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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 6 October 2008

Lundi 6 octobre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 October 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 octobre 2008

The House met at 0900.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order: Just for some guidance and assistance, was that the atheist moment of silence or are they going to be accommodated in yet another way?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): In speaking to that point of order, the prayers that were submitted were the ones that were submitted by the prayer committee, and any additional prayers that you may wish to be considered in this chamber, I ask all members and anyone watching to forward them to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. It is the standing committee's responsibility to make any further recommendations on prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INCREASING ACCESS TO QUALIFIED
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR
ONTARIANS ACT, 2008

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 30, 2008, on the motion of second reading of Bill 97, An Act to increase access to qualified health professionals for all Ontarians by amending the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 97, Loi visant à accroître l'accès des Ontariennes et des Ontariens aux professionnels de la santé qualifiés en modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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

Mr. Caplan has moved second reading of Bill 97. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Should the bill be ordered for third reading?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

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

Orders of the day? Government House leader.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek consent for the House to recess until question period at 10:45.

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

The House recessed from 0905 to 1045.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have some guests we'd like to introduce today. On behalf of page Supriya Sethi: her mother, Minakshi Sethi, and her father, Satish Sethi, in the west members' gallery. As well, on behalf of page Imaan Javeed: her mother, Shehna Javeed, and her grandmother Zarina Jabbar, and they're going to be seated in the public gallery today.

I apologize for being late. I was touring with two guests from my riding, Dianne and Amy Nickson, and they will soon be sitting in the Speaker's gallery.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last December, you told this House that you estimated that your risky gamble into asset-based commercial paper would cost Ontario taxpayers less than \$100 million, and you were more than a little cavalier in terms of that kind of money when you made that reference. Minister, through the public accounts, we're now told the hit on taxpayers is \$125 million, and that's before the latest turmoil in the US financial markets. Can you give us an updated estimate of your gambling losses in asset-backed commercial paper?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The public accounts indicate that there is a writedown of, I believe, about \$107 million. We expect to recover all of that. That's an accounting reality. We still own the paper. Much of it has value. We expect probably about \$30 million of that, sir, to eventually be written off. It did slightly exceed the \$100 million that I had projected late last year, and there will be a loss somewhere probably around \$30 million over time, but much of that will be recovered. Governments in Ontario over the last 15 years have invested in asset-backed commercial paper, as did many other institutional investors, and we believe that in the public accounts, we reflect properly the accounting treatment of that asset-backed commercial paper.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Well, the minister keeps repeating, when we reference this issue, that former governments made these kind of investments, but the reality is that it's only under your government that such high-risk investments were authorized.

Minister, you should know you have a duty, a trust with Ontario taxpayers, to invest their money in safe, secure investments. Instead, someone in your government was allowed to put hard-working Ontarians' money into dangerous investments, and that taxpayers' money is gone. A loss is a loss no matter how you try to frame it. People are losing their jobs and their pension savings; communities are suffering, and you roll the dice with taxpayers' money. Someone in your government should be accountable to the people of this province for losing their money. Will you hold those individuals responsible?

1050

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to assure the people of Ontario that in fact this money is not gone. What we did was indicated in the public accounts and took an accounting writedown, which was approved by the Auditor General after being reviewed by two external firms. The assets are still there. It is the expectation that virtually all of that will be recovered over time. It represented a very, very small portion of Ontario's cash holdings that were invested in this particular asset. I should remind the member that successive governments have invested in asset-backed commercial paper. While that writedown is real, it is appropriate, and I believe taxpayers can be assured that they will recover a substantial portion of it.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: These high-risk investments were enabled by a regulation passed by this Liberal government, and he tries to suggest that other governments were engaged in this. That's simply not accurate. When we talk about this issue, I understand that people's eyes glaze over, but the reality here, what really matters, is that this government not only participated in but facilitated the use of taxpayer dollars in very risky investments. They rolled the dice with taxpayers' money. This wasn't Mr. McGuinty's money or Mr. Sorbara's or Mr. Duncan's; it was hard-working Ontarians' money, and its use and loss deserves straight answers from this government.

Minister, will you call in the Auditor General to determine what happened, who was responsible, and how we ensure it doesn't happen again?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member opposite that the Auditor General has been involved in every aspect. In fact, he correctly points out that it was in public accounts where the writedown was. I'd also remind him that Mr. Purdy Crawford, who I think deserves the gratitude of all Canadians, has put together the compromise proposed on asset-based commercial paper. Mr. Crawford has said the province of Ontario—who hold their restructured paper to maturity can expect to get most of their investment back over time.

While this contagion has affected that particular aspect of the portfolio, we will continue to invest our other funds. I remind the member that the return on our funds has been much higher than in previous years.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to follow up on my colleague's questioning, but I want to direct my question to the Premier. The Minister of Finance has sidestepped my colleague's questions. He goes out of his way to assure the taxpayer that this money is not gone.

I would like to ask the Premier this question: Why does he feel that it's important for his government to justify the actions of the Ontario Financing Authority, which clearly gambled with \$700 million of taxpayers' dollars? Whether \$100 million are lost or \$200 million or lost is not the issue. The issue for the Premier should be, is his Minister of Finance holding the Ontario Financing Authority accountable for questionable investments that they made, and if not, why not?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Ontario Financing Authority is composed of a board of very experienced individuals who offer advice to the government. We also rely on the advice of the Auditor General as well as outside auditors. Like the Caisse de dépôt, like the Alberta Treasury Branches, like CP, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. and a range of others, a very small percentage of our cash holdings was invested in asset-backed commercial paper. That has been the situation now over a number of years. We have written down a little over \$100 million—\$107 million—in this year's public accounts, with the expectation that the vast majority of that money will be recovered. I should remind the member opposite that the Auditor General has signed off on those public accounts.

Mr. Frank Klees: Here is what the Financial Administration Act tells the Ontario Financing Authority is their responsibility: that investments are limited to those that are "advisable for the sound and efficient management of public money."

I ask the Premier one more time: Why does he feel that he or his finance minister must defend the Ontario Financing Authority for not doing its job rather than calling it to account for not doing what it is intended to do? Because all of that money that the finance minister tells us is recoverable is now not available to pay for drugs, to pay for long-term-care facilities for seniors, to pay for cancer care drugs—all of those public services that that money was to be providing. Why does the Premier feel that this authority needs defending?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, the asset-backed commercial paper component of our portfolio was very small relative to the overall amount. In fact, we actually had better returns over the last three years than we had certainly over the previous number of years.

A number of policy adjustments have been made at the Ontario Financing Authority, and I remind the mem-

bers opposite that this challenge has really hit most of the western world. It affected some of our largest financial institutions, including the Ontario Financing Authority—this challenge that was experienced throughout markets. A number of recommendations have been seen to, for instance, the credit agencies and how they make recommendations. We've changed our policies to reflect processes that have been adopted elsewhere. Clear guarantees from banks and others have put this together.

None of us is happy about this situation. However, in my view, I don't agree with the member; I believe the Ontario Financing Authority has acted prudently in—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: So we hear from our finance minister that it was prudent, on behalf of the Ontario Financing Authority, to have gambled \$700 million in risky investments on behalf of the Ontario taxpayer. He stands in his place, and the Premier chooses not to intervene, to say, "No, I disagree with my finance minister. It's not prudent. They did not act according to the prescribed legislation that calls on them to make prudent investment on behalf of taxpayers."

Every single dollar that is lost is not a technical write-down; it means that cancer drugs can't be paid for, it means long-term-care facilities can't be provided, and it means social services can't be provided to people in this province through the tax dollars that they paid into this government. I call on the Premier to hold his minister and the Ontario Financing Authority accountable for their reckless actions.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It's important to keep the context of every response in its true form. First of all, organizations as diverse as the Caisse de dépôt, Alberta treasury branches, CP Rail and others also suffered from this particular situation. What I said to the member was the response of the OFA, once the challenge was there, was prudent, was responsible in the circumstances and in the face of all knowledge.

Ontario taxpayers can be assured that the cash holdings of the province are appropriately invested, are earning a good return and in fact, given the strength of those returns over the last year, are enabling us to invest more in health care, invest more in education, and to repair the damage that that member and his government did to our health and education sectors over the eight years that they were in office.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has received two responses from federal leaders on his so-called fairness questionnaire. I assume the Premier has read the two responses. Can he tell us which response, Mr. Dion's or Mr. Layton's, delivers fairness for Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I can tell where the leader of the NDP is coming from on this, and I think I

know which response he favours. I think I know which one he would have favoured before he even received it.

The point of this exercise, though, is to bring to the people of Ontario's attention that there is a fundamental issue of fairness between our province and Ottawa. We're asking Ontarians to visit our website, www.fairness.ca, take a look at those responses that have now been posted and to take that information into consideration when it comes time to cast their ballots. Unlike my friend opposite, I'm not telling Ontarians how to vote. What I am asking them to do is to take into consideration this issue of fairness, to make sure they put these kinds of issues to their candidates when they come to the door, and to that end we've put in place a website. Please visit that website and take that posted information into account.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm simply asking the Premier some questions about his own campaign. It seems to me one of the issues that is troubling all Ontarians is the huge loss of jobs. Whether it is Goderich, Welland, Oshawa, Thunder Bay, Brantford, London or Windsor, a huge loss of jobs; hundreds of thousands of people who've worked hard all their lives are out of work. In your letter, you ask for employment insurance fairness. I read Stéphane Dion's response. The changes he proposes to make to employment insurance would actually make it worse for Ontario workers.

Premier, are you going to stand up for laid-off Ontario workers, since Stéphane Dion doesn't think it's important to stand up for laid-off Ontario workers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's what we did as a Legislature through our just-passed resolution, passed unanimously in this House. Together we stood up for Ontario workers. Together we said to Ottawa, "It's unfair to give our unemployed workers \$4,600 less in employment insurance benefits than they would receive were they Canadians in any other province." Together we said, "That is unfair." That's what I call standing up together for Ontario workers.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, here is the reality: Only one in five Ontario workers who is laid off today is in fact eligible for employment insurance—one in five. Four fifths of them, even though they've paid into employment insurance, cannot collect an employment insurance benefit. Maybe you think it's good enough simply to pass a resolution. I'm asking you, what are you going to do? Are you going to get on the phone to Stéphane Dion and tell him it is unacceptable, that the changes he proposes to employment insurance would actually make it worse for Ontario workers—not better but worse for Ontario workers—who have lost their jobs? Are you going to get on the phone and tell him he's wrong?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just don't understand how the leader of the NDP can take such direct orders from the federal leader of the NDP and put these kinds of

questions to us in the House. I think we have a higher responsibility. That responsibility is to speak to all Ontarians, to help them understand the consequences of the unfairness that is being visited upon all Ontario families. It extends beyond employment insurance. It also affects our health care. We're coming up nearly \$800 million short. We'd receive \$800 million more were we treated the same way as Canadians living in other provinces. We'd get about \$1 billion more for our infrastructure were we treated the same as Canadians living in other provinces. Here in southern Ontario, we're the only region in Canada that does not benefit from a regional economic development program, yet this is where 10 million Canadians live. It's the heartland of our manufacturing sector. Again, our shared responsibility, as I see it, is to continue to speak to Ontarians and educate them on the issue of fairness.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier again: I want to read his own words to him. "Ontario's economy is facing challenges, which means some workers, particularly in the manufacturing sector, have been laid off." And you then go into several sentences talking about the unfairness of the employment insurance system to laid-off Ontario workers. Now you're confronted with Stéphane Dion's position, which would actually make it worse for laid-off Ontario workers. Laid-off Ontario workers would get less under the changes that Stéphane Dion proposes to make to employment insurance. Was the Premier not sincere when he wrote these words? Does it mean that you advocate on Monday for unemployed Ontario workers, but by Thursday they don't matter?

I'm going to ask the Premier again: Stéphane Dion proposes to hurt laid-off Ontario workers even more than they've been hurt already. Are you going to get on the phone and tell Stéphane Dion that he's wrong, that it's wrong to hurt Ontario—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the leader of the NDP's particularly partisan perspective on this issue. But again, I believe that our shared responsibility is to collect information from all federal parties, to post that information and make it public so that all Ontarians can get hold of it, and then to ask Ontarians to take that information into account when they vote. I understand that the leader of the NDP has his own very partisan perspective on this. I understand that and I accept that. But I think together we owe more to Ontarians.

We did that just recently through a resolution we passed in this House unanimously, asking all federal parties to put forward their position. Those positions are now posted at www.fairness.ca

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, I'm not asking that you come out and endorse Jack Layton or something. I'm

simply testing your own sincerity. You said in your letter that the plight of laid-off Ontario workers was important. You said that the employment insurance system was unfair to laid-off Ontario workers. Now one of the federal platforms, that of Stéphane Dion, the Liberal leader, proposes to do even more damage to laid-off Ontario workers.

I'm testing the Premier's own sincerity. Is the Premier going to get on the phone and tell Stéphane Dion that he is wrong, that the changes that he proposes to make to employment insurance are going to hurt Ontario workers more than ever? It is a test of the Premier's own sincerity. Are you going to live up to your own fairness campaign and tell Stéphane Dion that it's wrong for federal—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I hope I can count on the leader of the NDP's energy, enthusiasm and general ebullience on this issue when we have to deal with the next federal government, of whatever political stripe that might be.

But there is an important issue here. The fact is that if you lose your job in Ontario, the first problem you face is that you are not qualifying as easily as you would if you were living in another province, and even when you do qualify, you get \$4,600 less than you would as a Canadian living in another province. That \$4,600, if you've lost your job, isn't for the purposes of investing in RRSPs or in some condo. It's about groceries, it's about rent money, and it's about clothing for the children. That's what that money is all about. That's why we need to stand together and to impress upon Ontarians how important it is for all of them to speak out on this issue, particularly in the context of this federal campaign.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: My test is that of testing Dalton McGuinty's sincerity. Is he going to get on the phone to Stéphane Dion and speak out?

Here are your words, Premier: "Under the current EI program, unemployed Ontario workers get an average of \$4,630 less in EI support than workers living in other parts of Canada"—\$4,630 less. The changes that Stéphane Dion proposes in the Liberal platform would actually make it even worse than that. So I think all Ontarians should speak out on this issue, but I'm asking the Premier, are you now going to speak out? Are you going to get on the phone? Are you going to call Stéphane Dion and tell him it's wrong to hurt laid-off Ontario workers by making the employment insurance system even tougher for them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I certainly agree with the leader of the NDP when it comes to us coming together and doing what we can to impress upon Ontarians the need for us to speak out in the context of the federal campaign.

It's not just the issue of employment insurance, though. As I said a moment ago, it also affects our health

care. We are getting nearly \$800 million less than we should, and than we would were we Canadians living in other provinces. That \$800 million, by the way, would allow us to hire over 10,000 more nurses. It would enable us to pick up about 250 MRIs. Those human resources and that kind of medical technology would enable us to drive wait times down even further. There's a real consequence to our health care, to our workers who have lost their jobs, and to the quality of our roads and bridges and the like. That's why it's important for us to continue to stick together and press our case with all federal parties.

1110

YOUTH CRIME

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Premier. Today's Ottawa Citizen has a story by Lee Greenberg, and I'm quoting from it: "Ontario's Liberal government, which rode into office pledging unprecedented transparency, refused this week to say how much a former Liberal MPP is being paid to lead an over-budget and overdue review into youth violence."

