope it passes; we’ll be supporting it—may be moot, academic, if there’s no agricultural produce left in this province. I say that to say that is not being in any way, shape or form melodramatic. Our farmers are at risk. This bill, of course, considers not just fruit and vegetable producers, but producers of livestock—pig, cattle, emu, ostrich, buffalo—eggs, and the processed foods, the honeys and cheeses. Let’s face it, we can’t count on the large super-market chains to accommodate Ontario produce. They can’t; they won’t. They’ve shown time and time again that they will pay but lip service to Buy Ontario. We need the farmers’ markets, and I say that if we’re going to talk about this bill, we’ve got to talk about making sure that farmers’ markets not only survive—because

they're at risk, with a regulatory regime that encumbers them in a way that's totally unfair and totally unnecessary, I say to you.

Reflect just back a year: Superior Sausage down on Roncesvalles—the best kielbasa in Toronto. These people weren't just producing high-quality sausage, they were maintaining a culinary culture, something I feel very strongly about. Whether it's the Amish and the food products they make, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Italians, or the new Canadians from Somalia, the Caribbean or South America, they're a very important part of our Canadian culture, our culinary culture. The more we relinquish to the large meatpacking industry, the more we forfeit the culinary culture of Canada. Superior Sausage: a family-run business, high-quality produce. There was never a single incident of listeria flowing from that shop.

I go down to Ujfalusy, the Hungarian, down in Port Colborne, and here's old man Ujfalusy having to convert his whole small shop from—you know the wood doors on the freezers with the big, metal handle? We grew up with those, for Pete's sake, down where I come from. Well, it's got to be stainless steel now. All the wood trim in his shop has to be converted to non-wood or finished in such a way that there's no risk. I tell you, folks bought Ujfalusy's hurka and other sausages for decades and generations. They export it and send it to their families across Canada and America. Here's a producer who's at risk of being put out of business because the standards for big meat processors—and let's face it, those standards haven't worked particularly well, have they?—are being imposed on small, boutique processors, like Ujfalusy's butcher shop. I tell you, Ujfalusy down on the east side of Port Colborne—if you want hurka, you go to Ujfalusy, or you can go to the Welland market on Saturdays; his family's there selling it.

1400

We've got to become far more aggressive. I have great respect for the Speaker of this Assembly, because the Speaker has been very aggressive in promoting Ontario produce in any way that he can. But I say that this Parliament building should be a showcase for Ontario produce. I quite frankly am not interested in a single juice product or processed product being sold in the cafeteria here or anywhere in the hallways that doesn't reflect the Ontario agriculture industry. That's a step that hasn't yet been taken.

I don't know where you come from—I do know where you come from, Speaker; you're from one of the southernmost parts of Ontario, just like I am. I'm not quite as far south as you are; we don't grow orange trees where I come from. We need a market for our apples and apple juices—grape juices. Sadly, with the closure of CanGro—this government let the CanGro opportunity slip through its fingers—there aren't going to be many processed juices. We're going to have to rely on the small boutique producers.

The grape industry: David Wiley, one of Niagara's outstanding grape growers, gave me a call just the other week—I wrote a letter to the Minister of Agriculture.

David Wiley and his family have 170 acres of grapes down in the St. Catharines area. He has only had a market for one quarter of that crop. David Wiley estimates that around 5,000 tons of grapes, worth up to \$6 million, are going to rot this year. It's a simple matter of this government making sure that the wine content legislation ensures that if it's called an Ontario wine, it darned well better have 100% Ontario grapes.

You see, there are things that can be done right now—to save an industry that's very much at risk, and thousands of jobs. Don't think for a minute that agriculture doesn't create jobs. It's not just the jobs on the farm; it's all the suppliers, the industries that support the agricultural industry.

I support this bill enthusiastically. I want it to go to committee, because I think committee hearings, which should be speedy but full as well, should consider this and all those things the government not only can but ought to do. It's government's responsibility to protect this unique asset that we in Ontario have, this legacy that this generation of political leadership is not just squandering but abandoning and quite frankly, by its own hand, destroying. We'd better stand up for agriculture, the farmers who grow the food and produce the stuff we eat, who have served us for generations and deserve far better than they are getting now.

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

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Certainly, as an MPP from a very agricultural riding and farmer myself, I'm very pleased to stand in support of this private member's bill presented by the member for Oxford.

I know myself, as I drive through my own riding, that I have three counties I represent, and each of the counties has opportunities for the farm gate sales that this would address. Certainly I enjoy, to a great extent, just going through different parts—I know the Speaker probably enjoys stopping for tomatoes on his way home. In the Chatham-Kent area, I get an opportunity to stop and get tomatoes. I can get virtually any vegetable that's produced in the Grand Bend area. I have the same opportunity to stop and get potatoes, carrots, cabbage and lettuce. I can do the same thing again in the Arkona and Forest area, where I can pick up every possible fruit imaginable. We get cherries, peaches and apples there.

I really look for the signs that the member is addressing here, and I often find that one of the things that can happen is that I am going by a farm gate, the stand is there, the sign is right there in front of the stand and I can't make a safe stop to get there. When I'm reading the bill, it says "provides directions," and that the signs should be on land that's owned or rented by the owner of the sign. I would, maybe, suggest that somehow we could also, with permission of a landowner, do the same thing. Like I said, in order to be able to get there, I need the time to be able to stop safely. That's just one of those things.

I also want to, just before I go any further, welcome Brenda. Are you wearing your lovely asparagus pin

today? Brenda has this wonderful asparagus pin. It's not just a piece of jewellery. She promotes her product when she wears it, and I have the same embarrassment today too because I'm not wearing my chicken pin either. I'm not wearing the chicken pin, so I guess today we are both kind of guilty of that.

Again, like I said, the signs are an important part of what's happening at the farm gate. What I find over time is that these signs have become very sophisticated, and they're actually rather attractive pieces of artwork in some cases. You will see a cob of sweet corn, and it's beautifully done, beautifully painted, or a big red tomato with the directions on where to find the farm inside the tomato. People continue to do a beautiful job of promoting their product by making the signs look attractive as well.

I know the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock was talking about crop touring. That is not something that farmers do by themselves anymore. This has become something else. As she alluded to, it probably has a little different intent than it does when we do it. Still, people do have an opportunity to go through our communities, and they're looking for these kinds of things. Everybody is interested in buying local and supporting the farmers in our communities.

Over the years, I have benefited from this farm gate sale at our own farm. It wasn't personal benefit in the sense that I was standing at the roadside with the sweet corn, but my kids did. It was a summer job for them. It gave them an opportunity to learn about business. They had an opportunity to understand input and the agricultural practices of growing, in their case, sweet corn. They learned about things like customer relations and customer service. Our farm is situated en route to Lake Huron, so we are en route to Port Franks, Ipperwash and Grand Bend. People come by from urban areas in the summertime and they see the sign that says there's sweet corn available and they'll stop. I remember very well my daughters managing the stand while their brother ran in and out of the sweet corn field with the wheelbarrow and kept putting the sweet corn in, and people were buying it as fast as he could get it out to the side of the road. It was an interesting exercise in understanding public relations and how important customer service is when you are doing these kinds of things.

We talk about the need to address this policy. I do understand that the Ministry of Transportation is looking at its sign policy, and I hope that when they do this they will address this specific interest, because, again, I find that this is a seasonal opportunity. It's an opportunity for farmers to increase and add to their income. But as I said, it's also an opportunity for our young farm people to have some employment and to learn business skills. I think good signage is part of running a business. You need to be able to make your way to the farm gate to be able to buy the products.

The member from Welland was talking about the need to bring local and Ontario product into Queen's Park. I want to certainly commend Speaker Steve Peters for the

work that he has done in bringing Ontario produce and products into our cafeteria and dining room. I noticed that in the members' lobbies, on each side, there are now apples and pears, and they're seasonal right now. You can get apple juice and other Ontario juices there, and those are the kinds of things that I think we, as members, are obligated to do—support our farmers and our communities by having these products here. I find, again, that it's a very important thing that we're doing.

As I move through and look at this bill, I can only say that I'm fully in support of this. I think it makes absolute sense. We need to be able to promote the Buy Ontario and Pick Ontario Freshness campaigns that our government has put \$56 million into for the next five years.

1410

They did a survey through Foodland Ontario. The survey says that 78% of the shoppers can recall having seen or heard the Foodland Ontario advertisements. Some 78% recognize what these ads are doing, and I'm sure almost that many can sing it, so it certainly is important. And they say close to 94% recognize the Foodland Ontario symbol. So we know that our consumers are looking for these products, they're buying them in their grocery stores. Now we want to make sure that they have the opportunity to buy them, not only at their local stores, but also from their local farmers.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome Bill 98. I support the bill. I congratulate the member from Oxford for bringing it forward. Through my office, we've been fighting this issue for several years now, specifically on behalf of Charles Emre, who was mentioned earlier, an asparagus grower down in my riding. Also thank you to Brenda, another asparagus grower in our area, for being here this afternoon on behalf of the OFVGA.

Charles Emre has a number of farms, and for the past 23 years he's had a sign—on provincial Highway 24, just a couple of miles north of my constituency office—that says, "Fresh Asparagus for Sale," and it gives you a clue as to where to go to get it, because you can't get it right on that provincial highway. Locally grown produce: There's an urgent need to resolve not only his issue, but the issue of many farmers across the province. Hence, we have legislation before us—the Signage to Promote Ontario Grown Agricultural Food Products Act, 2008—something that I would say every one of us in this House agrees with.

It was a year ago last summer that Mr. Emre's sign turned up missing. He stormed into our office. He was furious. Thanks to my staff, we did a search and we discovered it in the MTO yard in Brantford—it had been confiscated by workers—and made arrangements for it to be returned. I understand it was taken during night time.

This year, after arranging to post the sign again on a private field beyond the ministry's road allowance, Mr. Emre received what amounts to a "cease and desist or else" letter from the MTO.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: What kind of government is this?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, I'll quote from this government letter: "This letter serves as notice to cease this activity and remove the device immediately.... Failure to do so may result in removal of the device ... and may result in charges being laid."

Charles Emre reports that, as soon as that sign got ripped down by government, his sales dropped 50%, especially on those big spring weekends when you get your sales.

The news has not been taken well locally. People are behind Mr. Emre and others, some have suggested. I want to quote from a publication, UR Norfolk:

"Anyone wishing to advertise the selling of their home-grown produce in Norfolk should find or build a covered wagon, stack something that looks like a few transparent bags of illegal cigarettes on it, attach a Mohawk Warriors Society flag to this wagon and then attach a large sign on that wagon advertising their particular product for sale.

"That would guarantee that no one from the MTO or the OPP or the RCMP would interfere or dare touch any part of that sign."

These are the times we are living in, certainly in our part of southern Ontario.

The mayor of Norfolk county—he got involved this summer—categorized the move by Ontario's transportation ministry as being, as he characterized it, "abusive and threatening."

Mr. Emre is far from the only farmer to be dissuaded from promoting his produce grown locally. Others have run afoul of MTO authorities enforcing signage laws in this province. Examples across rural areas are inconsistent enforcement, and provincial sign laws lead to confusion, red tape, and lost revenues for Ontario farmers.

For that reason, I fully support Bill 98. We got nowhere dealing with staff summer after summer trying to resolve this issue. Obviously we've got to change the law, and I welcome this proposed legislation.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm pleased to support this great piece of legislation.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: No, that was me.

There's a long history of farmers being able to sell their produce off their farms. It's guaranteed in the British North America Act, as I understand it. In fact, in the 1950s, when the QEW, the Queen Elizabeth Way, was opened—I guess it was opened before that, but when it became a higher-speed highway in those days, the farmers along the QEW used to sell their produce over the fence to motorists passing by. As traffic moved faster, that became a traffic hazard and it became dangerous, and so a negotiation took place and the farmers built a number of fruit stands along the highways. Of course, I think most people here can remember when those fruit stands were up and operating. They have ceased to operate now, because there is a different, more sophisticated marketing process down there for roadside mar-

kets. Those roadside stands marketed farmers' produce for many, many years through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and on into the 1990s. That guaranteed farmers the right to sell their product off their farms, and they have that right in Canada.

It's almost a given that when you have the right to sell something, you should also have the right to sign that the products are for sale, and directions for where that sale is taking place. That's the motive behind the member for Oxford's bill. It is one that is long overdue. We hear stories about the Ministry of Transportation having gone to extraordinary lengths—given the conditions of our highways, you should think they would have something else to do; they could go and fill in a pothole or two—to keep their highways pristine of farmers' signs to sell their produce, and that's wrong.

There are so many advantages to buying your produce locally. It's not only more nutritious; there's also the ability to buy varieties that you can't get anywhere else, varieties that perhaps don't ship as well, but have a terrific flavour. One of my favourite strawberry varieties is called Bounty. It does not ship and it does not keep very well, but it has the most fantastic flavour. If you've had the opportunity to eat some wild strawberries with that tremendous flavour, Bounty have a flavour very similar to that—but they will not ship. You can buy them occasionally at roadside stands. I could go on with this subject for a long time. I haven't even started on apples yet, but I see my time is out. I support the—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Member for Oxford, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Peterborough, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Welland, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Haldimand–Norfolk, and Halton for their kind comments. I was somewhat surprised. I knew that everyone had great interest in making sure that our agriculture community was helped in any way they could, but I did expect that there would be some opposition to looking at something like this. I'm happy to hear that everyone is here and supporting it, and I thank them for that.

I just want to answer the one question that I think the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex mentioned, the issue about how, hopefully, we could change it to allow it to be put on land that did not belong to the person putting out the sign. I just wanted to point out that if you read the bill very closely, you'll find that the only requirement is that the produce or the product on the sign has to be the product of the owner of the sign, not of the property that the sign is being put on. So it is intended to allow a farmer to put it out on the highway where his farm is maybe two or three miles down the country road. I just wanted to clarify that for all those gathered.

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As I said, I want to thank everyone for taking this in the vein in which it was intended, which is to help farmers. We've heard some debate about the zealotry of the enforcers of the law. I just want to point out that

the reason we brought this bill forward was not because people were enforcing the law, but that the law isn't correct, and to change it so they will no longer be required to deal with those signs along the road, if they're properly situated.

I just want to say again, thank you for supporting this bill. If this bill passes, goes to committee and gets third reading, it will once again allow our consumers to follow the signs to the best food product in the world. Thank you very much for allowing me to put this forward.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Peter Kormos: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should move expeditiously to establish and implement a comprehensive jobs program that would contain the following components:

—A jobs-focused Manitoba and Quebec style investment tax credit that would encourage manufacturers and processors to make capital investments and create jobs.

—An industrial hydro rate that would ensure that all major industrial and resource-based consumers would be eligible for a fair new industrial hydro rate guaranteed for five years.

—A “Buy Ontario” program that would ensure that the billions of dollars in transit, other infrastructure investments, and health and education that governments make every year create good-paying jobs in Ontario and not in far away places.

—Job protection legislation that would ensure that laid-off workers receive the severance, back-pay and vacation pay that is owed to them by law.

—A jobs commissioner and other job-sustaining initiatives that would complement the above measures in protecting jobs and preventing plant closures such as the announced John Deere closure in Welland which will cost 800 workers their jobs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Kormos has moved private member's notice of motion number 51. Pursuant to standing order 97, Mr. Kormos, you have up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It is trite at this point in this province's history to declare that we are suffering an epidemic of job loss in the resource and manufacturing sectors. It's a pandemic, in that it's affecting workers and communities across this province from the north to the south. Down where I come from in the riding of Welland, Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, and St. Catharines, it is as acute as it is anywhere in this province, because those communities in Niagara through to Hamilton are historical industrial manufacturing communities. The economies of those communities are manufacturing economies, industrial economies.

The resolution makes reference to John Deere. We all know John Deere, the green-and-yellow-trimmed agricultural implement, along with residential-use lawnmowers and small garden tractors and the four-wheel vehicles used by farmers and in provincial parks, amongst other places. It's a production facility in Welland that is his-

toric, a profitable production facility, a modern production facility, a production facility in which John Deere had only just made some significant investment, with a workforce—and I know these workers well; I know these women and men really well. I've been in their homes. I've seen them in their churches. I see their kids when I visit their kids' schools, I see them at the Welland market down at the Seaway Mall, I see them at festivals and events in any number of cities across Niagara. These workers are skilled, trained, educated, talented and very, very productive. But their jobs are gone. Not a couple of jobs, not a couple of layoffs—800 jobs gone. And it's not just 800 jobs gone; it's an industrial site that will no longer be paying property taxes, based on an industrial assessment.

What does this mean? Last Saturday, like so many of you, I was with my federal candidate counterpart, Malcolm Allen, down in Welland. We were at the Seaway Mall, saying hi to people, howdy, encouraging them to vote in the federal election. I'll tell you, for a Saturday afternoon, the Seaway Mall was a pretty lonely place. Merchants were coming out of their stores, stopping Malcolm Allen and me, and expressing their concerns about their futures in their retail shops. A hard-working woman with a toy store is worried about bankruptcy. This isn't some multi-layered corporation with all sorts of subcorporations that can cover itself in the event of a—when she goes bankrupt, she goes bankrupt personally. The house is gone. The failure of her shop, which has been great, very efficiently run—and it made modest profits allowing her to support herself. Retailers work 80-hour weeks, with very little pay, no vacation pay, no vacation, but she's been pleased to do it. The bankruptcy of that shop means she loses her home; she becomes not just jobless, but homeless too. She knows, like the other retailers we talked to—and the same goes for any one of you. I'll bet you my colleague from Oshawa, who is going to be talking later this afternoon, could tell you the same thing about retailers in his town. These retailers know within a day when there's been a factory shutdown, when there have been job losses, because people don't buy toys for their kids, they don't buy suits and sports jackets for themselves, they don't buy furniture, they don't buy those modest vacations like a couple of weeks in Florida to escape the brutal weather of January or February. These retailers knew within a day that John Deere shut down, eliminated 800 jobs.

The fact that John Deere will no longer be paying industrial taxes doesn't reduce the city's overall costs. We won't need, down in the city of Welland, any fewer police officers, any fewer firefighters, any fewer city sanitation workers when the John Deere factory closes. The revenue demand is going to remain the same, and that's going to shift on to residential property owners, the same ones who just lost their jobs, who can least afford to pay increased property taxes, because cities across this province have already cut their budgets to the bone. Municipal politicians, God bless them, are the ones who

take the real heat on a daily basis. Municipal politicians have been working very hard, by and large, knowing full well the economic crisis that they're confronting or being confronted with in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario of job losses.

I listened to the government talk about its plan to retrain workers. That's why I made a point of telling you that these John Deere workers, bright young women and men—we're talking workers with not just high school diplomas, but college degrees, university degrees, skilled trades. Retrain them for what?

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When workers were losing their jobs at the beginning down in Niagara, they used to go to Niagara College and some other courses and programs to learn how become blackjack dealers or slot machine technicians so they could work in the casino. Well, the casino is laying people off. There are no jobs at the casino. People are losing jobs at the casino. Retrain them for what?

Mr. Michael Prue: Call centres.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, I heard the minister just today tell two stories, one about a worker who had lost his job who was trained in culinary management. Look, I'm a fan of cuisine. I'm the restaurant industry's best friend, let me tell you. I have every respect for people in the culinary trades, but let's be candid: Right now, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, a diploma in culinary management means what? Assistant manager at a McDonald's, maybe a Burger King. The fact is, only this many of the graduates of those programs are going to become the next Emeril.

Let's talk about yet another worker who lost his job in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario but is in law and security training. He or she might just get hired by the Niagara Regional Police Force, but in all likelihood, and you know this as well as I do, Speaker, that means working as a security guard for \$12 or \$13 an hour on a good day.

There's nothing wrong with those jobs. By God, those people work hard. But you know what? At \$10, \$11 and \$12 an hour, you don't send kids to college and university. At \$10, \$11 and \$12 an hour, you don't pay mortgages. At \$10, \$11 and \$12 an hour, you don't pay taxes, other than the inevitable provincial sales tax and GST. At \$12 an hour, you're not making much of an economic contribution to the economy of your community, your province or your country. You're scraping by. At \$12 an hour, you're spending more time at the Goodwill store—you are, and God bless those people—than you are in the Sears or the Bay.