Premier, does Mr. Greenberg have it right? Are you refusing to let the public know how you're spending their money?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the member opposite knows, the information that was sought is in the public accounts, available for all to see. It is available. I was not prepared to give the information without the permission of the people involved, but it was in fact in the public accounts and is publicly available.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Based on that response, a couple of things: We have to wonder why the minister has to take direction from some mysterious office—we suspect it's the Premier's office—but the other point I'd like to draw from her response was her apparent willingness to make this information public. I think we should have details—the public should have details—on why this budget has ballooned from an expected \$1 million to, we're now told, roughly \$2 million and growing. Why has the report not been released, why has it been delayed, what is the process and just how much time have Mr. Curling and Mr. McMurtry spent on this over the past year and counting?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The safety and well-being of our youth is a top priority for this government. That is why the Premier appointed two very, very capable people to look hard and come up with ideas on how we address crime that affects all of us.

I want to say thank you to the co-chairs, who really have embraced this quest with enormous enthusiasm. They will be releasing their report later this fall; we very much look forward to seeing their recommendations. I think it's important to get this right; this is foundational work. There is no simple solution, but I am confident that

the co-chairs will give us some very good advice in the coming weeks.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. In the 2003 commitment to medicare act, this government vowed to "support the prohibition of two-tier medicine, extra billing and user fees...." However, a report released today by the Ontario Health Coalition shows that the number of violations of the Canada Health Act is skyrocketing across Canada and in this province.

Will the minister agree to investigate the suspected violations documented in the report? Why is this government allowing those violations in the first place, and why does it not have a system to effectively monitor and prevent them?

Hon. David Caplan: I'm pleased to receive the report; I think it was released about an hour ago. Of course, the ministry takes very seriously the future of the commitment to medicare act, passed in 2003, as the member mentioned.

Interjection.

Hon. David Caplan: I hear the member from Kenora. In fact, he opposed it. I look at other members of their caucus: The member from Trinity–Spadina also opposed it; the member from Timmins–James Bay also opposed it. So while the member from Nickel Belt stands in her place and says, "This is the way the government should be operating, this is the kind of commitment that a government should have," she and her colleagues clearly do not.

In fact, the commitment this government showed, upon taking office in 2003—and that the Ontario Health Coalition acknowledged too at the news conference held today—it was this government that took seven private MRI clinics right across the province and brought them back into the public system. Because of the work and the strong commitment of this Premier and this government, that kind of work is taking—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Although I did say that there was an act, what I said is that in the act you said you would not tolerate extra billing, block fees, but there are 49 violations happening right here in Ontario, and I'd like to know if you're going to do something about it.

The spread of private for-profit clinics across Ontario is threatening equal access to quality care. One in seven ophthalmologists works in private for-profit clinics. Private, for-profit clinics not only draw scarce resources away from the public system, they charge exorbitant user fees and promote queue jumping. Yet, according to the Ontario Health Coalition report, Ontario has no adequate regulation and enforcement to stop the block fees and the extra billing. When will this government put a stop to the growing number of private for-profit laser eye clinics,

surgical clinics, boutique physician clinics, that are in clear violation of the Canada Health Act?

Hon. David Caplan: Clearly, I've outlined how the member and her party opposed the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, so it's a little hard for her to come into this House and say that somehow this is now something that they support, when clearly they have opposed it.

The way that this government is approaching this is to make our public health care system even stronger by having shorter wait times for key procedures. In fact, if you go to our public website, you'll find angiography down 50%, angioplasty down 46%, cataract surgeries down 61%, hip replacements down 51%, knee replacements down 47%, CT scans down 46%, cancer surgeries down 17%, MRIs down 24%, bypass surgeries down 28%. That's because this government has a commitment to a publicly funded, publicly delivered health care system, unlike, obviously—

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

RURAL ONTARIO

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Our economy here in Ontario has been facing challenges and there are many circumstances taking place that are challenging our economy that are beyond our control, such as the high cost of oil, the weakened US economy, and high transportation and fuel costs, to name a few.

Our government has a plan, and it's a five-point plan, and it's the right plan to meet these challenges. We are investing in skilled trades for our workforce, and we are building infrastructure, creating jobs in the short term, and making Ontario more competitive in the long term. We are boosting innovation, cutting taxes and partnering with businesses.

Many Ontarians have lost their jobs recently and many of those jobs have been in rural Ontario communities, including communities in my riding. I would like to know what the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is doing to support the economy in rural Ontario.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's important that folks in rural Ontario understand the commitment that the McGuinty government has to support their communities. That is why we have the rural economic development program. This is a program where our government partners with businesses to help remove the barriers that there may be for community development. We are partnering with businesses in the province. Since October 2003, 185 projects have been approved, with provincial investments of some \$60.3 million. That would have generated \$566 million of investments in rural communities right across Ontario. Those investments also brought jobs to those communities, and that is why our government has committed to double the money that we

will direct toward rural economic development, and that will be an increase over four years of—

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

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Supporting rural communities is vital to the strength of the overall Ontario economy. I'm very pleased that our government has provided over \$1.7 million to my riding since 2003, through the rural economic development program, to partner with local businesses and create jobs in the communities.

One example of the benefits of the RED program: We have provided \$500,000 to the Regional Equine and Agricultural Centre of Huron to provide state-of-the-art facilities for education and recreational purposes and provide support for the agricultural and equine businesses. That is a huge economic driver in the community of central Huron and surrounding area.

I know that the rural economic development program is not the only program under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs that is supporting economic growth in rural Ontario. Minister, what else is your ministry doing to sustain and create new jobs in rural Ontario?

1120

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I am very happy to identify some of the other investments we are making to help economic development in rural communities. We have a commitment to expand broadband Internet access in rural communities. That is what businesses—

Interjections.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I know members of the opposition are mocking that investment, but clearly they haven't been listening to what their constituents are telling them. We have been, and that is why we have committed \$30 million over the next four years to expand access to rural broadband, and that's on top of the \$10-million investment we made in 2007.

I would also like to talk about the fact that our Premier has sponsored a \$2.5-million program to recognize innovation on farms in the province of Ontario. This has been a very welcome program. Farmers are very happy that their innovations are being promoted and they are actually receiving as much as \$100,000 with the—

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

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Last week, the Prime Minister proposed a plan to provide a \$2,000 completion bonus to apprentices who finish an apprenticeship program in a nationally recognized skilled trade. In Ontario it's going to be next to impossible for most apprentices to qualify for that bonus, because you have this crazy idea that it's somehow good policy to deny positions to young people through your artificially high apprentice-to-journeyman ratios.

Premier, it's clear that Ontarians will have to apprentice in other provinces in order to qualify for the \$2,000

bonus. Is this what you meant last week when you said you would not discourage Ontarians from looking for work elsewhere?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I'm always pleased by the interest shown in skilled trades by the opposition, but I think we should get some facts straight here. We are the first government to make apprenticeships a priority. Under our watch, there are 50,000 more apprentices learning trades than there were when we took office, which I think is an extraordinary figure, compared to the record of the Conservatives in power.

The member opposite has asked many questions in this House about ratios, and often talks about the 3-to-1 electrical ratio. I would like to point out that when it comes to electrical contractors, smaller contractors—who represent the majority of electrical companies in this province—are governed by a 1-to-1 ratio.

The member is aware that we are committed to improving and reforming the apprenticeship system. Based on industry advice—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, Minister, your approach isn't working; obviously, it's not working. Thousands and thousands of young people want to fill apprentice positions, and the positions would be there if you would change the ratios. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce estimates that in Canada, 25,000 to 60,000 workers are currently required in the construction industry, and another 50,000 are going to be needed in the tooling and machining industry.

I say to the Premier: Why do you consistently drag down Ontario's young people? Why don't you put Ontario's economy first by lowering the ratios, filling the apprentice positions that would become available, and making sure that the \$2,000 bonus per young person stays right here in Ontario?

Hon. John Milloy: As I said, again, I'm very proud of our record. We have 50,000 more apprentices working, which makes their record when they were in power pale to insignificance.

We are committed to reforming and improving the apprenticeship system. Based on industry advice, we have changed eight ratios during our time in power. How many did the Conservatives change when they were in power? Absolutely none.

We commissioned a report by Mr. Tim Armstrong, a noted industry expert. Based on Mr. Armstrong's advice, we want to further strengthen and enhance the apprenticeship system by commissioning a college of trades, where we can get the best advice most effectively from all those involved in apprenticeships in the province of Ontario.

We will continue to have a system of excellence in this province—which, as I said, causes their record in power to pale to insignificance.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Stats Canada reports that since July 2004, Ontario has lost 235,000 manufacturing jobs. This means workers who have lost their jobs are sliding from making ends meet into poverty. When will the Premier admit that his government's failure to protect good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario is resulting in rising poverty rates in Ontario's manufacturing communities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Michael Bryant: We were just in your neck of the woods, I say to the member, as we made an announcement on Thursday that launched the Yves Landry Foundation project. That, in fact, is going to see support for manufacturing workers on the job so that as the technology improves in manufacturing companies and requires new and updated skills, the workers are going to be able to, on the job in small and medium-sized enterprises, undertake that skills training to make those innovative and highly competitive manufacturing companies that are making those investments improve productivity. We're making the investments so that the workers can be able, on the job, not only to advance their own skills but advance those very important companies that we very much want to continue to succeed in the province.

Mr. Paul Miller: That's an interesting answer, considering that over 50 large manufacturing companies left Hamilton in the last 15 years and not one has come. I don't know where they're going to work.

The government's numbers tell the tale. The Ministry of Community and Social Services' quarterly statistical report shows that the number of Ontario Works cases increased in June 2008 by over 7,000 cases; the number of Ontario Works recipients, including children, increased by 12,000. Ontario needs action now: a \$10.25 minimum wage, social assistance rates that cover basic needs and an adequate supply of affordable housing. When will this government listen to the voices of low-income people, act now and stop sentencing these families to a life of poverty?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Let me say, the question covers a number of different areas. I'm going to speak to the efforts by the government to make investments in the very region that the member speaks of—Hamilton—so as to try to, instead of talking down the economy in Hamilton, provide encouragement and, more importantly, investment in that region, so that in fact we can create more jobs. That's why, in August 2007, the government announced the \$6-million advanced manufacturing sector loan to Dofasco to support a \$60-million investment to upgrade its steel production process. That's why, in June of this year, Ontario made investments with the city of Hamilton to improve economic planning through a multi-year economic development strategy. The government has a role to play, yes, in terms of providing social assistance to all Ontarians. The government also has a role to

play, an active role that I know the member does not support, that in fact will make—

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

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I have a question for my friend and colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines regarding skills training in northern Ontario. As the members of this House are well aware, the 2008 provincial budget of the government released a five-point plan to strengthen the economy of Ontario. As part of that plan, the government made a commitment to invest in skills training. One area in which it is important to invest in skills training is through post-secondary education, as these investments will provide students with the resources they need to build careers and lives in northern Ontario, which strengthens the economy not only of the north but of the whole province. Since taking office, I know that the minister has made important investments in skills training in northern Ontario, and I'm keen to know what recent investment he has made in post-secondary skills in northern Ontario.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm grateful for the question from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who is such a strong supporter and advocate for post-secondary skills upgrading. Certainly, our government's investment in post-secondary education skills training will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the people studying, working and living in northern Ontario. The McGuinty government understands full well that northern Ontario's six colleges and four universities all make a major economic and social contribution to the north. A good example of that is: On July 11, when Premier McGuinty was in northwestern Ontario, we announced an investment of \$9.5 million to upgrade equipment and provide new classroom space at Confederation College, an investment that will see students training for new careers as welders, miners and construction workers. That's great news; 300 more students available. Certainly, I'm also happy to report that since February 2006, the northern Ontario heritage fund has invested more than \$7.6 million in projects for advanced education and training, in co-operation—

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Minister, thank you for informing the House about the significant investments that the government has recently made toward Confederation College. I look forward to the investments this investment will bring to northwestern Ontario and indeed all of Ontario.

As you know, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine opened in 2005, with campuses at Lakehead and at Laurentian University. Having a medical school in northern Ontario is very important for a number of reasons, but one, of course, is that it will improve the health and well-being of northerners. It will also help people living

in remote areas across the vast northern regions of our province to provide better medical care closer to home.

I and my constituents are very interested to know what recent investments in skills training at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine have been made to improve access to health care in remote northern communities.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks again to the member. Obviously, we're very excited about the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. It's a tremendous accomplishment, the first new medical school to open in Ontario in 30 years.

Another great announcement was made this August, actually. Premier McGuinty was at the Thunder Bay campus of the medical school to announce that, through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., we have provided \$3.3 million to expand local medical centres and improve Internet connections in 77 communities over the next three years across the north. These investments will allow medical students to train and see patients in small rural and aboriginal communities while staying in close contact with their teachers by using video conferencing and distance learning.

By training medical students in the north, we're helping to ensure that more doctors will work in the north. With these improvements, northern communities will benefit right away from the dedication and the expertise of these medical students. It's great news.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question. The member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate you helping to take credit for that school started by Mike Harris.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Over six months ago, your government agreed to the terms and conditions and you signed on the dotted line of the federal government's 2,500 front-line police officers program. The money, \$156 million, is to be used over five years and will add another 1,000 police officers to Ontario's police services.

Minister, can you inform the House today how many officers will be added to First Nations policing, municipal police services, and OPP non-contract policing in this fiscal year, 2008-09, using a portion of the \$156 million in federal dollars?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I look forward to informing the House very shortly on the plan, but I'd like to inform the House and ask the House, especially the member, who is my critic, to stand up with Ontario and tell the federal government that their program, their promise to put 2,500 new officers on the street, is a failed program. There isn't a police association in Canada that agrees with that particular program. So I ask the member, as I ask the official opposition, to tell Stephen Harper to rethink his failed policy and to ensure that he funds

police officers not for five years but for the life of the police officer, which is 30 years, the same way we did right here in Ontario.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Clearly, you didn't answer the question. As you are aware, your government and Premier McGuinty agreed to the terms and conditions to see the \$156 million flow to you. The money is in the bank, effective April 1 of this year. In the meantime, there is a desperate need for additional resources in many areas of policing across Ontario. For example, using the OPPA staffing model, there's a shortage of 500 officers in the OPP alone.

Minister, if you could try to answer the question, how much of the \$156 million that you have now will you be using for additional police resources in this year, 2008-09? It's a very simple question; even you should be able to answer it.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: What I'm going to ask of the member is very, very simple as well, and even he should be able to work—the Canadian Police Association, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Ontario police association, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and every province and territory at the latest justice ministers' meeting supported Ontario's resolution that we ask the federal government to live up to their commitment for 2,500 more police officers. What we're asking is that the Harper government stop being fluff on crime and start being tough on crime.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development—I'll have to go to the Premier, I guess. Oh, here he comes.

Ontario's economy is in serious trouble, and the time for excuses is over. Today, the Ontario Federation of Labour released a report in my community of Hamilton that reveals the true depth of the job crisis. The report documents the failure of the employment insurance system and the plunge in wages for Hamilton workers who have lost good manufacturing jobs and are now forced to work in the low-wage service sector.

When will the Premier and this government admit that their fairness for Ontario campaign has failed, and when will they take real action to protect and sustain jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Michael Bryant: That report, as the member says, was released very recently—this morning. Obviously I look forward to reviewing it and certainly wish to work with the member, to the extent he is willing, on addressing recommendations that are in the report, particularly those that emphasize government intervention by way of assisting the advanced manufacturing sector, in addition to assisting those companies whose goal is to provide the next generation of jobs and in addition to the specific regional assistance that's being provided through Communities in Transition.

This government is engaging in that kind of intervention to try to retain, promote and grow those jobs and those clusters in the very region the member is speaking of.