This government is going to retrain 250,000 industrial manufacturing workers and 250,000 more that we're told will lose their jobs over the course of the next three years of Dalton McGuinty? Train them? I asked this question the other day: What are you going to train them to do? Are you going to put tutus on those John Deere workers, send them down the road to the opera house and have them dance the ballet?

You can retrain people all you want, but they've got to have jobs to go to once they've been retrained. Dalton

McGuinty has abandoned the workers of this province. Dalton McGuinty has abandoned this province's economy.

There are things he can and should be doing right now—Buy Ontario, what a remarkable idea. How effective that may well have been for John Deere and its products. Buy Ontario—what a remarkable idea and what an effective thing that might have been for Abitibi paper in Thorold. An industrial hydro rate—what a remarkable thing that may have well have been for John Deere and even more so for Abitibi paper, a large high-electricity consumer. For the paper industry, their big concern all the time, inevitably, is the cost of electrical power. There are things that this government can and should be doing right now, and they're the proposals contained in this resolution.

I say, as New Democrats, we're prepared to stand here and fight for working women and men in this province and their jobs. We simply ask the Liberals to join us. The workers of this province and their families deserve no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Pickering—

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Pickering—Scarborough East.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: That's the riding that now spans the 905 region and Toronto. It's an interesting environment.

I'm pleased to be able to join this afternoon's debate on the member from Welland's private member's resolution. It certainly has the flavour of resolutions, private members' bills and probably elements of the NDP campaign platform all contained within. I wish I could stand with the level of enthusiasm that was expressed for the private member's bill we dealt with a few moments ago, but I can't do that.

During the almost 15 years and beyond from 1990 to 2003, the province chose to swing dramatically in its adoption of political philosophy. It brought to power an NDP government that turned out to be not only unresponsive to business, but ultimately unresponsive to the workers of the province. The public of the day decided, in 1995, after one mandate, that they wanted a change in direction and swung to the hard right at that point in time, under the premiership of Mike Harris and the then-Conservatives of Ontario, who had, I might suggest, some disdain for workers in the province of Ontario.

In 2003, the province chose to endorse a government that wanted to work, and has worked, with industry and with the workforce in partnership, as well as with partners in government. In 2007, again with a resounding majority, more so than what occurred in the year 2000 with the second majority government of the Harris era, they reinforced the desire for the work that was established from 2003 until then—that first mandate—to be reinforced.

Some of the results of that work also need to be on the record during the discussion of this resolution. We need

to have on the record that, since 2003, there have been almost 450,000 net new jobs established in the province of Ontario, and over 70% of those are good-paying, full-time jobs. That's not to diminish in any way the job losses—manufacturing or otherwise—or the individuals and families who are affected by those job losses, particularly, I would suggest, in communities that are either single-industry or dominated by a single industry, where the impact is felt the hardest. But at the same time, we have to acknowledge this massive increase in employment province-wide and the increase in employment in full-time jobs in the province.

From January to August of this year alone, Ontario created 60% of the new jobs in all of this country. That's not quite the same tone as the resolution and as the mover of the resolution would express. But it does speak to continued successes here in Ontario, in spite of the very uncertain and challenging times we find ourselves in at this point. We have made choices during our time in government to support industry, thus supporting the workers in those industries. That's why, during the early part of our first mandate, we were so adamant about our auto sector strategy and encouraging the federal government to join us in that with the private sector.

We are losing some jobs in the auto sector, and I expect the member from Oshawa will be speaking to this matter—I see him nodding a bit—and will have some comments to make. But some of the jobs we're losing are a result of product choice. When you see a collapse in the truck market, there is little question that some elements of truck building will go by the wayside. But you see Toyota building a new plant in Woodstock, Ontario, that will employ many hundreds of employees. When the likes of GM decided to establish the new Camaro line in Oshawa—and we only hope that that product, as they modify that product, will catch the public's attention and bring back some of those lost jobs. It's why we made the choices about investing in the auto sector, because it is such a key element of the province of Ontario's economic climate. We remain the largest jurisdiction in North America for auto manufacturing.

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We're investing in job skills. We're investing in retraining. We're investing in young people with the Reaching Higher program so we can meet the next generation of needs in this province for workers.

There's not enough time, in the modest time we have, to cover all of the area in any way whatsoever. I simply wanted to reiterate that, in spite of some of the comments that were made in respect to job loss and the like, this province has done and continues to do well considering the economic climate we face here in Canada, in the US and abroad.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Before I get into the substance of what I'd like to say, just a comment with reference to what we just heard from the member for Pickering–Scarborough East relative to what he described as disdain

for workers during the era of the Conservative government. It's interesting that my friend says that. I'm a Conservative, and if somebody says, "You're a Conservative through and through," I would say, "Guilty as charged." For 15 years I ran my own company, and for another 15 years I was a CEO of a large company, and I bet you couldn't find a worker, out of literally thousands of workers who have been in my employ, who would say that I was disdainful of them.

I say that in the context of speaking to this motion, because I find myself in the somewhat unusual position of feeling encouraged, and in cautious support for the motion proposed by my friend, the member from Welland. I say it that way because, first of all, he is my friend; secondly, I say "cautious support" because it's not often that you find a person with Conservative values saying that, on the issue of employing people in this province and on making the economy work again, you would find a fair amount of commonality between conservatism and what the New Democratic Party espouses. So I have to say that I support the spirit of the motion. Surprisingly, it is driven, in my opinion, by what I consider to be, in broad strokes, conservative principles that are underlined in the motion itself.

Normally, when it comes to the economy and when it comes to business, the NDP and my party are on opposite sides, and today I find myself able to relate. What that demonstrates is an amount of creativity and some common cause. I would hope that on all sides of the House—in fact, I would have to say that on all sides of the House, we want the economy to thrive. But at this point, we have to start being in an offensive posture, and I hear too much of a defence from the other side.

I know for a fact that on the backbenches of the government side, there is as much concern at the riding level as there is in our caucus, as there is in the NDP caucus, and I understand the reason for the motion put forward by the member from Welland. The ideas that are driving this motion are what the McGuinty government ought to be thinking about. But unfortunately, I don't believe that the McGuinty government is doing an awful lot of thinking at all, or at least not sharing any of this creativity that I'm talking about, which it may well have in reserve, and that is providing incentives to stimulate our economy rather than throwing money away and wasting money on band-aid solutions to what I have to describe as an economic crisis. If you've consulted the Toronto Stock Exchange today, we're down over 600 points, and this is not in response to what's going on in the States as much as it is looking inward at our own resource sector.

The motion proposes tax credits. Could that lead to business retention? Do you think? The answer is yes, it could. It proposes lower costs of doing business through lowering hydro rates, or at least fixing them for a finite period, which is another reasonable approach and an approach that our party has put forward before.

I want to commend the member for Welland for this motion. It is these kinds of motions that will keep jobs in

Ontario, because they force discussion, and that discussion addresses this crisis—and I do use the word “crisis” again to underscore what we’re dealing with in Ontario now.

You see, what the McGuinty government doesn’t seem to understand is that if you make it easy for business or manufacturing or employers to operate in Ontario, they will stay in Ontario, and that’s what we’re trying to stimulate. It means that our skilled workforce will have jobs to go to in Ontario. Instead, Premier McGuinty has turned Ontario into a sinking ship and is forcing our most skilled labour to flee for the shores of Saskatchewan or Alberta or other provinces, while Céline Dion sings the theme song from Titanic.

This position is oftentimes characterized by the government as not standing up for Ontario. I think the best thing I or my friend from Welland can do as a member, in terms of standing up for Ontario, is to discuss motions like this and to come together—I would hope all three parties and our independent friend—to look at ways together to come up with something for Ontario that stops the bleeding.

Instead of showing leadership, the McGuinty government is happily skipping down the yellow brick road and leaving the opposition to come up with ways to save our province. Let’s do it together is what I propose.

Again, I want to commend the member for Welland for his work on this motion. When I listen to him speak, I enjoy the kind of passion that I hear. It is not just his riding of Welland—he knows this all too well—a more rural riding, a smaller-town riding, a riding with agriculture and industry in it, compared to, say, my riding of Thornhill, which is an urban riding, doesn’t have an awful lot of industry, has some retail, and \$100,000 is the average yearly family income—very different from Welland; and yet there is the same kind of discussion as I talk to people in the Tim Hortons of my riding, or at the doors. People are concerned about their jobs; they’re concerned about their families; they’re concerned about their kids in university.

It’s something that we share, so once again, I commend my friend from Welland, and I will be supporting this motion.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: The job crisis: We believe in a good job for everyone, because a good job is the best way to make sure working women and men share Ontario’s prosperity.

In Ontario, manufacturing and forestry jobs are some of our very best jobs. But there’s a problem in Ontario’s manufacturing and forestry heartlands: a job crisis. Since July 2004, almost 230,000 Ontarians in the manufacturing sector have lost their jobs.

I shouldn’t have to tell the members across the floor how important manufacturing and resource jobs are to this province. These jobs are not just important because in addition to paying better, these jobs also come with good pensions and good benefits. All this is important,

but there’s another reason why maintaining and strengthening Ontario’s manufacturing and resource sector is crucial. Dalton McGuinty likes to pretend that the current job crisis is limited only to manufacturing and forestry, but anyone who knows anything about the Ontario economy knows that manufacturing and resource represent the foundation on which Ontario’s service economy rests. If you have problems in the manufacturing and resource sector, you will eventually have problems in the retail, financial services and other areas of this service economy.

The second quarter economic accounts released by the Minister of Finance a few days ago are disturbing in this respect. The real news from the report isn’t just that output from the manufacturing sector continues to decline. The real news is that when you combine reports from the first two quarters of this year, it becomes clear that the rest of the economy is no longer picking up the slack, and we’re ending up with declining output in many sectors of the broader economy. The end result is cratering manufacturing sectors, surrounded by a no-growth economy.

I think this means that the working families of this province are facing economic challenges they’ve never faced before. In fact, I believe there are fundamental changes taking place in the economy that require innovative, activist government action now.

Due to the global financial crisis and the failed federal and provincial policies, Ontario’s economic foundation is threatening to crumble, and I believe that government must respond now.

The NDP believes that the government has to play an active role in protecting good-paying jobs when those jobs can’t be saved. Making sure that workers who have committed a lifetime to an employer are treated fairly and given every opportunity to return to the labour force in comparable jobs, not lesser jobs. The McGuinty government doesn’t believe in an activist government. Mr. McGuinty has stood on the sidelines showing absolutely no leadership, while factories and mills downsize and close, costing hundreds of thousands of workers.

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I’m here to tell you that the NDP doesn’t see things that way. We believe that sometimes the market works and sometimes it doesn’t, and when it doesn’t—and this is one of those times in Ontario’s economic history when the market definitely isn’t working—the government must step in on behalf of hard-working men and women and set things right.

Here are just some of the policies the NDP has been fighting for, for the last couple of years: a five-year guarantee on industrial hydro rates, a jobs protection commissioner to help at-risk companies overcome financial difficulties and save jobs, the Buy Ontario policy and tougher plant closure legislation that would ensure that everything is done to prevent profitable plants or mills from closing; in addition, no longer advance-notice and enhanced mandated severance; expansion of severance eligibility and increase in advance notice in mass layoff

situations, pensions and wage protection that would make sure that workers get every penny they are owed from their employer when their company becomes insolvent or goes into bankruptcy—I believe I brought that forward in Bill 6, which fell on deaf ears—and finally, a refundable manufacturing resource investment tax credit that would provide real incentive for manufacturers—equipment and machinery—that leads to high-paying, good-quality jobs.

These are just some of the constructive ideas we've put forward in the past few years to deal with Ontario's job crisis, and every last one of them has been shot down. No, I'm not saying that these ideas are the whole story, and I want to make it clear that we in the NDP will continue to look for new and creative ideas to deal with unprecedented economic crisis.

There are three other job-related issues that are important. Before I conclude, I want to address three other closely related issues that the NDP believe requires reform to make economic security a reality for Ontario workers: labour and pension law reform, and enhanced regulation of the financial markets. Week after week, New Democrats rise in this House and speak to the need for labour law reform in this province. For far too long, labour laws in this province have tilted overwhelmingly in favour of employers and against men and women who attempt to exercise their constitutional right to bargain collectively. It is also a fact that for far too long, workers who try to form a union in this province have been intimidated, threatened and even fired for their union activities. I want to say this directly to the Premier: If, in the province of Ontario, you can sign a card and become a member of the Liberal Party of Ontario, then you should damn well be able to sign a card and become a member of a democratically controlled union.

I also want to say a few words about pension reform. Quite frankly, defined pension reforms are in serious trouble in this province. In the private sector, the proportion of workers covered by these plans has fallen from 30% in the late 1980s to just under 20% today. The trend line isn't good and the frustrating part of it is that it doesn't have to be this way. We desperately need to reform the pension rules of this province so that employers with existing pension plans are no longer allowed to walk away from their retirement obligations to their employees after a lifetime of dedication. We also need rules that encourage the formation of far more new, defined pension plans in workplaces where workers currently have no pension coverage. The time has come for new rules that encourage multi-employer pensions and other innovative plans, so that the men and women of this province can retire with dignity and security. We, on this side of the House, look forward to the Arthurs pension report, which I believe will be released relatively soon.

Finally, I'd like to say a word or two about the ongoing crisis gripping the world's financial markets. Listen, I don't pretend to be an expert in any of this, but I was struck by a recent interview with Joseph Stiglitz, an American economist who won a Nobel Prize in eco-

nomics a few years back, and presumably knows his way around these issues. Stiglitz made the case for a financial product safety commission, just like we have for consumer goods. His reasoning is that, of late, financiers have been inventing products not intended to manage risk but to create risk. Stiglitz also makes the case for greater transparency, yet he makes the interesting observation that all regulators knew these dangerous financial products were out there but they were just too complex and no one could understand them.

In conclusion, I can only speak from my perspective about Hamilton. Hamilton has been decimated in the last few years with the exit of major manufacturers in our community—17,000 jobs related to the Hamilton area in the last 10 years. It's incredible. But what is going on? I can name at least 50 major manufacturers that have left Hamilton, but I can say that under this present government, under this situation, not one major manufacturer has come into Hamilton. You wonder why we're in trouble? We're not attracting business. As my colleague from Welland says, you can train all the people you want, but when they're getting on trains, when the Premier of Saskatchewan is coming here and signing people up to go to Saskatchewan and they're going to the tar sands after we paid to train them—they have to leave because there are no jobs in Ontario. This has got to stop.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I've got to comment on the member from Pickering when he talks about the disdain the Conservatives have for workers and jobs. I think he's got that exactly opposite: Conservatives worship jobs; we worship workers. Jobs are the way you keep score in an economy. In our term of office, after five years of being in power in Ontario, we had created a million new jobs. That's more than twice as many as your government has created in your first five years. Yes, a million new jobs mean a million new dreams, a million new hopes and a million new lives. Jobs are the way you keep score in an economy. I don't know where the member from Pickering comes off talking about how this government or any government that we've been part of would have disdain for jobs.

But we're here to talk about a comprehensive job program from the member for Welland—Welland-Thorold or just Welland?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Welland-Thorold's fine with me too.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Welland-Thorold—yes, the great city of Thorold: It's the only place in Ontario I know of where you can sit and watch a baseball game and have a ship rise out of the ground; in 15 or 20 minutes, a full ship is sitting there in front of you where none existed before. It's like magic. You've been to that ball diamond.

There are a number of components in this particular proposal. One of course is a jobs-focused Manitoba and Quebec style investment tax credit that would encourage manufacturers and processors to make capital investment

in jobs. This is like a reverse capital tax. This government has done away with the capital tax in Ontario, phased it out. It will be gone in 2010, I believe, and that's a good thing; that's a very positive thing. When you want companies to invest, you don't tax them every time they make an investment.

The next stage to that competitiveness would be a review of the provincial sales tax, because about 40% or 50% of the provincial sales tax comes from investments by business into capital goods or in raw products. Taxing businesses for their input costs is also a negative thing to do in an economy. It would be far better if we could find a way to harmonize the PST with the GST, which would have the PST then act like a value-added tax. It would not be a hardship on employers, and they would become 4%, 5% or 6%—depending on what their manufacturing and purchases are, they would become that much more competitive. It would be a good idea.

This idea of tax relief is a good one, particularly coming from the NDP. It's not something that I would have thought the NDP would support, but we hold out hope that the NDP are learning. And if the NDP can learn, how far behind could the Liberals be? It would appear they're quite a ways behind, but perhaps they can catch up with this. It's a way to attract smart business. Smart businesses go to low-cost jurisdictions.

Of course, businesses move slowly over time. It's not something that happens in the blink of an eye. I would suggest that it takes about a year and a half before you start to see the effects of these kinds of things, that there's a lag time in there. But when it does happen, it tends to build momentum, and that momentum can be a very powerful thing because it creates jobs. Every new job is a new taxpayer and every new taxpayer allows you to make the investments in health care, in education, in the environment and those things that Ontarians expect their government to fund for them in a very real way.

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This Liberal government has over the past five years been in the business of picking winners and losers, not making the entire business community competitive but to pick a winner here and a winner there and reinvesting in those companies, trying and hoping that they are going to be successful. All too often, we have seen examples where the government has not picked well, where some of those companies that have been picked have done poorly or have laid off workers and been unsuccessful in their expansion dreams. That's too bad, because that's taxpayers' money. That's very hard-earned taxpayers' money that has been spent on these projects that have not always been successful. Whereas if you spend that money in making your jurisdiction competitive, every business wins. Every single business in Ontario wins when the jurisdiction becomes just that much more competitive, and that's a good thing.

The tax credit, of course, is a good idea. I think it's one part of a tax strategy. As a Conservative, I would suggest that perhaps it doesn't go far enough. It goes a long way for the NDP. I would suggest the Liberals

should be in the middle and they should be bringing these kinds of things forward and encouraging these kinds of tax incentives.

I'm quickly running out of time. The industrial hydro rate—again, a good idea. It should not just last for five years. The pulp and paper industry isn't going to go away in five years. I don't think somebody's going to open a paper mill for only five years. I think that competitive hydroelectric rates have—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I have but a couple of minutes, so I want to talk about the recession as I see it happening in Toronto, because oftentimes the city in which I live and in which this building exists seems to be jobs-reduction proof, and that is in fact not the case.

I had an opportunity last night to go along the Danforth, to many of the stores and buildings that were there and the places where people worked, and I saw them boarded up. I had not seen this for a long time. The recession is coming to Toronto and the recession is here. People who had good jobs in those stores and good jobs in the factories that surround them are now starting to leave. It's difficult in a place like Toronto, as I'm sure it is in Hamilton or any places where the jobs were there a long time ago, where the factories are old, where the technology and the times have not kept up with them—those are among the first to leave, and I would suggest that we in Toronto need to do something about it.

I'm here to talk about—because I have such a limited period of time—the Buy Ontario policy, because I think that is the one key factor that we can do to turn this thing around. When I was mayor of East York, we had a Buy Ontario policy and a Buy East York policy. It was remarkable in the way we were able to produce jobs locally, to keep those jobs and keep the factories going.

I would suggest that the Liberals need very strongly to look at this: to buy cars made in Ontario, to buy all of the factory-produced goods that are made in this province. If the government only does that one thing, if the government only agrees to that, we can create and keep thousands of jobs. We are a big consumer in this province—the province itself is a big consumer. It needs to be done. Please, seriously consider this motion.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I heard some very rational commentary from the member from Welland. I think that one of the things that would really help is if we started to understand that unless we start to get the message clearly across to the people of Ontario, and we get the message across to all members of the federal Parliament—that we have to have a new paradigm when it comes to Ontario's economy, and that new paradigm cannot be built on the shaky foundation of equalization. We on this side of the House said the same thing to the Martin Liberals; we're saying the same thing to the Harper Conservatives. We said that it is fundamentally impossible to bring about the new economic paradigm unless there is a change made.