Mr. Paul Miller: This is the first time I have addressed the minister in the House, and I'd like to congratulate him on his new job.

The loss of thousands of good-paying jobs in Hamilton in the last two years alone is truly staggering. A quarter of the manufacturing jobs in my area—a quarter—disappeared in 24 months. Companies that have been the foundation of our local economy are closing down and transferring jobs to Mexico, the US and Asia, and our provincial government stands by and does nothing.

When will the minister and this government stop blaming everybody else and take real action to protect Ontario jobs?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I appreciate the member's good wishes. To the question itself, I would just say that, on the contrary, this government has in fact been extremely active in not only reaching out to support Stelco, Dofasco and the city of Hamilton, to give a few examples, but, in addition, in making investments to support those companies that are engaging in innovative and highly productive changes to their companies—the assistance that's being provided through skills training, including through the Yves Landry Foundation program, which allows workers to improve their skills on the job as we work with these companies in order to allow them to grow and be the prosperous—

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

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Last week, Sarnia radio reported on the groundbreaking of the Bioindustrial Innovation Centre at the University of Western Ontario's research park in Sarnia. The \$20-million building will be home to Colt WorleyParsons, one of the research park's largest tenants. The building itself will also be state-of-the-art environmentally. Construction of the 75,000-square-foot facility is expected to wrap up by early 2010. Work has already started on the second phase of the multi-million dollar project, and that includes renovations for lab and plant facilities. CHOK AM in Sarnia states that over the next 10 years, the bio-industrial innovation centre will attract over \$1 billion in investment and help create over 1,000 jobs. Minister, can you outline what our government has done to help foster this project? And why the bio-economy—

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

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Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend for the question. Where other provinces are currently experiencing economic prosperity due to their abundance of

fossilized and non-renewable carbon, Ontario is well positioned to become a global leader in the development of renewable carbon. This investment is taking us one step closer to that new reality.

Specifically, Ontario's \$10-million contribution will leverage at least \$15 million in matching funds for the research park from its other partners, including the county of Lambton, the city of Sarnia and private sector organizations. The research park was also successful in securing an additional \$15 million for this project through the federal government's networks of Centres of Excellence for Commercialization and Research. The bioindustrial innovation centre will provide laboratory equipment, incubator space, pilot plant space and office space for growing start-up companies and small businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Innovation is clearly part of our government's five-point plan, including investment, strategically, in research and innovation. That is in order to grow Ontario's next generation of jobs and prosperity.

One of the emerging high-growth sectors is clean technology and bioeconomy. Ontario produces close to 50 million tonnes of biomass a year, which has the potential to produce enough energy to meet the needs of seven million Ontario homes. We've all been reading reports suggesting that diverting crops for usage as fuel could be increasing food costs and contributing to a global food shortage. Certainly, as stakeholders who will be directly impacted by its outcome, the farmers of my riding in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex have been following this debate very closely. Farmers know that biofuels are more environmentally friendly than those extracted from fossilized carbon. Minister, how will we as a government address the fuel or food—

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: We are investing in the next generation of biofuels and biomaterials because they create energy and biomaterial products from agricultural by-products such as corn husks and manure. It's not a question of food or fuel; it's the solution of food and fuel.

The province recently invested some \$7.5 million in the University of Western Ontario's bioproducts initiative, which consists of two projects in my colleague's riding: first, the creation of a new 19,000-square-foot research centre, the Institute for Chemicals and Fuels from Alternate Resources—research will focus on the process called pyrolysis, turning agricultural waste such as corn husks into fuel for vehicles, organic insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers; and, second, state-of-the-art optimization research in anaerobic digestion at a nearby dairy farm.

The goal is to quickly move next generation biofuel research from the lab bench to a large—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. I want to take this opportunity to remind the Premier of his pre-election commitment to small and medium-sized employers that he would improve the inspection and auditing process for small and medium-sized employers. Given the activities across the province over the last year of what seems to be an army of inspectors who show up at businesses' doors, not to help them, but from what we're hearing, to hinder them, I would like to know, has the Premier forgotten about his pre-election commitment or is the message simply not getting down to those inspectors in the various ministries within the government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: It's very unfortunate that this member and his party want to water down legislation and regulations when it comes to workplace health and safety. He is not on the side of workers and does not want to protect our workers. The member should know that we have over 250,000 workplace injuries a year—that's 715 a day. That's one every two minutes. So if the member is asking for us not to inspect workplaces, not to protect workers, I say no to that member and no to that party.

Mr. Frank Klees: The Premier referred the question to the wrong minister, because that's not what I was talking about at all. I am talking about the regulatory burden that is being put on small and medium-sized businesses across the board.

Mr. Doug Simon, the district manager for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, delivered a number of documents to me, letters from employers, that basically say this: "While Ontario businesses, including mine, struggle to cope with high fuel and energy costs, a strong Canadian dollar and intense foreign competition, we are further undermined by the heavy-handed enforcement arm of government."

My question to the Premier is simply this: When will he instruct his government ministries to work with employers in this province, not against them? That's my question.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: This government has worked in partnership with labour, with employees, with employers. We've struck the right balance. We brought stability to the workplace. Labour relations have never been better in 30 years. This is a commendable record. We've brought down workplace injury rates by over 20%. We are working together to build a stronger, healthier Ontario. We're going to continue to do that with our labour relations.

It's unfortunate that this member has a vision of an "us" and "them." We believe that we're all in this together, working together to build a strong Ontario, to build a strong economy. We've got a five-point plan that's working. At the heart of that plan are our employees, our workers, Ontarians. This member should step up to the plate, work for—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Health. There are a growing number of for-profit boutique physician clinics in the city of Toronto, including two in my riding. These clinics charge steep enrolment and annual fees for medically necessary services. They double- or triple-dip by billing OHIP, private insurance and users. They draw scarce physicians out of the public health care system.

Does this government recognize the threat that these clinics pose to our public health care system? If so, when will this government act to address this threat?

Hon. David Caplan: The government has acted, in fact, to pass the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act. I would note, for the people of Trinity–Spadina, that this member opposed that bill. That bill would do a number of things: prohibit extra billing, prohibit charging patients for an insured service, prohibit queue-jumping, and require reporting of violations such as queue-jumping and enforce penalties for violators. Why would this member oppose the universal public health care system and these kinds of principles as outlined by this government and as outlined by my predecessor? It's beyond any imagining.

I want you to know, Speaker, it's through the action and investment of \$11 billion, a 37% increase in health care spending, that we've been able to expand public health care options for all Ontarians, see wait times decrease and the number of front-line medical personnel increase. That's a true commitment to medicare, and I wish—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The time for question period has expired.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents in some areas of Simcoe–Grey have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

“Whereas whatever one-time money has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL
FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Mike Colle: This is a petition entitled, “Fairness for the People of Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government gives more support for economic development, health care and infrastructure to other parts of Canada, and unemployed workers in Ontario get less employment insurance support than in other parts of Canada;

“Whereas the federal system of taxes and equalization extracts over \$20 billion from the people of Ontario every year above and beyond what Ottawa invests in Ontario;

“Whereas laid-off workers in Ontario get \$4,630 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived in another part of Canada;

“Whereas federal health care money is supposed to be divided equally among all Canadians, but right now Ontario residents are shortchanged by \$773 million per year;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the federal government stop gouging the people of Ontario and treat them fairly.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham that reads as follows:

“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” outcomes for all Ontarians.”

I'm pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I shall sign this and send it to the Clerk’s table.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today from David Snowball, who lives in Mississauga, Ontario.

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it and give it to page Sarah.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

Mr. Jim Wilson: “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 agree with this petition and I will sign it.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government gives more support for economic development, health care and infrastructure to other parts of Canada, and unemployed workers in Ontario get less employment insurance support than in other parts of Canada;

“Whereas the federal system of taxes and equalization extracts over \$20 billion from the people of Ontario every year above and beyond what Ottawa invests in Ontario;

“Whereas laid-off workers in Ontario get \$4,630 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived in another part of Canada;

“Whereas federal health care money is supposed to be divided equally among all Canadians, but right now Ontario residents are shortchanged by \$773 million per year;

“Whereas the federal government provides economic development support for people living in the north, Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the west, but provides no economic development support for southern Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the federal government stop gouging the people of Ontario and treat them fairly.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have another in the petitions from residents of western Mississauga regarding a 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 am pleased to sign and certainly support this petition and to ask page Marissa to carry it for me.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition signed by a number of constituents from my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerk’s table.

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

There being no more petitions, this House is adjourned until 1 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I’m pleased to rise today to mark the start of the 10th annual Ontario Agricultural Week. It was created by a private member’s bill by Bert Johnson, the Progressive Conservative MPP from what was then the riding of Perth. He created it to celebrate

agriculture in Ontario. As you know, agriculture is the second-largest industry in Ontario, creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and helps keep our rural communities strong.

However, I'm sure that Mr. Johnson never envisioned that 10 years later the gallery would be full of young farmers who are here because the government is forcing them out of business. They were all farming in 2007, when the losses on pig production were at their greatest. They all should have received support from the Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture program. But because the government used out-of-date data, they didn't get the support they needed. Their need hasn't gone away. I hope that the minister will use her statement today to answer some of their questions.

Several weeks ago, John Tory and I visited Tina and John Vehof. We saw how hard they have been working to hold on to their farm for their four children. Tina is here today to ask, "Why is the beginning farmer being pushed out of farming?"

Ursula van den Heuvel is here because she received less than 6% of the support she should have. She believes that a large cheque went to the farmer who retired and sold them the farm in 2005. Minister, can you tell her that this isn't true?

Thank you very much for allowing me to make this comment, Mr. Speaker, and I do hope the minister can answer that question when she makes her statement on Agriculture Week.

SENIORS' INFO

Mr. Kuldip Kular: Today I have the pleasure of highlighting for my colleagues a very useful and effective tool for Ontario's seniors: the online Seniors' Info, the first multi-jurisdictional seniors' portal in Canada.

In partnership with the federal government and 23 Ontario municipalities, the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat developed Seniors' Info. The goal of Seniors' Info is to give seniors, their families and service providers access to information and services from three levels of government in one convenient location. The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat developed the concept and plays a leadership role in Ontario. Seniors' Info is sponsored by the Canadian Seniors Partnership, which works collaboratively to improve services for seniors across Canada.

The website provides extremely useful information on topics such as getting ready to retire, retirement planning, vacationing in Ontario, aboriginal services, health care resources, caregivers and life care transition. You can find the website online at www.seniorsinfo.ca.

With Ontario being home to over 1.6 million seniors, the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat is working to improve the quality of life for our seniors and help them lead active, healthy and dignified lives. I urge my colleagues and their constituents to use this multi-jurisdictional portal and become familiar with it. It is just one more way this government is helping Ontario seniors.

TOWN OF AURORA

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise today to call the attention of all members of the House to the prestigious Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership, won this year by my hometown of Aurora. This award is bestowed on a Canadian municipality that has demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to the conservation of its historic places through its exemplary stewardship.

It has been said that the history of Canada is reflected in the history of Aurora. It was in Aurora that the French missionaries Brebeuf and Chaumonot conducted the first church services in York region, and where our Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe admired greatly the magnificence of the area as he and his men worked to develop its early settlement.

It was in Aurora that the Queen's York Rangers, "A" regiment, laid down permanent roots at the Aurora drill shed, and where Edward Blake's famous Aurora speech was delivered during the early years of Canada's statehood. To celebrate Aurora's history and contemporary heritage is to truly enter into the very best of Canadian heritage and culture.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the residents and businesses of the town of Aurora on achieving this prestigious honour, and wish them continued success in maintaining our town's national standard as a leader in Canadian heritage preservation.

JOAN BRENT

Mr. Michael Prue: Each year it is my privilege to stand and talk about the Beaches citizen of the year. Each year, the community comes together to pick one of their own who has done exemplary work in our community. The Beaches citizen of the year this year is Joan Brent. She has been a volunteer and contributor to life in the Beach for a long time.

Some of her great accomplishments include working for the Toronto East General Hospital; Neighbourhood Link; the cancer society; heart and stroke; Share a Christmas from Centre 55; the Terry Fox Run; Habitat for Humanity; East York East Toronto Family Resources, where she has done a great deal of work for a long time and is now the vice-chair of that organization; and Lions international, where she has been involved in a program that helps test students to see that they have proper vision and helps, through LensCrafters, to give glasses to those who cannot afford to get them. She also collects eye glasses for Third World nations so that people in other countries might have the gift of sight.

We congratulate Joan for her many years of hard work in our community. It was a pleasure to be there on September 27 as they unveiled the newest plaque on the wall of fame in Woodbine Park in the Beach with her name. She is the eighth recipient in as many years, and the choice was unanimous. I congratulate her and everyone else who had something to do with her selection. Congratulations again: Joan Brent, Beaches citizen of the year.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise in the Legislature today to speak about our government's commitment to improving public transportation, decreasing congestion on our roads and reducing pollution.

Gridlock on our roads costs the GTA economy \$3.6 billion each year in lost productivity, not to mention the environmental and social consequences. This is of particular concern for the people of Mississauga South, who have to fight traffic every day on their way to work and to get back home to their families.

The GTA is the fourth most congested area in North America and has as many as 64,000 more vehicles added to the road each year. While we have invested nearly \$7.4 billion in public transit since first being elected in 2003, we realize that more must be done. That's why our government plans to alleviate congestion and reduce our impact on the environment. I speak, of course, about Move Ontario 2020. This program and plan intends to build 902 kilometres of new or improved rapid transit that will move people more efficiently around the greater Toronto area.

These investments will lead to reduced congestion on our roads, which will help people and goods get to where they need to go; decreased emissions of greenhouse gases, which will reduce our impact on the environment; less smog, which will make the air we breathe cleaner; as well as better, more sustainable urban development, which leads to strong communities and a higher quality of life.

We have taken the lead on improving public transit—

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

MUSKOKA AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Norm Miller: Muskoka Ambulance Communication Service provides call-taking and dispatch services throughout Muskoka. They direct ambulances and also provide dispatch services for the first response team, town of Bracebridge, Georgian Bay and the township of Muskoka Lakes fire departments and Moose Deer Point First Nation Fire.

Muskoka Ambulance Service employs 15 Ministry of Health qualified communication officers, who are all from local communities. As a result, they are rich in local knowledge and expertise unavailable to an outside agency. Muskoka Ambulance is 100% funded by the Ministry of Health.

Last week they were told that the Ministry of Health is considering moving dispatch services out of the region, to Barrie. The effect of this could be devastating. When dispatchers receive 911 calls, they are often from tourists on a cellphone who are unfamiliar with the area. As a result, local landmarks are used to describe an accident or emergency site. Losing local dispatchers could mean added minutes in response times as dispatchers unfamiliar with our area try to pinpoint emergency scenes—not to mention the local jobs that will be lost.

Once again, the Ministry of Health is making decisions that cut health services in our region, put health concerns behind government dollars and take jobs out of our communities. Your government is still collecting the health tax from Ontarians, but for constituents in my riding, they're getting less and less for their tax dollars.

My question for the Minister of Health is: What is the price of one life? When you decide to transfer these jobs out of Muskoka, are you willing to accept responsibility for lost lives?

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AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize October as Autism Awareness Month. Education Minister Kathleen Wynne and Children and Youth Services Minister Deb Matthews have been working together to ensure successful outcomes for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. I'm proud of the progress we've made to help students with ASD.