Year after year, day after day, whether it's the people in Welland or the people in East York or the people in west Toronto, we can't rebuild our economy through this transition unless we're allowed—that is, the people of Ontario; not the government of Ontario, not Premier McGuinty's money. It is the money of the people of Ontario, through their income tax, through their small business taxes.

Why should a small businessman in Leamington be giving half of his GST and small business tax to support \$7 daycare in Quebec when we can't even afford daycare here in Ontario? The people in Leamington are supporting lower tuition in the province of Quebec. God love them in Quebec and God love them in the other provinces for having gotten this sweetheart equalization deal. But it is not right, day after day, to take the hard-earned money out of the pockets of the people of Welland and keep shipping it to other provinces. Can you imagine what the people of Welland or the people of St. Catharines or the people of Scarborough could do if they were allowed to keep some of that money so they could help small business, so they could put money into roads, into green jobs? But we can't do that because of equalization.

As I said, it's not just the Harper government that has done this. This has been in effect for decades, because the people of Ontario have always been very generous in sharing their economic wealth.

If you're out of work in Timmins, why should you have to wait more weeks to be eligible for employment insurance? Why should you have to go through so many hoops to be eligible in Ontario, whereas it's automatic in these other provinces?

Anyway, these are some of the things we have to change. We can talk about all these new programs until the cows come home—and the member has some good ideas here—but fundamentally we have to shift that economic equalization paradigm. If we don't do that, we're going to have a hard time in Ontario.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say it's an interesting argument the government puts forward: We can't do anything because we have to deal with the bad federal government that's not giving us what we need to be good to the workers in York, the workers in Hamilton and the workers in Timmins.

I want to remind this House that equalization was around in the 1960s, and Ontario had jobs, Ontario was building an economy, and we were giving far more money per capita than we do now into equalization. Don't argue to Ontarians and to me that the reason why you can't respond to the crisis of jobs and the economy in Ontario is because of the bad equalization deal that we may or may not have with Ottawa. That's poppycock.

The issue is, you have tools. You're the government. You're the guys with the limo. You have tools that you can take out of your tool box that you can bring for solutions to the problems in our communities.

I'll give you an example. The communities of Opasatika and Smooth Rock Falls, which both lost their only employers—if we'd had a jobs commissioner, as is being proposed in this particular motion, the jobs commissioner could have sat down with those companies and said, "What can be done to save the jobs that we have today?" If at the end of the day the jobs couldn't have been saved, they could, at the very least, through the jobs commissioner, lever the tools of government to say, "Okay, if the mill is shutting down, let's keep the fibre tied to the community, so that when the economy comes back around, there will be a successor employer."

We have tools in government that we can use without having to whine to the federal government. The problem is an Ontario problem. Yes, it's the world economy; yes, it's North America; yes, it's Canada. But each government has tools at its disposal to be able to respond to the crisis. What we're saying to you is, stop blaming the federal government. This is a problem that we need to face in Ontario. Solicit their help, yes. I have no argument with that. But use the tools that you have to assist the workers, and you can do that by voting for this motion—

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

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Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I only have but a few minutes to talk about the reality of the tools that we have put in place and how those are positively impacting our communities. I'm glad that the member opposite started using the phraseology of tools because I can tell you that the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, \$500 million, is a real, concrete tool that businesses analyze and look at when they're making a decision whether or not to invest in Ontario. The second-career strategy, and the funds that are available to assist those who need to retrain, is a concrete deliverable that our government has put in place that is having a positive impact on the lives of people who have been caught in an old-time economic manufacturing sector and want to transition to a new and modern job. That's a real, concrete initiative that is being put in place, along with the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. These are real things that our government has created that are making a difference when businesses around the world are determining whether they want to come and create jobs in Ontario.

This government is standing up. It's fighting for jobs around the world, to bring those jobs here. It's fighting to keep the jobs that are here. It's helping individuals transition and learn skills to get them ready for the new type of job. We are on the offensive. We are out around the world saying, "Come to Ontario." We're working in partnership with both business and labour, the investment sector and the education sector to say, "Come to Ontario; bring your jobs here. We will partner with you, and we will work in partnership with you to make sure that we create the economy of the 21st century." That's what we're doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Welland, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you to all those members who participated in this debate.

With respect, I say to this government: What did its policies do to protect the 800 jobs at John Deere in Welland? What did this government do to protect the hundreds of jobs that are being lost in the month of October at Abitibi in Thorold? What did this government do to protect the jobs at Ferranti-Packard in St. Catharines? What did this government do to protect the jobs at GDX in Welland? What did this government do to protect the quarter of a million jobs that have been lost so far? What is this government doing to protect the other quarter of a million that are predicted to be lost over the next three years of McGuinty rule in this province? Because whatever it thinks it has done, it hasn't worked.

This government is bereft of any policies, any strategy, any plan that has any capacity to protect or save, never mind restore, jobs here in the province of Ontario. This government and its ministers seem resigned and quite pleased to see Ontario's economy turn into a Third World one.

Well, I for one, and New Democrats and fair-minded Ontarians of all political stripes haven't given up on the workers of this province. We understand that it's the manufacturing jobs that are the wealth-creation jobs. Without wealth creation, you don't have an economy. Without an economy, you don't have public health care, you don't have public education, you don't have police on your streets. This is a crisis. It's time for this plan now.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT
SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(CANADIAN MANUFACTURING
AND ASSEMBLY
OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES), 2008
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE
DES SERVICES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
(FABRICATION ET MONTAGE
DE VÉHICULES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
AU CANADA)

Mr. Ouellette moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the Ministry of Government Services Act to regulate the acquisition of government vehicles / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services gouvernementaux afin de réglementer l'acquisition de véhicules gouvernementaux.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to the standing order 97, Mr. Ouellette, you have up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: As I mentioned earlier in discussions today, Oshawa is currently celebrating the 100th anniversary of McLaughlin-Buick. Many didn't realize at that time that after a fire in the plant where Sam McLaughlin was producing, he looked to relocate, and it

was the vision of Oshawa coming forward with a \$50,000 interest-free loan that convinced Sam McLaughlin that Oshawa, Ontario, wanted to work with the auto sector.

And how the auto sector has seen some changes in growth. We've seen the 1965 Auto Pact, which in its time was a leader aiding production of the vehicles made in Oshawa, Ontario and Canada.

For those who don't know, essentially the auto pact stated that for every vehicle sold in Canada, Canada had to produce one vehicle. That's the baseline of what took place in the auto pact. Currently, you see approximately one vehicle coming into Canada and being sold in Canada for every three vehicles that go out. The auto pact was a great way to start moving the auto sector to becoming the number one employer. This aided in the growth of the Canadian auto sector's production, from 846,000 vehicles annually to more than 2.6 million, and close to \$100 billion in value.

The World Trade Organization came forward with a decision that the auto pact was improper and outside the guidelines of global trading, and ended the 35-year agreement.

Ontario has had several other competitive advantages as well, including OHIP and, at the time, workers' compensation, and of course, the value of the dollar.

Other jurisdictions, having seen the way Ontario and employers had benefited, and that we had that competitive advantage, compensated in their structures for health care and workers' compensation, eliminating the advantage Ontario had at that time.

There have been numerous changes in the auto sector sales structure. Many may remember—it was before my time—that individuals used to pick up vehicles in Oshawa, drive them out west to sell them and get their flights back. It was something that a lot of summer students and college and university kids did; they took that long trek out west, because it was cheaper for us to drive vehicles out there and sell them.

Not only that; I know of a number of dealers who used to offer, not so long ago when the value of the dollar was substantially less, to let you come back six months later, after buying your truck, and they would give you the exact price you had paid for it, as long as it was in the same condition, even if there was mileage on it. Then they would sell those vehicles in the southern States, because it was cheaper that way.

It also eliminated a bit of a problem, but that's business doing business. The problem was that they couldn't sell a new vehicle, so they had to wait six months. What was taking place was that individuals in Oshawa were getting brand new trucks every six months, and because of the value of the dollar, it was cheaper to take them down to the States. Well, since the value is gone, so is that opportunity.

We've also heard about how cheap it is, in certain situations, to buy a vehicle in the States and bring it back. Part of the reason for that was lease buyback arrangements. For those who haven't heard, General Motors is

moving away from leasing arrangements, because when the Canadian dollar increased, vehicles were being sold cheaper in the States and that virtually nullified a lot of the leasing buyback arrangements, which upset a lot of people and destroyed their leasing market. I think that's part of the reason they eliminated the leasing component in Oshawa.

Another factor that contributed to changes in the auto sector is the split between the CAW and the UAW. I'm sure the members who were speaking before me—the member from Welland—know very well that the individuals in the UAW were posturing for, and making proposals for, the same jobs as the CAW, which has led to a lot of discrepancies between the two, and the compensation—I mentioned earlier about OHIP, workers' compensation and the allowances that were made—now made them competitive, and Ontario and Canada have lost a lot of those jobs. Those are just some of the things, because those two organizations were fighting for the same jobs.

Oshawa has done a great job in building jobs. We've won awards through the years for the best production, the most productivity and the best-produced vehicles, yet we're still seeing the decline in the sales.

The end result is that Canada built a dependency on the auto sector for the jobs. It was the number one producer of jobs in Canada. The auto sector, with its supply companies—whether it was individuals delivering goods, bringing them back and forth—was the number one sector producing jobs in Canada. Who would have been able to foresee the impact of the failure of the US economy and what has taken place there?

The end result is that they're closing plants. As Mr. Kormos mentioned earlier, when those closures take place and the truck plant closes in Oshawa, the taxation base that would contribute to the city of Oshawa, not only for the truck plant but the north plant—it's gone—who is going to pick that up? We can expect some tax increases as a result of that, because they're still going to want the roads ploughed by the region and everything else that takes place. How is that going to impact the community? It's going to impact everybody quite substantially.

I know that my federal counterpart, Colin Carrie, established a federal committee to do what he could. He met with General Motors and the auto sector to find out what they wanted. Essentially, there were about five key sectors that they wanted some support on. The province, I'm sure, contributed in some fashion to that, although I don't yet fully understand the five-point plan. The only concern I have with it is that we've lost over 250,000 jobs.

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I know the feds contributed to research and development. I know the Prime Minister attended when the engineering department opened in Oshawa. It talked about border crossings and how to make it easier and more transparent for the auto sector to go back and forth—and a supportive tax structure, as the NDP men-

tioned earlier on, to aid in attracting businesses and retaining them here in the province of Ontario. As well, Ontario did contribute to a number of areas, and I acknowledge that.

The difficulty is, we've still lost thousands of jobs in my community, in the auto sector and in the manufacturing sector throughout the province of Ontario. The number one thing that we're constantly hearing about is, when you build a dependency on a number one purchaser, being the United States, and they go bad or they turn and look somewhere else, then you're in trouble. That's what happened in Ontario and in the auto sector.

We hear things about quality and production. I know Mr. Arthurs mentioned the Camaro coming to Oshawa. The expectation is about 100,000 to 120,000 units annually. You constantly hear from the media about who wants these gas-guzzling muscle cars? The reality is that General Motors, for example, this year and the past year won the green vehicle of the year, which was a Yukon. Can you imagine an SUV winning the green vehicle of the year? It was announced in California. It's receiving virtually the same gas mileage as a Toyota Corolla.

Interjection.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Well, that's the claim and that's what won down there. Yes, that's what's taking place. It's because the workers in our communities are producing great, quality vehicles and moving forward.

Now, what can we do? We've lost jobs. The government's job, in my opinion, is to create an environment that attracts, retains and promotes a healthy employment sector, where one can be in an environment where you can live, work and raise a family in a healthy environment.

In my research, I've now introduced five bills—a couple of them twice now—to try and address, or to send a message on, how we can help the auto sector. One was some tax relief for trucks, because there was up to about \$7,000 in additional taxes added onto every one of those trucks. We tried to eliminate that. When times are good and they can afford to pay it, then pay it, but when times are bad and they need some support, let's get rid of it.

Today's bill is designed to do something a little bit different. It formalizes the unwritten procurement policy within the government of Ontario. Essentially, it establishes the priority where Ontario-made vehicles are at the top of the list. It also adds a number of other components as well. Just think about all the government vehicles, whether it's the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Transportation and everything else, and all the vehicles that are utilized there, and how that may send a message out to those individuals.

It adds another area as well, in the renting or leasing of vehicles. If a government member is out from Toronto going to Thunder Bay, they would have to go, essentially, through that same process. That would expose individuals to make sure that they know the high quality of Ontario product that's out there. Not only that, but the leasing and rental companies would then come forward

and hopefully increase their fleet of available domestic product and make sure people have access.

Quite frankly, I would think that the government employees in the province of Ontario, one of the largest group of individuals, as they travel throughout the province making sure everything runs in the fashion that it should, are the ones that lease a high component of the leased and rental vehicles that are out there. This would add incentive to that.

I'm sure my friends from the NDP would like to hear this part as well. It also gives a little kick or a little, how shall I say it, push to the auto sector. It changes the component in the structure in such a way that the determining factor is made in Ontario and made in Canada. Currently, the structure is based on North American free trade; it's 62% content. Content is determined based on the value of production. What I hear is that you can take an engine, say, from Windsor that's produced at a value of \$10,000, and produce that in an Asian country for \$2,000. You get the same component produced at a reduced rate, yet you have a lower concentration of North-American-manufactured components. The end result is you get more products being brought into those vehicles.

What this does is establish 62% based on the volume of production, so that that engine, if it represents 10% of the vehicle's manufacturing, still represents 10% whether it's made in Asia or in Windsor. That way, there would be incentive to have a 62% made-in-Canada component. It's trying to send a message that we need to recognize this; it supports a lot of the other sectors that are out there within the automotive supply industries. They'll come forward and you'll see a lot more individuals—quite frankly, with the high gas dollar, local production will aid in making sure that we can have things produced here as opposed to other jurisdictions and trying to ship them in.

This would essentially bring closer—it would give a better perspective and incentive for the local producers to make sure that there is a high component of goods manufactured right here in Ontario, and in Canada.

I'm hoping that this bill will go to committee so that the province can then have the auto sector come forward and hear from them so that they will give us some insight as to how they feel that we could move forward. I tried, with an open hand, to see if the Premier would be receptive to an all-party committee, and this is the next step in trying to move that forward by allowing the auto sector to come forward and work with the government and see if we can assist. Government's job is to create those environments that will allow business to flourish and prosper, and one of the ways is to lead by example. This is one example of how we can start.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I stand in support of this bill. I know that Mr. Ouellette, the member for Oshawa, has a long-time interest in this matter. He and I have discussed it many, many times, and I appreciate his putting this bill forward and having the

opportunity not only to speak to it but to vote for it and to hope that it—it's got to get to committee. It's got to go to committee so that it can be refined—whether you want to quibble about the 62% value or 62% timely, do that in committee—although Mr. Ouellette, the author of the bill, makes an interesting proposition here and anticipates some of the angles that might be used.

I've got to tell you, when I see public dollars—and I swear, I could be wrong, but I'm sure I saw one of those Mercedes-Benz Smart cars being used here in the city of Toronto as a parking enforcement vehicle. It just rots my socks. I can't for the life of me understand why the public—we're in the midst of this job crisis and we understand that the auto sector is the very core of manufacturing here in Ontario, at the very heart of wealth creation. The author of this bill, Mr. Ouellette, talks about the government, and he's referring in this instance—in my reading of the bill—to the government of Ontario. But I tell you, the committee that considers this bill may well consider saying that any public expenditure in which there's a penny of provincial money, where there is the acquisition of vehicles, should ensure that it's in compliance with this bill.

We're in deep trouble. Look, I take no joy in being a doom-and-gloom predictor, but we're in deep trouble. I don't worry so much about my generation as I do about young folks 20, 21, 22 years old—many of your kids or grandkids. For the life of me, I don't envy them at all. My generation, those baby boomers—I was born in 1952—probably enjoyed the very best that Canada has had to offer. I suppose what drives me is that, yes, my generation of baby boomers, as a result of the hard work and sacrifices of our parents and grandparents, enjoyed the best that Canada has to offer. Surely, we have a responsibility to pass a legacy on to our own children that's as least as good as the one that we enjoyed.

This bill is consistent with the NDP's Buy Ontario policy. There is simply no argument to be made for not adopting this policy by way of this legislation and, for that matter, extending it so that municipalities and any transfer payment agency—think about that, any transfer payment agency—is bound by it as well.

I know autoworkers, I've known them all my life. I know them down where I come from in Niagara and I know them across the province. I was up in Oshawa with Howard Hampton when those workers were fighting to keep their truck line there. Heck, I drive their cars. I suppose the problem I have as an automotive consumer is that I'm driving a 1994 Chev pickup with hundreds of thousands of kilometres on it and it's not ready to go yet. Part of me almost wishes there'd be some rust or some mechanical problems because it would be kind of fun to get a new one, but at the same time I'm more than pleased to have a pickup truck that I—you know what it's like when you drive a pickup truck, don't you, Speaker? It's like owning a pool: All of a sudden you have more friends in your neighbourhood than you ever knew, because somebody has got to take something to the dump on Saturday morning, somebody needs some-

thing moved, somebody's kids are moving out of university residence. The deal is, "We'll give you our car. Let us use your truck for the day." A 1994 Chev pickup—before they had a 1985, the S-10. I've also got a 1991 Buick Park Avenue—1991, a beautiful car. Again, I wish that thing would start rusting, but it keeps running.

1530

There's simply no excuse not to buy vehicles that are North American in the broadest concept and quite frankly that are Ontario in a very direct way. That assembly line in Oshawa has year after year after year won award after award, not from the industry, but from consumer groups. That Chevy Impala that they're putting out of there, those things just won't give up. And now they've got this new Buick Allure. There's a different name for it in Canada than there is in the States. I'll explain that some other time because it's a fascinating little story. But the Buick Allure, Chevy Impala—great cars. Heck, you want a big gas guzzler? Go down to St. Thomas and buy yourself a Crown Vic, Mercury Marquis, whatever you want to call it. They're great fleet vehicles. Cops have been using them for years and continue to use them. Limo services use them and continue to use them. You want economy cars? They're being made in Ontario too.

In difficult times, in times of crisis, it's time for drastic measures. I wish I could call this a drastic measure but it's just, quite frankly, such a modest proposal. It's so inoffensive. It doesn't require any sacrifice on anybody's part. It simply says to elected people in this province that if they want to be serious about keeping jobs here, they've got to be serious about investing in those jobs as consumers too. And I say this: There isn't a member of this Legislative Assembly on the public payroll who has any business driving anything into this parking lot other than something that's made one way or another by auto workers in North America. Down where I come from we've got folks in St. Catharines who work really hard at GM components, a quality product. Jobs were lost there—and the impact of auto job losses is huge. You're talking about a ratio of 6 or 7 to 1. For every auto job that you lose, in the community you lose six or seven other jobs as well. That's huge.

I encourage support, and I look forward to discussing this bill in committee.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: It's a pleasure for me to speak on this bill. I'll be sharing my time with our member, our colleague from Guelph.

I applaud the member from Oshawa for his interest in improving our auto fleet and for bringing forward this bill that intends to ensure that we do everything we can to support the Ontario auto sector. I would like to begin by saying that I agree with this general principle. Who can argue against the principle of supporting our manufacturers? In fact, that's why the McGuinty government has been committed to ensuring investment and innovation in the auto sector right from its inception. We have always made sure Ontario-manufactured vehicles are a

significant component of our government's passenger vehicle fleet and we've continued to improve our policies over time.

Ongoing suggestions to improve our manufacturing sector, to improve our environment and to facilitate a greener economy are welcome. To this end, the government fleet is also becoming leaner and greener and so is our government. As parliamentary assistant to a minister who is passionate about finding ways to reduce our environmental burden, I am proud that are many examples of positive change we can point to. At MGS, we are making it easier for all kinds of small and medium-sized enterprises to do business with government. Over the past two years, recommendations from the Doing Business with the Ontario Government Task Force have been implemented and we're moving forward with removing these barriers one by one. That's why we've been eager to listen to Ontario businesses. We've taken a scan across government and we've asked a simple question: How can we make this easier for Ontario companies to do business with the government?