I would like to highlight just a few ways our government is making a difference to support the over 9,000 students with autism spectrum disorder enrolled in our publicly funded education system. We're supporting seven regional teams who are finding new ways to effectively deliver services to students with autism spectrum disorder through collaboration. Over the last two years, we've invested \$17 million to train teachers, teachers' assistants, school principals, school teams and other educators to support students with ASD.

Our government recognizes that more needs to be done. But, once again, I remind all of our members and the public that October is Autism Awareness Month, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing it.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Mr. David Zimmer: I want to talk about the public infrastructure that is so vital to our life here in Ontario. Past governments neglected public infrastructure investments. This led to closed hospitals and crumbling highways. After years of neglect and underinvestment, much of Ontario's infrastructure had deteriorated and was out of date. Some estimates pegged the deficit cost at more than \$100 billion. This is just one of the many hidden deficits our government inherited from the previous government.

In 2003, Ontario voted to end that regime of neglect and to invest in public infrastructure renewal. In 2005, our government created ReNew Ontario, a five-year, \$30-billion program that matches investment decisions with land use and community developments to stimulate economic growth, to build infrastructure where it can best be accommodated, and at the same time protect Ontario's rich agricultural assets and natural heritage.

By 2010, our government, with its partners, will have invested \$5 billion to improve health care facilities, another \$11.4 billion for transportation investments, \$10

billion for schools, a billion for the infrastructure justice system and \$600 million for new affordable housing. Ontarians applaud these actions of the McGuinty government. They are angry at the actions of previous governments for their cut-and-run mentality that bankrupted—

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

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Phil McNeely: The federal government needs to treat the people of Ontario fairly. The Prime Minister claims Ontario's unemployed workers are treated fairly and equally compared to all other provinces, going so far as to say, "There are rules that assist economies that have a higher or seasonal unemployment rate. As patterns of unemployment change those rules apply to Ontario as to any other province."

Well, that's not the case. Ontario's unemployed workers receive \$4,600 less in employment insurance than if they lived in other regions of the country. If Ontario's unemployed were being treated fairly by the federal government, then why has the Harper government short-changed Ontario's unemployed by \$2.1 billion?

These are tough economic times for everyone. I know I speak on behalf of my caucus colleagues when I say I just want to ensure our government is able to build the best defence for the people of Ontario during these challenging times. That is why we have introduced our five-point plan to help ensure Ontario's economy remains strong. All we are asking in return from our federal government is to be treated fairly. Ontario is shortchanged in the Building Canada fund by \$970 million. We are shortchanged in federal health funding by \$710 million.

To be treated fairly, the shortchanging of Ontario must end. Enough is enough. I join the rest of my caucus in asking for a fair deal for Ontario and encourage all of the hard-working people of Ontario to sign the online petition demanding a fair deal for Ontario from our federal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just to remind the members that the members' statements are set out at a minute and a half, and I will be very diligent in cutting off any pro-government statements or anti-government statements at a minute and a half. I've given a little more latitude to some of those who are celebrating good news or individuals in their riding—I don't have a problem with those—but any pro-government, anti-government or electioneering are going to be cut off very tightly at a minute and a half.

Reports by committees? Introduction of bills? Motions.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 97(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 40 and 42.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 60(c), the Standing Committee on Estimates be authorized to postpone consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Energy and proceed with consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for us to revert to introduction of bills for but a brief moment.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TRAINING FOR WORKERS ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA FORMATION DES TRAVAILLEURS

Mr. Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to promote workforce training /
Projet de loi 107, Loi visant à promouvoir la formation
de la main-d'oeuvre.

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. Rosario Marchese: The bill enacts the Training for Workers Act, 2008. The act requires every employer with a payroll of \$1 million or greater to contribute at least 1% of the payroll amount to workforce training. Any shortfall is to be contributed to the workforce skills development and recognition fund. The fund is administered by a committee composed of representatives of labour unions, employees and government, and the committee may use the money in the fund to promote and support workforce skills development and related measures and initiatives.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES**

**ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK
SEMAINE DE L'AGRICULTURE
EN ONTARIO**

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I rise to remind Ontarians that today marks the beginning of Ontario Agriculture Week, and what better time than the week leading up to Thanksgiving to recognize the hard work and dedication of Ontario farmers.

Cette semaine représente une excellente occasion pour mes collègues et les citoyens de l'Ontario de réfléchir à notre bonne fortune de pouvoir avoir accès sur place à certains des meilleurs aliments au monde.

As you have heard, good things do grow in Ontario. Our Pick Ontario Freshness strategy is a huge success, and I credit much of that success to the consistent quality of food produced by Ontario farmers.

This government is pleased to be a partner in that success. In the 2008 budget, we announced an additional \$56 million over the next four years in the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy and the farmers' market strategy. As part of the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy, we recently launched the \$12-million, four-year Ontario market investment fund. This includes support for local food networks and other industry efforts in promoting local foods.

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I'm also pleased that many major retailers have caught the wave and have developed buy-local strategies of their own in response to increasing consumer demand. Never before has there been a more exciting time to try and buy homegrown and locally sourced foods.

But we can do more. We're working hard to put the spotlight on fresh, high-quality foods grown and produced right here in Ontario. That's one reason why the Foodland Ontario program has been expanded, and it now includes deli, fresh meats, dairy and baked goods.

Today I'd like everyone in this Legislature and everyone across Ontario to challenge themselves to make Ontario food a part of every meal you eat. You'll be surprised how easy it is and how tasty it is, and truly what a difference it makes. It's good for you, it's good for farmers, it's good for the communities they live in, and it's also good for our environment.

Consumers too can be agents of change. In addition to challenging consumers to make Ontario food a part of every meal, I also challenge Ontario consumers to demand that their local food retailers carry more Ontario products. So if it's not in your local grocery store or on your favourite menu, it's time that you demand it. Ontarians know that Ontario's food producers grow, raise and produce the highest-quality food products that are among the very best in the world. You will be helping yourself, your neighbours, our farmers, your community, the environment and our province when you do so.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DES ENSEIGNANTS

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise in the House today to recognize a group of very special people: the people who work in our schools and our school boards. Yesterday was World Teachers' Day, a day for us to celebrate the difference these individuals make in the lives of thousands of young people.

Our educators and support staff give us more than enough reasons every day to celebrate them and to say thank you, and I want to take this opportunity to do just that. I want to thank them for their creativity, connecting what happens in the classroom with the world of work, making it real and relevant for students. I want to thank them for their energy and for inspiring students to take an active interest in the environment, in languages, in math, in science, in the arts, in technology and so much more. And I want to thank them for their patience with students who are struggling to understand a concept and for their determination to reach everyone. It is their caring and individualized attention that inspires students to succeed and motivates them to reach higher.

Ce sont eux qui assurent la propreté, la santé et la sécurité dans nos écoles. Ils font de nos écoles des centres accueillants dans les communautés et contribuent ainsi à instiller de la confiance dans nos écoles.

They challenge young minds, open new doors, and help each student learn to the best of his or her ability. They make a tremendous difference in the lives of our young people, and our students will remember them for it.

When we talk about public confidence, it is often individual experiences that matter most, the individual experiences that our educators and support staff provide every day. When we talk about student achievement in helping struggling students, it is the people working in our education system who help students in the early years develop a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy.

Et quand les élèves entrent l'école secondaire, nous savons qu'un adulte attentionné peut faire toute la différence pour ceux qui éprouvent des difficultés.

We have come a long way in education over the past few years. Class sizes are down, student achievement is on the rise, and more students are graduating from high school. We have the individuals who work in our schools and our boards to thank for that, and we will continue to work in partnership with them as we move forward. They are dedicated, professional, and they clearly demonstrate an outstanding commitment to supporting students.

We can invest in school buildings and resources, we can introduce new programs and mandate smaller class sizes, but it is the caring and individual attention that comes from the adults in our schools that makes the difference.

Les exemples d'excellence sont nombreux dans nos écoles.

World Teachers' Day reminds us once again to celebrate that excellence and to thank the people who make it possible.

Henry Brooks Adams said, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops,” and that is so true.

Je suis sûre que nous nous souvenons tous avec gratitude des gens qui nous ont influencés lorsque nous étions sur les bancs de l'école.

To the educators and support staff across the province, once again I offer my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for what you do.

CUSTOMER SERVICE WEEK

SEMAINE DU SERVICE À LA CLIENTÈLE

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Today marks the beginning of Customer Service Week. Around the world, people are celebrating the importance of service in our daily lives. Everyone is a customer at some point. Whether you're in a grocery store, at your doctor's office or visiting your local library, customer service plays a vital role in every organization.

As political representatives, we too have an important role to play in providing services, and our customer base is extensive. We serve more than 12 million people in Ontario each and every day.

Cette semaine constitue une formidable occasion de réfléchir à la façon dont nous, les membres de l'Assemblée, pouvons améliorer le service que nous fournissons à toute la population ontarienne, y compris aux personnes ayant un handicap.

L'Ontario compte plus d'un million et demi de personnes qui ont un handicap, et nous savons que ce nombre continuera d'augmenter à mesure du vieillissement de la population. Or, chacune de ces personnes fait partie de la clientèle de notre gouvernement et de nos services publics.

A person with a disability can choose where to buy his or her groceries, or where to buy their children's clothing, but there is only one place people can go to get their health card, driver's licence or birth certificate. All Ontarians should be able to easily access their government and their public services. We know that making our services and our province accessible to people with disabilities is the right thing to do. That is why the members of this House unanimously passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

By 2025, we envision an Ontario where everyone can shop in the same stores, work in the same places and have the opportunity to experience everything our province has to offer. This is our goal, and I'm pleased to say that we are already making progress. We are developing accessibility standards that will help identify and remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in our society. Earlier this year, our first accessibility standard for customer services became law. This means that the services we provide in the public sector must be accessible to all Ontarians, regardless of their ability, by 2010; the private sector will follow in 2012.

Nous nous devons de montrer l'exemple. Quand la population de l'Ontario constatera que le secteur public offre des services à la clientèle accessibles à tous et à toutes, il sera moins difficile pour le secteur privé de faire de même. Notre ministère s'emploie à concevoir de remarquables outils et ressources pour aider les personnes concernées à apprendre à répondre aux besoins des clients qui ont un handicap. Je vous invite à visiter le site Web accession.ca pour en savoir plus sur les possibilités d'intégrer l'accessibilité dans tous nos services.

Accessible customer service is really just good customer service. It's about listening and responding to the unique needs of each customer, client and citizen. Often, small changes can make a big difference. We don't need to be experts on disabilities or fluent in sign language to provide good service to people with disabilities, but we need to ask all customers how we can help, listen to their needs, and be willing to work on finding the best solutions.

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I know we all strive to provide the best service we can to the people of this province. By continuing to work together, I know we can reach our goal of an Ontario where our businesses and organizations are open to each and every customer and where our province is inclusive to everyone. That is the vision of this government and the spirit of Customer Service Week.

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

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to respond to the minister's statement on Ontario Agriculture Week. I'm proud of the many hard-working farmers in Ontario and the contribution they make to the communities in our province, but I wish the minister had used her statement to explain what she's going to do to address the urgent need of these beginning farmers in the gallery and the many more like them across the province.

Minister, Wayne and Geoff Bartels, in the gallery here today, have worked with their family since 2005 to build an award-winning hog farm. These are the types of young farmers we should be recognizing and encouraging. Instead, they watched as the pig farmers around them got cheques, and they received nothing. Their two families and their parents all depend on the income of this farm, and they aren't sure they're going to be able to continue.

In 2007, Tom Murray shipped over 11,000 hogs—he's in the gallery—but he received only \$347 from the cattle, hog and horticulture program. His son, Travis, is with him today and wants to go into farming too, but Tom has had the sad job of trying to talk him out of it because he just doesn't believe that there is a future in agriculture.

Minister, these are just a few of the stories of the people who were missed because money went to retired and deceased farmers instead of the new young farmers who need it, people who were missed because the pro-

gram had no application and no appeal. They are here to tell you that the bank is calling. They're having trouble getting feed delivered. They're getting closer and closer to losing their farm.

Minister, the answer for them can't be that you will fix the next program. The people who are missed by this program won't have a next time. This government needs to take action to help them now, or in the future there will not be any Ontario agriculture to celebrate.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I rise in the House today to recognize educators across this province of Ontario for their hard work, for their dedication and for their commitment to our children. Through their efforts, Ontario will continue to graduate the best and the brightest as they prepare our students to enter a competitive global marketplace.

Teaching is a vocation as well as a profession that is perfected over time. Practised in the art of listening, educators often go beyond the call of duty to draw reluctant children into the joys of learning. Our teachers are role models who spend a significant amount of time each day with our children. The influence and overwhelming responsibility of that commitment is one of the reasons we hold our teachers in such high regard. To quote Ever Garrison, "A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge and wisdom in the pupils."

We as legislators, as parents and as grandparents thank the educators across our province and around the world who seek to bring out the best in our students and instill in them a thirst for learning that lives on long after the school bell has rung. Thank you for the work that you do and the legacy you are leaving to all of us.

CUSTOMER SERVICE WEEK

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to comment on the minister's Customer Service Week statement. There are two sentences in particular I'd like to highlight and speak specifically to: "All Ontarians should be able to easily access their government and their public services," and "We are developing accessibility standards that will help identify and remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in our society."

We have just spent the last six months discussing Bill 77, and I have heard from more families who are dealing with lack of service from this government on the Passport funding and individualized funding. They don't feel any better listening to the speaker talk in platitudes when they are getting no service from the government. Less than 20% of the people who qualify and apply under Passport for individualized funding are receiving it. It's not reasonable, and it is certainly not offering more services for Ontarians.

We hear constantly from this government about how they will increase new standards, how they will put new

regulations in. What is missing is the other part of the puzzle, which is how you expect them to pay for it. When you tell hospitals, municipalities and schools that they must make their workplaces accessible, you don't put the other part of the announcement in, which is how you expect them to pay for it. You fund those organizations and yet you refuse to assist them when they do want to make their workplaces more accessible for their employees and all Ontarians.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I join the Minister of Education in recognition of World Teachers' Day. World Teachers' Day was first recognized by UNESCO in 1994, and 42 years later, this document is still very relevant. It's relevant because of the work that they do with young people.

We New Democrats—like, indeed, many others—appreciate and respect teachers for this very difficult and important work they do in helping to build our young people intellectually and emotionally. And yes, elementary and secondary teachers do an important job, but today I also want to emphasize the work of elementary teachers because they are the ones who help to prevent problems as they get into our high school system.

Today, they face many, many stresses—the stresses of many special education kids who end up in the regular classroom—and they don't have the help and the resources that they need to do their jobs adequately. The regular teacher has double duty more than ever before. They teach ESL kids who are not being taught by specialist teachers, so regular teachers have a big job on their hands to do that. We have more split classes than ever before, so the elementary teacher is teaching under a great deal of stress. We have more kids in our classrooms in grades 4 to 8 than ever before. Yes, they have a tough and demanding job. We need to support the work they do so they can do the preventive work for our high school teachers as they receive them.

This is an important day to recognize their work, and today I recognize in particular the elementary teachers who need our support and need in particular the support of this government to make their job a lot easier.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. Peter Kormos: This Minister of Agriculture has more nerve than a toothache to stand up here in this Legislature as one of Dalton McGuinty's Liberal front-benchers and talk about celebrating Ontario Agriculture Week. Farmers have got nothing to celebrate. Farmers have been subsidizing consumers in this province for far too long and are doing more so at an unprecedented rate right now, and this government is putting them under direct attack.

You want to talk about farmers? You tell me what the peach and pear farmers down in Niagara have to celebrate because this government let CanGro close its

doors, move its shop out of this country, out of this province—not just the good jobs alone but the hundreds and hundreds of acres of peaches and pears that are going to lie fallow down in Niagara.