We're answering this by revising procurement documents—IT terms and conditions, proof of insurance, financial statements, contract requirements and reducing paper burden—and allowing for more regional-based procurement, which means increasing the frequency of vendors that are permitted to bid on only one Ontario region. These are key elements of reducing barriers.

We are dedicated to reducing our carbon footprint in Ontario. For automotive and auto procurement, this means putting greater emphasis on the acquisition of hybrid and alternative technology vehicles. Our government is serious about this, serious enough to make available \$1.15 billion through the Next Generation of Jobs Fund to companies looking to invest in development and manufacturing of green vehicles and cleaner fuel technologies right here in Ontario.

Let me take a moment to outline how we support Ontario's automakers. This government has arrangements with the major auto manufacturers in Ontario to supply approximately 1,500 new vehicles each year. For the 2008 model year, 71.5% of the vehicles purchased were manufactured in Ontario. This is up from 66.2% from the previous model year. When you look at the procurement record of this government and find that it purchased over 70% Ontario-made automobiles, it raises questions about whether Bill 92 may actually water down our existing procurement practices.

We currently have a strong policy that supports Ontario manufacturers and a strong policy for improving our environment. We will continue to support our auto manufacturers while we slash our government's carbon footprint. That's why our OPS fleet consists of 385 hybrid vehicles. That's why Ontario is investing \$15 million in initiatives for automotive manufacturing and innovation, for development of new technologies to make cars lighter and more fuel efficient. That's why in August 2007, the Minister of Government Services approved a green fleet strategy with the following targets for the end

of 2011-12: a 10% reduction in fuel consumption, a 7.7% reduction in the number of vehicles and an overall reduction in the number of kilometres travelled; an increase of hybrid vehicles to 5% of the overall fleet; and a 5% reduction in idling time.

When I say the McGuinty government supports Ontario manufacturers, we don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk. It is evident from our investments that Ontario's investment strategy has helped leverage nearly \$7.5 billion in new automotive investments in Ontario, and all this in only the past four years.

If passed, Bill 92 would require the manufacturing and assembly of vehicles to be first Canadian and then North American if it is cost-effective and operationally feasible. This condition may actually weaken the Ontario policy, which currently does not allow such exemptions. It should also be noted that the bill does not include other types of vehicles. Ontario's fleet policy requires that all types of vehicles be manufactured in North America. When I question whether this bill may water down our current practices, I do so with great respect to the intent of the bill. I also do so with the knowledge that this government's auto strategy is protecting and creating jobs across Ontario. Without it, the issues facing the industry would be more severe. Our procurement policy is part of this strategy.

These are challenging times for the Canadian auto industry as it deals with global competition, weakened demand and a strong Canadian dollar. We will continue to work with all levels of government and industry to address these important issues and foster a strong partnership spirit.

I compliment and thank the member for Oshawa for bringing this bill forward.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm honoured to stand in this chamber today and support my colleague from Oshawa. I am very aware that all 107 of us are very zealous in representing our ridings, our constituencies and knowing the particular elements of those constituencies, but I don't think you'd find anybody who is more anxious, more involved and more a part of Oshawa than the member from Oshawa, and I respect him for it—to the point where the first time I ever played golf with him I had to go to Oshawa. But that's another story for another day.

1540

Bill 92, his private member's bill, An Act to amend the Ministry of Government Services Act to regulate the acquisition of government vehicles, is an important piece of legislation for many reasons. The first one that I can think of is it's kind of axiomatic. One would expect this situation to exist whether there were any legislation to enforce it or not—but not so the case. Wouldn't the average Ontarian just assume we do this? The answer is yes, they would—but we don't. In a time when our automotive industry and manufacturing sector is essentially crumbling—and I don't think I'm overstating it to use

that word—we need to start putting the broken pieces back together.

Interjection: Fearmongering again.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I resent the blame game that we're subject to daily in this chamber. We ask repeatedly about the economy of Ontario and what is being done to address it and we get platitudes.

This bill will do some of that reassembly. It's creative, and one of the essential pieces of a solution. "Solution" implies that there is a problem and, yes, we have a problem. Can we get busy now? This is not fear-mongering, this is about getting busy now. Why is it that there is no legislation protecting our own auto industry when it comes to the government buying cars or leasing them, whatever? Well, now there is, and it should be axiomatic for all members, and therefore all members should be voting for this legislation.

Essentially, the government that has used taxpayer dollars to stimulate this industry should be in there supporting this industry on a continuing basis with its automotive needs. So draw your own conclusions. To me, it makes sense. We have the Ontario government needing to buy, to rent, to lease automobiles. We have Ontario manufacturers right here at home. So it's a no-brainer. This is two plus two equals four. If you buy only from Ontario or Canada, then they will be made in Ontario. That's a great phrase that you don't hear often enough any more—"made in Ontario"—isn't it? A healthy auto sector creates a variety of feeder businesses that are now in peril.

I don't know, but I think the government over there needs a lesson or two in how to bring business in. We need leadership by example. We need some salesmanship. We need an end to the blame game. They've been so used to waving goodbye to manufacturers, business, skilled workers, that they've forgotten how to attract employers to Ontario.

The NDP knows how to attract them. We've heard from my friend from Welland this afternoon. We in the PC caucus know how to attract them. Citizens know how to attract them. So how come Dalton McGuinty doesn't seem to know how to attract them? We need to ensure that at least 62% of manufacturing and assembly is taking place in Ontario.

Here is a short refresher. If it is made in Ontario, that means it stays in Ontario. People will be happy in Ontario. Businesses will remain in Ontario. They did not call this province the engine of Canada for nothing. Stay in Ontario, manufacturers. Government, help manufacturers stay in Ontario. Don't let them go to Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia or the United States. I think every riding in this province has experienced some of that drain. It means 62% more business. It means 62% more jobs. It means 62% more domestic vehicles. To the McGuinty government, however, that means having to give a damn about Ontario, which we all know is not the same as giving a damn about your own precious party, or blaming anyone or anything for our troubles.

Bill 92 will make certain that hybrid alternative fuel and other types of advanced technology vehicles are

taken into consideration first, and we can help develop it. Oh, and I just wanted to point out that this private member's bill is longer and more detailed than a government bill which is supposed to help internationally trained doctors. But I digress. How does that make sense? Well, it's quite simple. My colleague and good friend from Oshawa actually cares about the people of Ontario. It is another case where the McGuinty do-nothing Liberal government believes that if it just ignores everything then the bad stuff will go away. But guess what? It will not. The only thing that is going away right now is our good jobs.

This week, we saw another 500 autoworkers lose their jobs—Volvo in Goderich. It feels like every time we open a newspaper or turn on the news, there's another automotive plant closing down or cutting hundreds, sometimes thousands, of jobs. My colleague has been proactive in trying to help the auto industry, and the government is sitting back and not doing anything. You would think the government would realize that, in order for companies to stay, there needs to be a demand from consumers and help from the government in some form. Here's an idea: When there is a demand for something, business always flourishes. There are currently no electric hybrid vehicles manufactured in Ontario. We need to bring that business into Ontario, and this bill can help do that. There we have it. This will not only help keep jobs in Ontario and Canada, but it will also help the environment.

The Premier of Saskatchewan came to Toronto to recruit our skilled workers. Why? Because he could. Our workers are leaving Ontario because this do-nothing Liberal government won't get up off their rump and keep the jobs where they're supposed to be. Speaking of rump, don't let the door hit you on the backside on the way out of Ontario, because that is exactly what is going to happen, given the current state of affairs.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I stand to support this bill and I stand to support the entire premise that the province of Ontario should be buying Canadian-made goods. We should be driving Canadian-made goods, we should be extolling the virtues of Canadian-made goods, and we should be providing jobs for workers and for communities to prosper.

One need only look at today's business section of the Toronto Star. There's a chilling headline in the business section: "Canada Braces as Auto Sales Crash." That's the statement. Mr. Speaker, not to use it as a prop but to actually read it, it states that sales in Canada actually increased in the month of September, but that's not what is causing problems for our workers. It goes on to say:

"But in the US, their losses were far worse.

"Ford's sales tumbled 34% last month; Chrysler's volumes fell 33%; Toyota's deliveries slid 32.3%; Honda's business dropped 24% and GM's sales were down 15.6%. All five automakers operate major assembly plants in Canada."

Then it quotes Mr. Lewenza, the new CAW chief of the union:

"When there are no customers and no production, substantial layoffs have to come...."

"Ken Lewenza, president of the Canadian Auto-workers Union, agreed the drop in US auto sales will undoubtedly trigger more layoffs here.

"You can't have this much of a decline in sales without more downtime coming and increased insecurity for everyone in the long term...."

The auto industry in this province is hurting. The auto industry in this province is reaching out to all of us, particularly people in this Legislature, to try to find a solution. I commend the member from Oshawa for seeking to find that solution. I commend the government in the past for attempting, wherever possible, to buy made-in-Ontario products. But surely, having a bill like this, which sets a minimum standard for what can be bought, doesn't stop us as Ontarians from buying even more Ontario-made goods. It sets a minimum standard for this government and for future governments.

I looked at the bill and I looked at what it was going to do. It advocates a number of really important things: that we look at alternative fuel cars as part of the bill, that we look at cars that use smaller motors and therefore use less energy as part of this bill. It looks at alternative-source-of-energy cars, it looks at the size of the cars and recommends that we use subcompacts, compacts and mid-sized cars, save and except where a large car is needed. And I do understand that, from time to time, larger cars will be needed in certain circumstances, where a lot of people or goods are ferried around and one needs a larger car. But wherever possible, it says that what we should be doing is setting an example, and I believe the province has that responsibility. I certainly know that the workers in Windsor, in Welland, in Oshawa, in Oakville, where Ford is manufactured, in St. Thomas and in all of the other places in Ontario are looking for leadership from this government. I certainly know that when I have been out there, as I am doing these days as part of the leadership tour—I was in Oshawa. I was with Mike Shields. I went from door to door with him for a little while, and I want to tell you the number one issue in Oshawa is what is happening to General Motors. That should not be of any surprise. What is happening to the economy? How do we keep the jobs in our community? How can we help? And I think that this bill will help. It will certainly provide no hindrance.