Talk to David Wiley, grape grower down in Niagara, who has tonnes of grapes rotting on the vine because this government lets Ontario wine be called Ontario wine when there's but 30% Ontario grape juice content, 70% plonk from Chile or Lord knows where, and Lord knows what was done to it en route to this province and this country. Those grape growers are at risk because this government refuses to take the simple step of ensuring that when a consumer buys Ontario wine, it's 100% Ontario grapes—good-quality grapes, let me tell you.

Farmers in this province have never been so desperate for the support of a government to help them through the increasingly difficult times of the importation of cheap food product. We've got a federal government that's selling them out on a daily basis when it comes to eliminating tariffs on foreign produce, especially South American produce, cheaply produced, produced at Lord know what risk to the consumer, never mind the stuff that might come in from China from time to time. We don't need to hear anything more about that.

I say, if this government wants to celebrate farmers and agriculture, it had better sit down at the table with the OFA and farmers in this province and start cutting some real deals to protect their livelihoods.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE WEEK

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to rise to celebrate Customer Service Week: serving customers with disabilities. Certainly accessibility standards for customer service for people with disabilities are important, and we in the NDP agree that every person with disabilities should have access to the services he or she needs. The government goes on to say that all Ontarians should be able to easily access their government services. One of the services that people with disabilities depend on is ODSP, the Ontario disability support program, yet since this government has been in power, the ratio of workers to recipients has gone way down. Now every worker has a huge caseload. People with disabilities who need to get in touch with their workers because things are not going the way they should can't, have a long wait, and don't get to phone in. This is not service.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. John Wilkinson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I move that the Standing Committee on Estimates shall suspend its consideration of estimates until Wednesday, October 15, 2008.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR DES IDÉES D'AVENIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 2, 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. Charles Sousa: I'd like to talk a little bit about the Ontario tax exemption for commercialization. As you know, we have a five-point plan for the economy, and it includes investing in and creating an environment for innovation. This legislation is a key component within our five-point plan to encourage investment. It also fits in strategic tax cuts to encourage investment. This is about jobs, the next generation of jobs, and bringing those jobs to Ontario.

The Ontario tax exemption for commercialization is an effort to further support innovation in the Ontario economy. The act produces proposes a 10-year tax exemption for new corporations that commercialize intellectual property developed by qualifying Canadian universities, Canadian colleges, Ontario centres of excellence and other such research institutes. The legislation, if passed, would authorize a refund to qualifying corporations equal to the amount of income tax and corporate minimum tax paid by the corporation. A qualifying corporation would be exempt from Ontario corporate tax and corporate minimum tax for its first 10 years. It must be established, however, after March 24, 2008, and before March 25, 2010.

We've made strategic tax cuts for business to encourage investments, and they amount to almost \$3 billion in annual savings for Ontario businesses when fully phased in. We have eliminated the capital tax for manufacturers and resource firms retroactive to 2007, resulting in a \$190-million rebate; cut the capital tax by 21%, retroactive to 2007, for all businesses; and we are on our way to fully eliminating the capital tax by 2010. Our federal-provincial corporate income tax rate is also almost seven percentage points lower than our major trading partners in the US-Great Lakes states, and it is lower than the federal state CIT rate in all 50 US states.

We have a comprehensive five-point plan for the economy, and it's more than just tax cuts; it's about improving and increasing jobs. We will continue to invest in education, health care and the environment.

I believe this to be an important piece of legislation. Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, is about turning innovation into Ontario jobs by establishing high-

tech companies that will, in turn, provide a boost to our economy. This bill provides a 10-year corporate income exemption for new companies that are homegrown, and their homegrown ideas here in Ontario, with new ideas and new products. This is a landmark corporate tax measure and it's the first of its kind in Canada. New businesses in Ontario that commercialize eligible intellectual property, developed at qualifying Canadian colleges, universities or research institutes would be eligible to claim this 10-year corporate income tax refund.

This is good news for communities like mine in Mississauga South. In Mississauga South we are trying to celebrate, motivate and encourage rehabilitation and revitalization of the area, particularly around the southern corridor. What we need are new companies to come into Ontario and to attract them to invest in Ontario so as to enable us to not only have new products and new ideas but to be more competitive on the global stage. Our economic and social prosperity is dependent on this ability to innovate and to compete. Our innovation agenda is aimed at igniting growth in the industries that will shape our future and create Ontario's next generation of jobs and prosperities.

In Mississauga South, and in Mississauga generally, we are fortunate to have many companies that have taken the lead on innovative technology. They are celebrated not only here in Ontario, but across the world, by having become members at the forefront of their respective industries.

For this bill, this Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, we also have the support of various institutions. I look at Dr. Paul Genest, president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities, and I quote: "Ontario is the fourth largest biomedical research centre in North America, a global leader in digital media and information and communications technologies and one of the top provinces in alternative energy and climate change initiatives. This enlightened new tax measure will help to create a greener, healthier and economically stronger province by tapping into our research excellence, strengthening the partnerships between researchers and businesses and promoting commercial success."

Linda Franklin, president and CEO of Colleges Ontario, writes: "Ontario's colleges have a successful track record for working together with business and industry and we support this measure to promote applied research and innovation. Half of the jobs in the next 15 years will require the ability to use technology that has not yet been invented and Ontario must be ready to lead the way in technological innovations."

We, as a government partner, must be prepared to facilitate. We as a province must be at the forefront. I encourage all of us to support this bill going forward. It's good for our economy, it's good for our businesses and it's good for the creation of jobs. Our five-point plan talks at some length about ways to take a balanced approach to initiate and move forward in our economic platform. For Ontario to be competitive within Canada is one thing. For Ontario, and Canada, to be competitive on

a global stage requires us to be leaders in innovation, to lead in regard to inciting and enabling our new companies coming into Ontario to have all the resources necessary for it to succeed. This bill putting a foot forward will enable just that. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments? The honourable member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd first like to be on the record as saying that anything in this current climate in the economy that can be done to encourage, reward and incent new business and innovation we would be supportive of, for sure. If you look at the explanatory notes in the bill, and I might say to the members here that this was introduced just recently, and it's a fairly comprehensive bill—I see this as another glowing example of Liberal red tape. The intent is fine, and it's well-intentioned to reward new business. We would know that the history of new business and commercialization is often unsuccessful. There is a lot of venture capital involved. There is a lot of risk-taking, to the extent that small and angel investors get involved in trying to bring something to market. Often it's out of the venue of a university or college, and often involving academics, whether it's in the areas that the speaker mentioned—biotech and technology of communication and digital technologies are important. We would be supportive of that.

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It says here, "The amendments set out other conditions that must be satisfied and include provisions intended to prevent tax avoidance." It sounds pretty innocuous at the outset. But if you look at it, it goes on to say that to implement the Ontario tax exemption for commercialization, there are a number of requirements that must be fulfilled. In fact, that's more red tape and audits. It goes on to say that the Minister of Research and Innovation will issue a certificate of eligibility, which means they will be audited. So there are people coming in to check this and that. There's no clear mandate.

Obviously, evidence is here that small business creates most of the jobs. Small business doesn't have the infrastructure of government, to have government inspectors in and say, "Oh, by the way, you haven't met one of the requirements."

We support it, but it's simply more red tape from the Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's interesting that I hear the Conservative members talking about red tape. I'm getting kind of confused these days, because I'm watching Sarkozy in France, standing in the Legislature, with the powers that be, talking about the need to regulate capitalism. Then you've got George Bush, the guy who's the beacon of the right in the White House, in the United States, and, God, he's out nationalizing the financial institutions of the United States. And then you've got that other guy, Mr. McCain, who wants to run to replace George Bush, that other guy from the right. He wants to regulate Wall Street. It seems to me you're completely

out of step with the right-wing base of not only North America, but the right-wing base of Europe overall.

I just think it's rather ironic at this particular time, as we take a look at what's happening with the financial meltdown that we see in the stock market generally. Because if we've learned one thing, we've learned the government does have a role to make sure that we set in place safeguards in order to protect citizens. I understand what the member is trying to get at, that you don't want to make whatever we do so onerous that it's going to cost a small business or an entrepreneur thousands and thousands of dollars to administer something. I understand that argument. But I get a little bit nervous when we start talking in generalities. Why have they got into this mess in the United States? Because they basically did release all of the red tape, as you call it, in the financial institutions when it came to lending money to people, that at the end of the day couldn't afford to lend it—and then basically further changing the rules around Wall Street so that they were able to sell all these mortgages off to other companies and they could speculate about how much money they can make.

So I just say, as a social democrat, I understand that government has tools that it has to use, and you can't be so restrictive with those tools that you get in the way of enterprise being able to move forward and to invest and do the things they've got to do. But you've got to have some rules. It's a little bit like having a freeway with no speed limits. You need to have speed limits at times.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank the member from Mississauga South for his support of this incentive program, really, for new ideas and new businesses. I think what really intrigued me more, almost, was the member from Timmins–James Bay, who brought up a very timely topic in response to the member from Oshawa.

I just saw the CEO of Lehman Brothers on CNN. Lehman Brothers collapsed, and he was paid \$489 million.

Hon. John Wilkinson: US.

Mr. Mike Colle: US. He walked away with that \$489 million. It collapsed, so the shareholders were all left holding the bag. The head of Lehman Brothers is laughing with his \$489 million. That's why we need government to support and to regulate—unlike the member from Oshawa, who believes in unfettered capitalism. It doesn't work. The Bush/McCain/Lehman Brothers legacy is not what we want in Ontario.

We need government to help support and ensure that new ideas—one new idea I'm trying to get to market here in Ontario is the on-demand water heaters. We all have these 50-gallon water heaters cooking water in our basements, and here we are all sitting here. Yet if you want to get a little on-demand water heater, you've got to pay 3,000 bucks in Ontario—the same on-demand water heater you can get for about 400 bucks anywhere in Europe or South America. I hope the Minister of Innovation is listening. Let's support an innovator in Ontario

who can give us an on-demand water heater we can put in our homes, save energy, save money and provide jobs, so that people in Mississauga and Stratford can build on-demand water heaters for \$500.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I appreciate the opportunity to get back to Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act. As the member for Durham so aptly put it when he started the discussion this afternoon, normally you would find that those of us here in the Progressive Conservative Party are in favour of any kind of tax relief. We believe that Ontarians are too heavily taxed, and we would normally support it. But this bill in particular is way too narrow; it deals with only a very, very small part of the economy that's going to be able to benefit from this and doesn't deal with many other industries that are under siege right now. We do support the concept of tax relief, but because this one is too narrow, we have some significant concerns with it.

The other interesting point is that the total decision-making with respect to what is an “eligible commercialization business” is one that is “in the opinion of the Minister of Research and Innovation, an advanced health technology business, a bioeconomy business, a telecommunications, computer or digital technologies production business.” That's a lot in the hands of the minister, and I would say that there should be some clearer criteria for it to be able to be applied, because it seems somewhat arbitrary that one business might qualify and another business might not. Even companies such as McCain, Gildan, Magna and Four Seasons, as I understand it, might not be able to qualify under this new legislation. That's something, I would submit, that the minister might want to take a look at with respect to the criteria to be used.

Finally, there's the whole idea of this being an exemption. In fact, it's not. This is a refund application that's made after the taxation year. It would seem that a process could be employed that might be a little bit more efficient, in terms that it wouldn't require a cumbersome procedure in order to give the money back in refund form after. I think there are still some significant concerns that need to be addressed with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member from Mississauga South has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Thank you to all those who contributed to today's debate. I take into consideration some of the issues that have been put forward, and I reinforce and remind everyone that this is a bill that is part of a broader picture, which is the five-point plan put forward by the government. We indeed are faced with some challenging times, and this bill is a component of the strategies going forward to complement and encourage innovation and investment and, more importantly, produce jobs in Ontario.

Let's remind everyone that in Ontario we do have strong fundamentals—strong economic fundamentals—and it's important that we take a balanced approach going

forward. It's not just about tax cuts; it's about ensuring we have sufficient incentives for new businesses to be incubated and created right here at home in Ontario, in our respective ridings.

I would also consider that for Ontario to be competitive on a global stage requires a strong government partner. We're here to facilitate, where we can, those new businesses coming to establish themselves in Ontario—I consider some of the companies right in my own riding of Mississauga South, and in Mississauga generally. We have a number of innovative companies that exist today because of the entrepreneurs and their ability to choose Ontario. Ontario is a competitive jurisdiction because of a number of factors. One of them is our health care. Another is our infrastructure proposals going forward.

This particular bill, which tells them we are going to also partner with them in innovation, is an incentive for them to get established and started right here. I remind everyone that this bill is part of a broader picture and a component of that strategy.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today to speak for a few moments on Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007. The short title is the Ideas for the Future Act, 2008. I want to put on the record a couple of the sections of the explanatory note. One is "that to qualify for the Ontario tax exemption for commercialization, a corporation must be a new corporation that is not formed as a result of an amalgamation or merger of two or more corporations. If its income for the taxation year under the Income Tax Act (Canada) is greater than zero, all or substantially all of its gross revenue for the year must be from one or more eligible commercialization businesses and all or substantially all amounts received or receivable by it on the disposition of capital property must be from the disposition of capital property in the ordinary course of an eligible commercialization business. The amendments set out other conditions that must be satisfied and include provisions intended to prevent tax avoidance."

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As some of the previous people have mentioned, I would try to be supportive of any bill that helps any kind of business. But I think we can go much, much further, especially in times when the economy is taking a downturn and we need to do everything we can to prop up our companies. In particular, I'll put on the record a number of times, I think the first thing governments have to do—and I don't think we've seen a very good effort from the current government—is make businesses feel welcome in the province of Ontario. They have to feel like they're wanted here. They have to feel like any money they're investing is valued, any jobs they create are valued. If we can do anything for manufacturers, for farming, for tourism operators, and those are the people who are having a very, very desperate time right now, it's eliminating red tape and making it easier to do business and making people feel welcome in our province.

I heard today a number of different comments about the five-point plan. The one thing that I notice is not in the five-point plan is the elimination of almost 300,000 manufacturing jobs since the beginning of 2005. I don't really know how the five-point plan has helped the people that have shut these plants down.

I can tell you, in my riding just a couple of weeks ago, we had a very, very innovative company, Huronia Precision Plastics—I was given a briefing note today by one of my colleagues who had heard about it through the plastics industry as well. This business was started, I believe, 11 or 12 years ago. It was started in Ontario, under the Mike Harris government. The government continually criticizes the efforts of Mike Harris; however, the reality is that in Mike Harris's time in government, a million jobs were created in the province of Ontario—Huronia Precision Plastics being one of them, creating almost 100 manufacturing jobs for the automotive parts manufacturer. They were so innovative that the plant could actually operate at night with a cellphone. That's the kind of technology they had. The only people who would have to worry would be—if something went wrong, the people on maintenance would be on standby, and they would immediately go over to the plant at midnight, and it was operated through the computer systems and through the cellphones if there was an emergency. Somehow, we're losing our manufacturing jobs—and this was a company that had very, very highly skilled people. These are jobs that paid a lot of money. Two weeks ago this coming Wednesday, 78 people were told they no longer have employment, and the company has now gone into receivership. I feel that that type of an example is much too common in the province of Ontario. Ten years ago they were welcome, 10 years ago they were making money, and today they're not. I know there will be a million reasons why the government would say they're not to blame, but the reality is these are the kinds of companies that we're seeing going out every day—and now we've seen almost 300,000 of them in the last two and a half to three years.

I know that we had some fairly strong messaging around this. I want to put a few things on the record.

Our critic the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, Mr. Hudak, has pointed out that Bill 100 defines both innovation and commercialization far too narrowly, which is the problem with the McGuinty government; therefore, it will only have the possibility of helping a tiny segment of the economy, and that's very unfortunate. We heard that in some of the comments earlier. The government-identified priority sectors represent less than 2% of the jobs in Ontario and only a slightly higher proportion of the wages or GDP contribution.

Our party, the PC Party, believes in the free enterprise system and is a party of enterprise. We believe that broad-based tax reductions and lowering red tape are key to turning the economy around. I can emphasize once again that making companies feel welcome is one of the keys things as well. Far too often, manufacturers—and I visited a number of them recently, particularly over the

last few months—are telling me they don't really feel welcome in Ontario anymore. They feel like they're a hindrance, they feel like they're a burden to our government and to our province. I can tell you, it's sad when you've got 500 or 600 employees and your payroll is half a million dollars a week and you're turning around and you're not feeling welcome in your own province. And that does happen.

Our party understands business and how it operates and therefore supports measures to reduce the tax burden and increase investment. However, Bill 100 is not really properly designed and I think it can be improved a long way, as we move forward.

I also want to put on the record some comments, and I'm not sure if these were put on earlier by any of our other caucus members, made by Roger Martin, who told the finance committee in the prebudget consultations on January 21, 2008—and I would like to read Mr. Martin's comments into the record, as we move forward with this bill. It's what people are actually saying. Mr. Martin says:

“We've got to define and support innovation broadly. Innovation is critical to upgrading competitiveness, innovation and policy, and Ontario cannot characterize innovation so narrowly as it does. Whether or not there is a truly conscious consideration of the issue, innovation policy in Ontario construes innovation to be something that happens in a narrow range of industries—computer hardware and software, communications hardware and software, aerospace vehicles and engines, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, and medical devices—and that innovation is all about scientists working on technology. That is where the vast majority of the funding of all sorts goes to in innovation in Ontario and in Canada.

“Sadly, those sectors that I mentioned, 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. Even though the general public and policy-makers think that the numbers are dramatically higher in the high-tech-oriented US, they are not; it is a myth. Those sectors also represent less than 2% of the jobs in the US. In fact, the total size of these sectors in Ontario is exactly, precisely the same, down to the second decimal point, relative to the economy in the US: both 1.96% of jobs, not 1.97% or 1.98%—1.96%. So the US is not more innovative than Canada because it has a bigger high-technology sector; it's simply false. It is more innovative because it values, supports and expects innovation across the other 98% of the economy as well as the high-technology sector, and we don't. In Canada, the innovations that made Masonite, Four Seasons, Couche-Tard, Gildan, Magna and McCain global leaders would not be counted as innovation. But America sees FedEx, Wal-Mart, Southwest Airlines and Starbucks as innovators. They are right and we are wrong. We see RIM as a successful global leader due to technology innovation. It is a technology innovator. However, as important as technology innovation is to RIM, equally important to its success was innovation in carrier relationship strategy.

“Ontario needs to recognize that all sorts of business innovations are needed across all sectors of the economy to have a continuously upgrading economy and globally competitive companies. If we want more innovation that makes a difference to the economy, we need to broaden the support for innovation. Currently, we support exactly one type: scientific research. There is no evidence—none—to support the notion that this type of innovation is more valuable in the economy than, for example, business model innovation of the sort that McCain or Starbucks engaged in to create massive value.

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“We should broaden support for innovation projects designed to enhance global competitiveness. If governments in Canada can make a decision to provide funding for promising scientific research projects, why not for promising business innovation projects, which would have the benefit of encouraging Canadians to think that all innovation is created equal?

As I said earlier, those were comments made by Roger Martin to the finance committee pre-budget consultation back on January 21, 2008.

And that's why we say that it's a very narrow gap here; a very narrow number of companies are included. That's why, when we look at the very tight economy we're having today, we have to be far more considerate of all of the other sectors.

I listened very carefully to the member from Oxford when he introduced the young fellows in the audience today, this being Agricultural Week. He talked about the difficulties they're having. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker—being a member from the county of Simcoe, you probably know this as well—there are only two hog-farming operations left in the county of Simcoe. The largest county in the province of Ontario, and we've watched them drop off like flies. So anything that those people can do in their businesses, anything that we can possibly do would be of benefit.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Did you tell your federal counterparts?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I hear the lady from Bruce, or whichever riding she's from, complaining over there. You know what? I can tell you, she's way, way out of whack. Try driving down to Quebec. Drive to Quebec and see how Quebec treats their farmers. There are all kinds of farming operations in the province of Quebec. They're building new silos, new barns; there are new additions being put on homes. The truck dealerships are going well; the car dealerships are going well; the implement dealerships are surviving. In Ontario, they're not. And I can tell you—don't say it's the federal government's fault this time. This is the difference between Ontario and Quebec, and how Quebec treats its farmers versus how this government treats our farmers. There's nothing but a hatred for rural Ontario coming from this government. We see it day in and day out, in all kinds of small companies.

And let me tell you—under this bill, how many companies do we really expect would be covered in rural

Ontario? There are very, very few to begin with, but most of them would be covered in the large centres, and hardly any in rural Ontario.

If you want to talk about the government's hatred for rural Ontario, let's talk about the tourism resorts. They've had one of the worst years ever in history, with all the different things that have happened around the world, plus what's happened here in Ontario. But all we've had out of this government is the tourism czar, the former Minister of Finance, travelling around with this fancy glossy book, telling everybody how wonderful things are and how we must change to accept the future in tourism.

That's not helping people with jobs. That's not helping the resorts that are going bankrupt, and we're seeing it almost every day. We've got big problems out there.

And then we get right over to manufacturing: places like Volvo in Goderich. How many jobs there—550 jobs gone? John Deere—you could go on all day, talking about the job losses we've seen in the province of Ontario under this government, almost 300,000 manufacturing jobs now. And you know what? What have we got?

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, of course, you know what? It's all about Harper, isn't it? It's all Harper's fault. That's the way you like to put it. You can hear the heckling going on over there. You know what? Who was in government 13 years before Stephen Harper? The mess they made of everything—that's why they got tossed out. Harper is trying to clean up their messes. I give Stephen Harper a lot of credit for inheriting the mess and trying to get this country back on track. He's done an excellent job of it.

I hope that people in this country are smart enough on October 14 to re-elect a Harper government with a majority, so that we can actually get some things done without all this cumbersome activity that we see going on almost every day from the opposition, and the way they're fighting the government and trying to create obstacles to stop the formation of a successful country, which is what Mr. Harper is trying to do.

I want to put one other thing on the record, because I was heckled earlier today when I asked a question of the Minister of Community Safety. These people are actually trying to take credit for the Northern Ontario Medical School. Can you believe that? As a former Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, I think you probably realized it was Mike Harris who started that. Does anyone remember that? And here they are today, bragging about the Northern Ontario Medical School, pretending they actually did it. I can't believe it.

So we go on and on and on, with all these spin stories around here, but the reality of the matter is this bill is very limited. If it helps a little bit, we'll help; we'll support it. But let's get some more detail there. Let's help more companies. Let's help agriculture. Let's help tourism. Let's help more manufacturers.

What about a tourism resort that was having a difficult time and wanted to change and spend a whole bunch

more money focusing on a whole new clientele? Would they not be worthy of the same kind of benefits that anybody else would receive under this bill? Or a farmer who decided to change his whole operation around so he could utilize the soils etc. Why would he not qualify for this, if it's a benefit? Those are all entrepreneurs, they're all people with very innovative ideas, and I think they deserve every right to any kind of a tax exemption or refund or whatever it may be, as are people who would qualify under this bill.

I could go on here all day, and I know the minister would like to hear me go on all day, because I listened to him brag about his ministry for a number of hours in estimates, and I was trying to be quite nice and polite about it. I thought you did a great job in estimates. The reality of the matter is, we'll be supporting the bill, but there's a lot more wrong in Ontario, and we think this bill could actually include more than it does. It's quite narrow the way it is right now. We'll look forward to further debate and the comments you make after listening to my speech here this afternoon.

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

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I just wanted to take this opportunity to not only speak about Bill 100 but also to respond to the member for Simcoe North. I just want to jog his memory, just a little bit. I want to remind you what the riding of Huron—Bruce represents. We're the largest in beef; we're the largest in pork; we're the largest in supply management. So for you to stand up and start giving me a lecture on agriculture and how it is affected today—too rich.

I can tell you that what my farmers need is a risk-management program, and the pork and the beef need support from the Harper government. So don't stand up and give me a lecture on what our farmers need today, because that's what they need and it's falling on deaf ears.

Whatever the outcome is in October, the McGuinty government recognizes that our future lies with new technology and working with the sectors in order to move toward a greener economy. I know for the members across the way, "green" is probably a difficult word, but I want to tell you that that is the future. Really, quite frankly, I hope that you're going out with your federal counterparts so that you can hear the concerns first-hand from the agricultural community.

When I hear the member stand up and talk about tourism—our second largest industry is tourism, so we know that they are experiencing challenges. We have been there to assist, and we'll continue to do so, but where are you and why won't you Harperites over there support a regional economic development plan that will help the southwest? Why won't you? Why won't you go to your people on your side and stand up for southern Ontario? Come on. Member for Simcoe North, let's get out there, let's work together—it was passed unanimously—and get it done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: First of all, I'd remind all members that the one thing about politics is that we catch a lot more flies with honey than we do with vinegar, so whoever forms a government, I'm certainly sure we're setting a tone that will be appreciative of working together—maybe not.

But to go back to the bill, I'd been working on a bill in the spring, as I mentioned, very similar to this, and I hope the minister will take a number of things into consideration. You talk about fuels, and even in your opening under subsection 57.13(1), clause (b), where it says, "biofuel" means a liquid fuel made from a biomass resource and includes the liquid fuels ethanol, methanol and biodiesel," it should include the phrase "but not limited to."

Part of it is that we need some competition in the fuel sector. What we've done here is talk about the creation, but it's the distribution that's a major problem right now in the biofuel sector. There isn't any incentive for that. What I'd been working on in the spring was working with major manufacturers that found governments in other jurisdictions—that found incentives to start to distribute the biofuels once they're created, because there is no incentive for the current major oil companies to distribute that fuel out there. So what you need to do is find that, and I'd be more than happy to try and pass on some of the information to the minister on how we can incorporate that into the bill to make it more advantageous.

For example, every E85 vehicle coming out of Oshawa and the Big Three can run on 85% ethanol, but there are only four stations in the province of Ontario that can provide that fuel. What we need is an incentive for other stations to sell that fuel and not just create it. It's great to have it, and we've got it there, but there's no incentive to move it forward.

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The other aspect is that there are some other fuels out there now that I'm working with. There is an unwritten rule that allows for a tax exemption on fuel for about five years, but it's unwritten. They need it in writing so they can move forward with some of the distribution of the fuels in the contracts that they have; they just don't have that. Will it take place? I've read the documentation from the feds. The feds have given the okay to move forward with the sale of just GST, and actually suggest PST, but if we can move forward in the other sector, it will help bring in competition in—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to give a few comments to the member from Simcoe North on Bill 100, An Act to Amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

I would tend to agree with the statement made by the honourable member that the bill is not well designed. First off, it completely sidelines basic research in favour of commercialization research. If basic research is not well funded, then commercialization is not going to

happen. You cannot fund the end products when you have not funded the basic research that will lead to those products. Good scientific research is developed in the minds of individual scientists. In order for them to create basic research, they need to have the infrastructure, and we need to invest so that we are attractive to the best and brightest minds in the country and in the world so that they will come to Ontario to do basic research. If you fund this, commercialization will happen because those people will bring it to market. To quote the owner of Research in Motion, he certainly supports the idea that you will not recreate another Research in Motion if you don't invest in basic research.

The second problem with the bill is that for most research companies in the advanced health and biotechnology sector to become profitable, it takes eight to 10 years. So if you don't make any profit, you don't pay any corporate taxes. If you don't pay any corporate taxes, you don't get any refund. To think that a refund on companies that take such a long time before they become profitable is going to be a big incentive to create new jobs is not realistic. Those companies take 10 years. They need venture capital. They need access to capital, not a tax credit.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I thank the members from Huron-Bruce, Oshawa and Nickel Belt for their comments this afternoon, and I appreciated making the speech. I want to respond to the member from Huron-Bruce for a moment.

One of the things that's interesting is that the government is now talking—after 31 months of the Harper government, suddenly Mr. Harper is supposed to make a southern Ontario economic development plan. After 13 years of corruption and overtaxation by the former Liberal government, we never, ever heard this government ask about that. It's only in the last few months that this has come up, and now it's suddenly a priority. After all those months, all those years of Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Martin in Ottawa, this was never mentioned; it was never a priority.

Even when we talked about the fairness issue—and Mr. McGuinty has now got his fairness website up and all that sort of thing—he never talked about fairness in health care or any of that type of thing. He always blamed the Harris government, and everything was fine in Ottawa; Ottawa was sending all the proper money forward and everything else. But you know what? The reality of the matter is that the agricultural industry is having a really difficult time. Maybe it's wonderful around Goderich, where they just lost the 500 jobs. Maybe it's great over there, but I don't think it probably is.

What I noticed when I travelled down to Quebec this summer was that the farmers in Quebec are doing much better, and we've got the same federal government and two different governments—the Quebec provincial government and the Ontario provincial government—and they're certainly treating their farmers differently, as far as I'm concerned.

I can tell you that as we move forward with this bill, I will be supporting the bill, but I'm going to encourage people to make the kinds of comments I've made on the economy today because I think that's where the real problem is with this government and how they handle the economy.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The honourable Minister of Research and Innovation.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair today.

First of all, I look forward to entering into the debate. I have been watching it here or reading in Hansard what all the members have been saying about Bill 100. I'd like to add some comments and perhaps some clarity for all the members about what we are trying to accomplish with this bill.

First of all, I want to thank the Premier of Ontario. I think history will record that it was the Premier's leadership that allowed us to come to this point today, particularly his decision back in 2005 to create the Ministry of Research and Innovation. I had the privilege of serving as his parliamentary assistant in the previous government, and I'm quite blessed to be the Minister of Research and Innovation in our current government.

As well, I want to thank the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, who is carrying this bill in the House. Since this is a tax measure, it falls to the Minister of Finance to carry the bill, but as many people have commented in the House, the Ministry of Research and Innovation and the Minister himself or herself actually has a specific role to play in the administration and the decisions around Bill 100, so I wanted to comment on that.

I would say first of all, to set some context, that we are in the midst of an eight-year, \$3-billion investment on behalf of all of us here in Ontario in something known as the innovation agenda. We are very clear, on this side of the House, that it is innovation and the commercialization of new ideas that will allow us to succeed in the 21st century.

I've been telling people that there was a formula for economic success in the previous century, and it was quite simply this: If you could come up with a local solution to a local problem, you would garner a local market and do quite well for you and your family. That was really the formula for success in the 20th century. But in the 21st century, with the forces of globalization washing across our economy, it seems not only on a daily but even on an hourly basis, we on this side of the House say that there has to be a new formula, and we believe that we know what that formula is: If you can find just a slice of a global solution to a global problem, then the global marketplace and global capital will beat a path to your door. That is really at the heart of Ontario's innovation agenda, and Bill 100 just forms one part of that formula of success that we at our ministry are working so hard to bring into being here in Ontario, the largest and greatest province of this wonderful country.