1550

Although I understand that the Liberals are proud of their record in the last couple of years and the number of purchases of cars and leases they have made that were Canadian made, we need to set a minimum standard. This minimum standard that is set here is a good one. Sixty-two percent is a good one, and it is one that we will ask, when we pass it, that other companies, other authorities and other municipalities also do. I think if we do that we are doing the right thing. I commend the member from Oshawa.

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very happy to speak to Bill 92 by the member from Oshawa. I just need to start by commenting that no party, no government has done more to support the auto sector in Ontario than the McGuinty government. Our auto investment strategy has attracted over \$7 billion in investment in the auto sector in Ontario. In fact, I'm actually pleased to note that when you look at Bill 92 and you look at our actual government procurement policy—because that's what we are talking about here today, specifically, the government's procurement policy for its own fleet—it's actually almost the same as the bill that is being proposed. So what's already happening is better, actually, than the bill.

For example, we are looking at when we should have fuel-efficient cars, alternative fuel and hybrid models. There is an exemption to our buy-Ontario policy, not because we want to buy someplace else but simply that in many of those cases the manufacturers have chosen not to build those lines in Canada, in Ontario. When you want to get some of those hybrid models, you do need to go offshore. But that same clause is in Bill 92.

When you look at exemptions around compacts and subcompacts and that sort of thing—same language, essentially, in our policy, which is, for those vehicles which are going to be used for passenger vehicles, go with the smaller vehicles. Go with Ontario-manufactured smaller vehicles. But where you have a legitimate need for larger vehicles, for example, the over 2,000 cruisers in the Ontario Provincial Police fleet, you go with a larger model. Those are all things that are already covered in our policy, and it has been a huge success because we do have a buy-Ontario policy.

If you look at what we are already doing, we've purchased over 500 vehicles in April and May of this year alone from Ontario-based production facilities. We have contracts with a number of Ontario manufacturers, including Ford and Chrysler, to add 1,500 new vehicles each year to Ontario's fleet, manufactured in Ontario. For this model year, for 2008, 71.5% of the vehicles purchased are manufactured in Ontario. In fact, if we look at the green side, why isn't that 100%? Because we're also conscious of the green side. We actually have a green fleet strategy. Where we are aiming for by 2011-12 is 10% reduction in fuel consumption, an increase in hybrid vehicles, a number of things. As of April of this year, the OPS fleet already has 385 hybrid vehicles with another 26 on order. So I would suggest that we have an excellent record.

But there is something that I really do like about this bill, because I come from an auto parts town. When we look at a lot of the stuff about buy-Ontario and buy-Canada, we're looking at where things are assembled. If you're like me, and you come from an auto parts town, jobs in my community are sometimes used to produce vehicles that are assembled in other countries.

For example, Linamar in my town often has contracts that take its engines, its drive trains, into the Detroit,

Michigan, market. There is a lot of assembling that is supplied from Guelph into the Michigan market by Linamar. When I look at another one of my parts manufacturers, Denso, which specializes in extruded plastics components, they're actually, as we speak, with the help of the Ontario auto investment fund, doubling the size of their plant in Guelph. They're doing that because they are choosing to introduce a new part into the North American market that they used to produce in Japan. The only place that they are going to be producing these air conditioning housings is in Guelph. If anybody buys that part from Denso, it will be supplied from Guelph. So I am really pleased to see that the member from Oshawa is including in his bill looking not just at the place of assembly but also the place of manufacture.

If this bill is passed, I think it's going to require some work at committee. How we figure out that more sophisticated content needs some work. I think that the whole idea of short-term leases is problematic. I once landed on a flight from Timmins, an emergency landing in Kirkland Lake. When I rented a car, I didn't care where it was manufactured—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: But I am interested in this bill.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is indeed an Ontario day in private members' business, with pick-your-own signs and buy-Ontario in our automotive industries. It is interesting, the 100th anniversary of the McLaughlin-Buick. It is a wonderful celebration. I hope Oshawa is celebrating that in some prestigious system.

I understand that Colonel McLaughlin was a man of sterling character, a tremendous individual, and his cars represented his character. His cars were extremely well built. His character was also extremely well built. His family continues to be in Ontario. In fact, his grandson is the dean of agriculture at the University of Guelph, and he's been at the University of Guelph for at least 30 years; I think I've known him for 30 years. Dean McLaughlin has done a great deal of good for Ontario agriculture in his role as dean and, prior to that, as a professor at the University of Guelph.

The auto industry is Ontario's number one industry, and it's well and good that we should be supporting the purchase of Ontario vehicles with Ontario taxpayer dollars. One has to be very careful when we do this because NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, has certain criteria in it that you cannot promote something from your home jurisdiction to the discredit or to the disadvantage of vehicles that are manufactured in some other jurisdiction within the North American free trade area. I believe that the member for Oshawa has brought in a bill that protects Ontario's standing in NAFTA and that this bill is NAFTA-proof and would do well to serve the people of Ontario.

Keeping in mind the member for Oshawa is from Oshawa, and he's a son of Oshawa, when he says we

should buy-Ontario in the vehicle business, there's an unwritten message in there. In fact, if you hold the bill up to the light just right it says "GM." "You should really be buying GM, out of Oshawa," that's what the bill really says.

1600

Of course, Jerry and I have very similar ridings. He's on the east of Toronto; I'm on the west of Toronto. He has some agriculture in his community; I have some agriculture in my community. He has an automobile plant in his riding; I have an automobile plant in my riding. I tend to be coming from Ford country; he comes from GM country. So it's very similar. That invisible ink says "GM" east of Toronto; it says "Ford" west of Toronto.

I heard the member from Welland talking about the gas mileage from other cars. I was the proud owner of a 1997 Mercury Grand Marquis for many years. I put nearly 300,000 clicks on the car, and even at the end that car was getting 28 miles to the gallon. It was an extremely good car. It served me well for many, many years and still got 28 miles to the gallon. It was an amazing mileage for a car of that vintage.

Buying Ontario is something that is extremely important for all Ontarians to be aware of, whether it's buying automobiles or buying food products that are grown in Ontario. The safety of our foods and, indeed, the safety of our automobiles is becoming more and more important. The way they're built and the way they're grown is very important to the people of Ontario, from a safety perspective and from a quality perspective. So I would encourage Ontarians, no matter what they are looking at, to have concern for buying locally. I think it's good business.

This bill, again, is good for Ontario. I think it's important that people understand that buying Ontario—particularly at this time, when the economy of Ontario is in very, very serious trouble. We are standing on the brink. We are sitting on a teeter-totter. In the United States, the rescue package went through the Senate last night. It's being discussed by the House of Representatives and American Congress today and tomorrow. They think they may vote on it Saturday. But even with the passing of that package last night by the Senate, which I would think would be good news, markets are in serious doo-doo this morning and this afternoon. I understand that the TSX is down some 700 points today, in record territory. I think that is only a small indication—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Oshawa, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I want to thank the members from Welland, Mississauga South, Thornhill, Beaches—East York, Guelph and Halton for their comments today.

Is the bill perfect? Of course not. But it's a start. It's leading by example. I know in my family, I drive GM, my wife drives GM, my mom drives GM, my dad drives GM, my aunt drives GM, and the list goes on.

I have to tell you, it's not just a matter of vehicles; it's leading by example in so many other areas. For example, I had to buy my son new hockey pants. He wanted one

particular brand. I'll even name the brand; it was Fury. I said, "No, we're not buying Fury." He said, "Why?" I said, "Come here and I'll show you." I showed him and I said, "See? It's made in China. You're buying Tackla pants." He said, "Well, why, Dad?" and I said, "Look, it doesn't say 'Made in Ontario,' it doesn't say 'Made in Canada'; it says 'Made in Pickering.'" You have to lead by example. If you show your kids now the reason and the impact and explain the difference to them, maybe it'll make their future a little bit better.

A friend of mine stated once before that if you're willing to accept a product based on a \$2 or \$3-an-hour wage production component, then maybe you should be willing to accept a \$2 or \$3-an-hour wage, as well. That's one of the difficulties in Ontario: We would like to have it all without compensating or making any differences.

We have to lead by example. One of the areas that was mentioned by the member from Mississauga was talking about the hybrids and the availability. If they want to increase the fleet, General Motors in Oshawa and the other Big Three in Ontario produce—every vehicle coming out is E85 friendly, can run on 85% ethanol, but there are only four gas stations in the province of Ontario that will supply it. There's the difficulty.

Lead by example, establish some criteria by which we can bring in the independent or non-major oil companies and bring some competition in there. Lord knows we need some competition in the auto sector. It'll go a long way in making sure that we have environmentally friendly vehicles in the province of Ontario, produced and purchased by the taxpayers in the province of Ontario.

I hope it goes to committee and I look forward to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The time provided for private members' business has expired.

We'll first deal with ballot item number 37, standing in the name of Mr. Hardeman.

SIGNAGE TO PROMOTE ONTARIO
GROWN AGRICULTURAL FOOD
PRODUCTS ACT, 2008
LOI DE 2008 SUR L'AFFICHAGE
VISANT À PROMOUVOIR
LES PRODUITS AGROALIMENTAIRES
CULTIVÉS EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Hardeman has moved second reading of Bill 98. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 97, the bill is referred to—Mr. Hardeman?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The Standing Committee on Justice Policy, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Agreed? Agreed.

We shall now deal with ballot item number 38, standing in the name of Mr. Kormos.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Kormos has moved private members' notice of motion number 51. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members for a vote on this after dealing with the next ballot item.

We shall now deal with ballot item number 39, standing in the name of Mr. Ouellette.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT
SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(CANADIAN MANUFACTURING
AND ASSEMBLY
OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES), 2008
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE
DES SERVICES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
(FABRICATION ET MONTAGE
DE VÉHICULES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
AU CANADA)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Ouellette has moved second reading Bill 92. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Agreed? Agreed.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We shall now deal with ballot item number 38.

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

The division bells rang from 1607 to 1612.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in support, please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Shurman, Peter
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those opposed, please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Albanese, Laura	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Arthurs, Wayne	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldip	Sousa, Charles
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Naqvi, Yasir	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are eight; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day? Chair of cabinet.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Monday morning, October 6.

The House adjourned at 1614.

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 Craiton
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**

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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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craiton, 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**

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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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