If there is a great idea in a research institute, in a university or in a college, the question we have to ask

ourselves is, "Where will that be commercialized?" Because a great idea will be commercialized. Where will that idea be commercialized? That is at the heart of Bill 100. We are saying clearly that, in a North American first, if there is a novel idea that has been patented—intellectual property has received a patent and the person who came up with the idea owns the idea and it's very clear as to who legally owns that—if you own that idea and you want to commercialize that idea, the very best place in North America, the very best place in Canada, to commercialize that new idea is here in the province of Ontario, to answer that question, "Where will that commercialization happen?"

That's why I wanted to say to my friend from Nickel Belt that I disagree with her. She said that if we focus all of our attention on world-class basic research, that commercialization will just happen. What we're saying is that commercialization will happen, but this bill answers the question of where it will happen. We have made a commitment in regard to research, both basic and applied, of some \$625 million. I don't think there will be anyone who would be able to challenge our government and what we're doing in regard to our investments in research, whether it's basic research or applied research, whether it's research excellence, which is the talent of our researchers, or whether it's infrastructure, giving our state-of-the-art, world-class, top-notch researchers state-of-the-art, world-class, top-notch tools to do their research. We do that on both sides of the equation.

I was fortunate just in the last few weeks to announce some \$33 million worth of new Ontario Research Fund grants just for research infrastructure, just on the tools that our researchers need to allow them to be world class.

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I wanted to speak specifically about the bill, particularly on the question of whether this bill should be broadened to the private sector. I wanted to let people know, because one would assume from the comments of the opposition—and I would assume perhaps they're just not as informed as they could be, which is why I've decided to enter into the debate—the question of whether or not there are already existing incentives for private sector businesses to do research and what is the tax treatment of that.

I can tell you that in a recent 2006 study by KPMG for the G7, entitled *Competitive Alternatives*, Canada was deemed to have one of the lowest business costs relative to a number of international peers in regard to research. That is a combination—and I want to give credit to the federal government where it's due—of tax measures available to Ontario companies at both the federal and the provincial levels. There is something called a SRED credit, the scientific research tax credit. That is matched by an Ontario innovation tax credit here in the province of Ontario. When the federal Minister of Finance was able to improve that, I can tell you that our government took steps to match that. So I can tell you that in this province, when it comes to doing research, if you are a for-profit business and you are investing in research and

innovation, the taxes that you owe on your profit will be reduced because of that.

But this bill is not specifically geared to companies that are already receiving the benefits of those tax measures. This bill is specifically geared to those innovators, those people across this country at our research institutes, our academic hospitals, our colleges and universities, who discover some novel idea, some groundbreaking new piece of intellectual property, who ask the question, "Where should I commercialize this?" We have sent a very strong signal that we believe Ontario is the place for that innovation to happen.

I would like to comment, as well, about the minister's role. There have been some questions, I think, raised by the opposition about the fact that the minister is to issue these certificates. I think that is the appropriate role of the Minister of Research and Innovation. I can assure the House that each and every decision I make, whether it has to do with academic research or whether it has to do with business excellence, is informed by the great staff, the great people at the Ministry of Research and Innovation, who give me advice on a daily basis as to what is the wisest decision.

I can tell people that there are really two guiding principles in our ministry, the first being that we never allow political science to interfere with science. I have the privilege of being the Minister of Research, and I find it passing strange that down in the United States—

Interjection.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would say to my new friend that the politicians in the United States have allowed political science to interfere with science, which is why so many scientists in the United States are moving to Canada and to Ontario. Because when they want to do research, they can find that the question of whether or not they should do that research becomes a referendum issue, a ballot issue, in some state election.

Mr. Jeff Leal: That's Sarah Palin in Alaska, exactly.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Exactly. I would say to my friend from Peterborough that if we're going to be a jurisdiction that embraces the power of science, we as a government always have to make our decisions in regard to science based on peer-reviewed global excellence—and that is the standard that we set in this province—and, as well, that we understand the powerful powers of the markets. I agree with the members who have all found religion lately about how there's a need to regulate capitalism. I think we only have to look south of the border to understand how important that is. The markets are a powerful force for change and for innovation.

So it is important for us to understand the appropriate role of government, and that is to act as a catalyst, to bring our top scientists and our business leaders together.

I know the example was of RIM. RIM is a great example of two innovations, one a scientific innovation, which is widely credited to my friend Mr. Lazaridis, about push technology in regard to e-mail, and the other a marketing, business innovation by Mr. Balsillie—

Mr. Jeff Leal: A Peterborough boy.

Hon. John Wilkinson: —a Peterborough boy—and how those two innovations came together to form one of the companies that we're most proud of here in Ontario, as their product is exported around the world.

Why is their product exported around the world? Because about every nine months, they make their product better through the process of innovation. They don't rest on their laurels; they make that product better every nine months. There's a good example of a company that has embraced the concept of innovation.

Many members have talked about the need for venture capital, and I would agree with them. The Ontario venture capital fund now stands at some \$205 million. The \$90 million first pledged by the government has now been matched—oversubscribed—by another \$115 million. I know that the new Ontario venture capital fund is looking for additional money to try to bring that fund up to \$207 million, and the fund managers are working on that. The fund managers have already made an investment.

I also want to mention, while we're talking about Research in Motion, the fact that Research in Motion has announced their new \$150-million BlackBerry Partners Fund, a venture capital fund. We particularly want to applaud them for making an investment here in the province of Ontario.

Many speakers have talked about the fact that, somehow, what we're looking at here is a very small slice of the economy, some 2%. I would disagree, in the sense that at the beginning of the 20th century, the internal combustion engine had been invented, but there were a lot more people in the horse business than in the horsepower business. But it's the horsepower business that transformed the economy of Ontario in the 20th century. The type of investments that we're making in this tax measure has to do with those areas of the economy where Ontario already is a global powerhouse. We're saying to our researchers in institutions right across Canada that when you have breakthroughs in our areas of focus, Ontario is the very best place to commercialize them.

There are also some questions—and, I think, some confusion—in the minds of the opposition in regard to the nature of this. I say to my friend from Whitby that this bill is very clear. One must create a new company after the Minister of Finance made his budget speech in March of this year, and there's a four-year window. You can imagine, if we didn't put some very tight language around this, that you could have a company that could say, "Well, you know what? I have a big company." We'll use RIM as an example. "What we'll do is start a little company, and we'll put one innovation in that company. Then we'll transfer our entire multi-billion-dollar company into that little company, and now we won't pay any income tax for another 10 years."

We're a little smarter than that. The measures in this bill are all about making sure it is very targeted to those researchers, those innovators who have had a breakthrough and who create a company for the purpose of commercializing that innovation. Not the rest of the com-

pany—commercializing that innovation. We've set words around that in the legislation to ensure that we protect the interests of the taxpayer. If we hadn't done that, I think we would be negligent. That's why it's been important for us to clearly define what it is we are looking for in this bill.

I want to say to my friend from Oshawa, the member from Oshawa, that I look forward to working with him on the concerns he has raised in regard to what I think would be an innovative way of distributing biofuels in the province of Ontario. One of those E85 gas stations is in my riding, so I know it quite well. We look forward to that.

I say to my friend from Eglinton—Lawrence, Mr. Colle—he had discussed innovation, here in this House, in regard to smart water heaters, so that those water heaters are not wasting electricity and keeping water warm when we're not in the house. I look forward to working with him, and I know that the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure is also very, very concerned.

I just want to conclude by saying that this measure is part of a suite of efforts we're making at the Ministry of Research and Innovation. We are particularly focused on this \$3-billion, eight-year investment in innovation. We have chosen the areas of focus after an extensive global review of where we're particularly punching above our weight. I would say that expanding the digital universe and the capacity of those of us in Ontario to do that is a great example, because we have this wonderful wealth of multicultural diversity, representing the entire ability of the world to communicate, and we're all living in social cohesion right here in Ontario. So when a company comes up with an innovation in expanding the digital universe, it can be replicated in multiple cultures, multiple languages, almost instantaneously, right here in Ontario, unlike other communities. That's why we have such a focus on digital media.

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When you look at the powerhouse that we are here in Ontario in regard to life sciences, there is a global demand to prevent and to cure disease. That is a global opportunity. We want to ensure that our researchers know that Ontario is the very best place for them to commercialize and take those lifesaving technologies off the shelf in their labs and translate them to the care of patients.

Finally, in regard to the bioeconomy, we all know, as I was saying earlier today, that as a species we have to learn how to be sustainable. We have to learn how to wean ourselves off fossilized carbon. We in Ontario are blessed with having one of the largest repositories of renewable carbon in regard to agriculture and forestry. The research we are doing in this province is geared to making sure that the refineries are beside the mine and the winery is beside the grapes. If we're going to have a new economy based on the bioeconomy, we put it beside our 50 megatons of biomass that we grow each and every year in this province in forestry and in agriculture. We think it's a tremendous global opportunity.

I'm heartened that my colleagues on all sides are interested in supporting this bill. We look forward to it

going to committee and hearing their positive suggestions about how to improve the bill. I hope I've clarified the narrow scope of this bill in a larger context. We look forward to the comments from all sides as this debate continues.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I want to continue on with some of the issues that were brought up as the minister was speaking. The difficulty with the distribution of some of the new fuels that are out there, the biofuels, is that, as I mentioned, there is no incentive for the majors. What some of the US jurisdictions found was that there were tax incentives predominantly for the independents or some of the small fuel stations, whether it be Canadian Tire or the UPIs—which might be the case with yours—to convert those tanks over to ethanol on a tax-concession basis so that they have a central distribution point where they can get it out.

Some of the other problems: Actually, there is a fuel that's out; it's been sold on a regular basis in Japan. It fits completely into the vehicles, with no conversions at all required to the vehicle to allow it to use this new fuel. It's much more environmentally friendly, yet the distribution is once again the key problem in this area. The distributors want to verify that they can sell the product on the shelf, in a single unit. They can't sell at the station in volume as a fuel, but they can sell it as an additive, and there are no fuel taxes included in there.

What needs to be done is a standard five-year exemption, written out—it's an unwritten policy that's there—that allows these individuals to bring these new technologies that are currently out there and get them into the system. As it stands now, there is not very much competition and, quite frankly, the majors have zero incentives to start bringing their competitors in to start moving their product at some of the stations.

I've already done the communication. I'm going to bring you down some paperwork and documentation on this, and I will pass it over in the House when I'm done shortly. You can have a look, and hopefully we can move forward on some of these files, to take these new innovations that are out there and start to get them out to the retailer so they can bring in competition and hopefully put a little bit of scare into the fuel companies on the price of gas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I listened to the comments made by the minister, and he argues that we need to be very targeted in the way that we do this particular initiative. I guess that's one of the points that I want to speak to a little bit later, because as I sit down and talk to entrepreneurs that are running smaller companies—\$1 million, \$2 million or \$3 million dollars a year—part of the problem that they have is that they're struggling, first of all, to run an enterprise and to make some money. They're wanting to do the investment in R&D in order to position themselves so that they have products that they

can sell into the future market. Because you can't just keep on building what you've got; you've always got to innovate, and I agree with him on that point.

As I sit down through this process that I am going through, talking to a lot of different people about these issues, what's becoming clearer and clearer to me is that, yes, government has to have some safeguards at the end of the day so that entrepreneurs are not willy-nilly moving money around from one corporate structure to another and not using the money for what it's intended. But the message I'm getting fairly clearly is that unless you're big, unless you've got a lot of people that have got a lot of time to go through all of the processes that government has said is in place, it gets pretty difficult for them to get access to that capital. So one of the things that I think we need to have—we all agree, research and development is the key—is something that's fairly straightforward and simple, and it might be as simple as being able to defer their corporate taxes from year to year, because part of the problem is that you make quarterly instalments on your corporate tax based on last year's profit, and this year, for example, a lot of places that I'm talking to aren't going to make the kind of money they did last year. They'll all end up with huge credits at the end of the year, so now they've got a bit of a cash flow problem. We need to look at issues like that, about how we're able to deal in real time with how taxes are filed and how we basically organize our taxes so that those who can afford to, pay them, and those who can't, pay what they're supposed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: The Minister of Research and Innovation, with Bill 100, Ideas for the Future, makes a very compelling case for why this legislation needs to be passed. I note Saturday's Peterborough Examiner talking about a company that might take advantage of this:

"GE Energy Motors Division, Peterborough, large motors and generators manufactures engineered-to-order AC and DC motors for a variety of industrial applications including petrochemical production, mining, steel mills and air separation. Motors up to 65,000 HP and generators up to 32,000 kW have been designed and built at this site. We are a world leader in providing high value, custom, large motor solutions, leveraging premium technology and quality. This is a Canadian custom design and manufacturing facility with a global product mandate."

We talk about the health of the manufacturing sector. It goes on to say that right here in Peterborough, they want to embark on a massive hiring of quality specialists, supervisors, engineers, project managers, electrical systems and control engineers, electrical/mechanical technicians and technologists, mechanical/electrical engineers, materials managers, and hourly rated positions for fitter/welders, millwrights and industrial electricians.

This is the kind of innovative manufacturing that will produce the new jobs and continue to expand our manufacturing in areas where Ontario can have this com-

petitive advantage. The minister, quite rightly, says that if we put this bill in place, these new, bright ideas will produce the new jobs in the manufacturing sector that we all recognize as being under some real stress these days.

Also, I must put in a plug for Jim Balsillie, born and raised in Peterborough, went to PCVS high school, and then on to the University of Waterloo. He's the famous partner in Research in Motion. He's one of Peterborough's proudest citizens, and we wish him well in the future as he continues to provide jobs here in Ontario and Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: Looking at the minister's response, I would like to be on the record as saying we're supportive of the idea and the concept behind the innovation. In fact, the commercialization issue at the university level was an issue for our government. It was an initiative of our government to encourage the partnership in making an idea into a concept, into a product. This takes it one step further, which is encouraging.

The member for Peterborough just mentioned—as I said in my previous remarks, the problem here is the red tape component. You, as the minister, have a role in that to say whether or not they qualify, but as outlined by the member for Peterborough, GE would not qualify.

It says here in the regulations—I'm referring to subsection (2):

"Qualifying corporation...."

"1. It was incorporated ... after March 24, 2008 and before ... 2012...."

It also goes on further in section 57 to say that corporations that partnered with or were a part of or if the person who held the patent was part of that corporation in any form, they wouldn't qualify, not even if a professor was sharing it as part of a research project with GE or some other company and then formed another commercial product company. They wouldn't qualify.

That's the problem with this. It's stifling innovation. That's the real problem here. They should be putting more money into R&D, and if they go commercial, give them full credit. Most companies, as you know, Minister, fail in their first five years—the majority, 80%. So in fact, this sounds good, but it doesn't pass the sniff test. Like all things the Liberals promise, it sounds good, we're supportive of it, but at the end of the day, the recipients of this will be few.

I think there should be a requirement to report annually how many applied, how many were rejected. Those kinds of measurements and accountability are missing, and I would encourage you to—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you to the honourable member.

The Minister of Research and Innovation has two minutes to respond.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friends from Oshawa, Timmins—James Bay, Peterborough and Durham for entering the debate on my comments.

First of all, I would like to say that it is so very important, as a government in the 21st century, to understand the simple equation I mentioned earlier that we have to build an economy that is not based on the fact that oil is going back to \$30, that the dollar is going down to 62 cents and that the American economy is going to boom tomorrow. If that is your idea of how to build success over the next few years, I would say, with all due respect, you have to give your head a shake.

What we are talking about in this government is the need for us to be nimble, to be swift and to succeed in the 21st-century economy, and that will be driven by the process of innovation. My friend from Durham talked about commercialization, which I think has been loosely defined as tech transfer, and most of our major institutions have tech transfer offices. But we've learned, through the Ontario innovation agenda, that it is a two-way street; that we also have to have industrial pull. I would say that industry now has an even greater incentive to be looking for those solutions that are on the shelves of our research labs and on the lab benches, and how we need to translate those into the economy right here.

The question, fundamentally, is that these great ideas will be commercialized. This answers the question of where, and what we're saying in this bill is sending a very clear signal that we believe it's Ontario. I'm glad—and I think all parties will support me and the Minister of Finance in this—that the best place to do that is right here in Ontario. That's why I'm hoping we will pass Bill 100. It's important that we do that, I would be so bold as to say, in this session. The sooner we get to this, the better. I want to thank the Minister of Finance for supporting our ministry and bringing forward this very important bill.

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Bill 100, entitled the Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, is more aptly titled the “red tape for future generations act.” I think this piece of legislation is another one of those good ideas but a huge missed opportunity. Businesses in Ontario need our help now, not in 2011. They need their government to work with them, to keep jobs here in Ontario now. What they do not need is to spend additional hours and wages filling out paperwork when they need to be out securing new businesses.

The 10-year tax exemption for new corporations is no real tax exemption at all. As my colleague clearly pointed out, it's a refund buried behind a mound of paperwork. But before businesses begin to get too excited about this tax refund, let's be clear: This special enhancement is only available to new businesses, not businesses that have been weighed down by oppressive taxes and regulations in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. No, those companies who have been paying their dues and supporting our communities will not—will not—be eligible for assistance. This job-creating tax refund will only be made available to new businesses, and in very specific sectors that the government has, in its own wisdom, deemed to be priorities.

Perhaps it is the fact that, as Progressive Conservatives, our party places a great deal of faith in the private sector's ability to decide what has the greatest growth potential. The McGuinty government, however, has seen fit to further restrict this tax refund in four eligible fields: first, advanced health technology; second, bioeconomy; third, telecommunications; and lastly, computer or digital technology production.

I do not disagree that these four areas will be of increasing importance to Ontario's economy as we move forward in a highly competitive global marketplace. Perhaps Minister Papatello will bring back work for these new start-up companies from her Saudi Arabia sojourn. Only time will tell. Not only has Minister Duncan limited eligible businesses to new companies and in these four select categories, but he has also restricted it even further. The tax refund is only available to businesses that bring to market intellectual property whose concept was developed at qualifying institutions. It's really unfortunate that the bill is so narrowly defined and that it helps just a tiny segment of our business community. In actuality, it would only contribute to about 2% of jobs in Ontario during this very challenging economic time.

This bill lists more ineligible than eligible companies and entities, and lists them in a way that makes it difficult for even eligible organizations to participate. Mountains and mountains of paperwork need to be completed, which perhaps may take the entire eligibility time of this initiative to do. While the McGuinty government has very clear restrictions on the applicant, there are no guaranteed timelines for approvals or for refunds. I think that Bill 100 offers more discouragement than encouragement.

It will also cost these organizations a considerable amount of money to go through the application process. It's been proven in other parts of Canada and in other parts of the world that this type of process is cost ineffective. It costs the organizations a lot of money to hire additional staff just to go through this cumbersome process.

I think we had an opportunity here to allow not just new organizations and not just public organizations to participate, but existing corporations that have a proven track record of stimulating jobs in our great province. We should be developing legislation that rewards this hard work, rewards initiative and rewards investment in our province's future. Premier McGuinty would know that, if he bothered to take an interest in this. In fact, the Premier just came back from an economic summit in Niagara-on-the-Lake with leaders from across Canada. Surely, between photo ops, one of them asked the Premier what his plan is for turning our province around. It's embarrassing to watch our proud province dragged through the mud and go from first to worst in economic performance.

My caucus colleagues and I, led by John Tory, could not wait any longer for Mr. McGuinty to hold his own economic summit. We took the initiative and held our own economic summit, where we brought together great

minds of business and the academic community to brainstorm ideas and share perspectives. We will gladly share this information with the Premier, as we want to see our economy turn around again.

We know we can't wait till 2011 to fix this problem. We need to start now, or Bob Rae is going to look like an economic genius in comparison to Dalton McGuinty. Already, Premier McGuinty has created one new government job in Ontario for every new job created in the private sector. This is an unbelievably poor understanding of basic economic principles.

The McGuinty government is great at telling us how terrible the loss of manufacturing jobs is and how hard they're working to retrain these workers and find them new jobs. They're great at telling us they are focused on our economy, and then they insult three quarters of existing businesses that are struggling to survive by throwing out an olive branch just to new companies. Telling us is not action; it's simply wasting our time with more words. I will be happy to share with this government some of the suggestions that arose during the economic round table, in the hope that they will not fall on deaf ears.

Over 90% of businesses surveyed believe that the Ontario government should set clear numerical targets for the reduction of fees, forms and regulations on small businesses. Since 2003, the McGuinty government has eliminated 81 regulations. That's great. But they have created 435 new regulations.. It is time to start listening to the people who create jobs, not just government jobs but private sector jobs.

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During our economic summit, there was a general consensus that we need to support our entrepreneurial culture. Alex Gill, executive director of the Ontario Environmental Industry Association, said: "The province has focused considerable resources on the earlier stages of innovation, namely supporting university researchers and helping them 'commercialize' their ideas." That is fine, but there is a gap further down the chain where companies are trying to grow beyond their initial stages, and that is often where they run into problems. It is time that Premier McGuinty started listening to the stakeholders in this province responsible for job creation. We are not expecting government to have all of the answers. In fact, the opposite is true. We want government to get out of the way of the private sector so they can do what they do best: Identify a niche area in the market and build business to meet that need. Businesses need research and development funding for their intellectual property outside of that academic environment. Premier McGuinty has rules for some and rules for others. It's okay to give General Motors R&D money, and new companies starting up will be eligible for this great new tax refund, but our small business community, the people who feel the slightest economic movement harder than most, will not get a lick of help from Premier McGuinty.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business conducted a survey on what businesses would spend their savings on if the cost of regulations were to be reduced.

Here are the results: 54% of businesses surveyed said they would invest in equipment or expansion planning, 28% would hire additional employees, and 11% would decrease prices. If the government got out of the business of complicating the efforts of the private sector, it appears that businesses could implement their own economic stimulus package without a dime from the province. I would encourage the government to pick up a copy of this Canadian Federation of Independent Business periodical entitled growing Ontario small businesses: the red tape factor. It leaves you without any doubt about how regressive your tax strategies are in this province.

For example, the tax compliance burden on small businesses who employ between zero to four people is approximately \$3,700. Well, that \$3,700 per employee is a job killer; that's plain and simple. If they have four employees, that adds up to \$14,800. That is significant money that could be reinvested in their business and in the economy of our province. Sixty-five per cent of those businesses that were surveyed in the CFIB study listed the amount of paperwork as a factor contributing to tax compliance costs—the paperwork.

I could go on and on about the tax burden weighing down our businesses, but I have a limited time frame in which to respond, and to me the answer is clear as day: If we want to help our businesses grow and expand, if we really want our economy to rebound, then we need the McGuinty government to step up to the plate and reduce the tax burden on our business community. The Premier has the gall to implement a fairness-to-Ontarians bill. But is it fair to businesses across all sectors of the economy to wave a tax refund that they don't really qualify for under their noses? Is it fair that the only intellectual property that the McGuinty government recognizes comes from universities, colleges, non-profits or hospitals? Has the government thought out or, better yet, costed out, how much the compliance costs will be for businesses hoping to qualify and how many staff will be needed to administer and interpret Bill 100? I hope that Bill 100 is not simply another job creation program for the public sector, because I don't think that the private sector can stomach much more of this. Will the government commit to reducing the paper burden by making compliance on-line?

If the McGuinty government is unsure of how to proceed with cutting red tape in any way, I strongly urge them to review the great work undertaken by the Red Tape Commission under Premier Harris. Our party is very good at cutting red tape. We cut through the nonsense and allow the private sector the room and latitude to do what they do best, and that is to grow and prosper in our economy.

Like in the famous children's story *The Emperor's New Clothes*, the benefits of this bill are invisible.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just find it interesting, in this time of financial meltdown, that we still have the

Conservatives talking about having to open up the market and let 'er rip. It seems to me that I would be a little bit more cautious if I was in a party to the right, either being a Liberal or Conservative, making that argument. We all understand that we need to make sure that the process of filing your taxes and whatever programs are available by government need to be done in some way that is easy to access. Nobody argues that point; that's a bit of a no-brainer. But it's interesting, it would appear that the Conservatives are having a problem shifting gears here. Clearly, what you're seeing in the United States and in Europe with all kinds of right-wing leaders is that they're in trouble economically and are trying to figure out how to put the cat back in the bag, as you might say, and trying to fix some of the mess that has been caused by some of the excessive practices of the banking sector, mortgage brokers, Wall Street and various stock markets around the world.

Certainly, the answer at the end of the day is not to say, "Let's continue down the road of deregulation. Let's continue cutting red tape." God, even McCain is not arguing for that. So if you're to the right of McCain and you're to the right of Bush, I don't know where that leaves you, quite frankly. I just wonder about that.

I'm going to get a chance a little bit later to speak to this in some detail, but the point I want to make is that I understand the fundamental argument you make from the Conservative side of the benches, that we need to make sure that business can access things easily, but I'm not so sure "let 'er rip" is a good answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: It is my pleasure to rise in this House and to speak about Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act. This bill is a part of our government's five-point economic plan.

As we all know, our economy is facing major challenges at this point. The lower Canadian dollar, higher oil prices and challenges that the American economy is facing are imposing extremely important challenges to our economy.

This bill is going to pave the way for a knowledge-based economy. As we all know, the economy of the 21st century is and will be based on knowledge. So the importance of this bill is that it's going to pave the way; it's going to facilitate the commercialization of research ideas and innovation in Ontario, the ideas created in any Canadian university research institution and the colleges.

I just want to make a comment on the point that the honourable member from Nickel Belt mentioned. Once this bill is passed, it's going to not only facilitate the commercialization of research in Ontario, it's also going to assist the development of basic and fundamental science in Canadian universities. In the history of science, many scientific ideas and research were just left in books and libraries and never came into commercialization. So once this bill is passed, it's going to pave the way for expansion of research innovations and also fundamental research in our universities.

I just want to mention the importance of science in the economy. The federal government, unfortunately, under our current Prime Minister, dissolved the Office of the National Science Adviser. We still need to have the office in our federal government. The next government, hopefully, will create that office to help our science and innovation and also the economy.

1510

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I just want to make a brief comment with regard to the member for Timmins-James Bay, who says Conservatives are for "let 'er rip." Nothing could be further from the truth, but this is what the left tries to portray. We are a prudent party that wants individual businesses to flourish and create wealth in our province. What we don't want is useless regulation which binds businesses' hands so they can't compete in the world today. I believe we had greater consumer protection when we were in government than we have at the present time. What we did at that time was make sure that our securities commission was being strengthened under David Brown, who was then the chairman, and we continued to push with regard to that.

When we talk about doing away with useless regulation and redefining regulation, we want to create opportunity with regulation. We don't want to confine opportunity. We have been hammering the government day after day about things like the regulation of our apprenticeship ratios. This government requires three journeymen for every apprentice, whereas in Alberta, it's one-to-one in commercial construction, and you can have two apprentices for every journeyman on residential construction. They're trying to encourage their young people to get the training on the job, whereas we are saying to young people who want to be an apprentice here in the province of Ontario, "You can go through the courses going up to become an apprentice, but God help you when you go out to the electrical contractor and try to get an apprenticeship position. It's not there."

We're for sound, reasonable, logical regulation. These guys—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further questions or comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: Bill 100 is a bill that incents entrepreneurship; it incents ideas. In Ontario, we have some of the best and brightest people developing new ideas, especially in the area of the new green economy. There's incredible potential for next-generation jobs, but they need a helping hand. These businesses that are established on the basis of these new ideas will be able to create all kinds of jobs that are part of this global trend that we need in order to stay competitive. This is a way whereby our government is partnering with the entrepreneurs, with the innovative thinkers in our universities and colleges, so that we can not only create products that are benign environmentally, but products that will employ a lot of Canadians and Ontarians. We need to do this more than ever, because the fact is, we are in very

uncharted waters right now. We can see what's happening. It's not only happening in Ireland, which was the Irish miracle—they're in a severe recession in Ireland. France has just declared themselves in a recession.

I don't want to sound doom and gloom but there is a global shakedown happening, so we need to be prepared. We need to acknowledge that government has to take some steps. This is a positive step that our government is taking to basically encourage and partner with innovation and with one of the greatest strengths we have in our society, and that is our learning environment. We do have the best, whether it's the University of Waterloo, the University of Western Ontario or the University of Toronto. We've got people. All they need is a bit of partnership from government. I think this bill tries to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Burlington has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I want to thank the members for Timmins—James Bay, Richmond Hill, Carleton—Mississippi Mills and Eglinton—Lawrence for their comments.

I think what is pivotal here is that we have yet another initiative that is unclear. It leaves out the private sector, it leaves out existing businesses and it creates more red tape. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, in their study, estimated that the total red tape burden costs Ontario some \$13 billion a year. That's about equal to the amount of money the province will spend on public education this year, and this bill adds yet more red tape to that burden. Business people are spending an increasingly larger amount of time filling out paperwork instead of growing their businesses or hiring more employees.

Unnecessary or outdated regulations are far from being a bygone in this frustrating environment that creativity needs to excel in. It's unfortunate—and I'm going to say again that it's an opportunity missed—that the government hasn't costed out and done a run to see how this legislation plays out in the real world. This is all theory, and theory sometimes doesn't play out. I think you need to talk to the people who deal in business every single day, who try to keep this province prosperous, who try to keep people engaged in employment and who try to pay their taxes to keep our province proud and great. I think we're falling further and further behind with Bill 100.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to be sharing my time in this rotation with the member from Nickel Belt.

I just want to take a few minutes to put something on the record. This is a debate that, quite frankly, I think we should have had some time ago in this province. Really, the point I want to make is that when you look at Ontario, compared to the industrialized nations, we lag far behind most other countries when it comes to our efforts on the part of both labour and industry and business to look at mechanisms to encourage research and development investments within our manufacturing sector and others.

It always astounds me, when I look at the numbers. Look at a country like Holland. Holland does more, when it comes to value added, and more when it comes to research and development with wood products, than we do here in Ontario. We are among the largest producers of wood products in Canada. This country is second to none.

This is not to say that it's this government's fault or that government's fault or our government's fault when we were there. My point is that Ontario was rather lucky for many, many years. Everything came naturally. There were a few things that we did at the very beginning in order to encourage our economy, and we basically developed an economy that was manufacturing based and also natural resource based. We tied that all together with good, sound public policy around cheap electricity rates etc, our proximity to the American border and our Canadian health care system, which helped cut the cost to employers not having to pay health care premiums as they do in the United States.

My point is that we had it really good for a long time. If you look at the employment numbers in Ontario through the 1960s, the 1970s and, I would even argue, the 1980s, through the time of the recession, we had it pretty well. We sort of had everything going for us. Because of that, I think governments in the past didn't do the kinds of investments that needed to be made, when it comes to public policy, to really be serious about how we encourage research and development in this province so that we can be cutting edge and ahead of others when it comes to competing for the products that people want.

Now, I'm not going to say that none of it has been done. You just need to take a look at RIM. Certainly some of it has been done and, yes, it has been innovation on the part of entrepreneurs and, yes, a partnership with the community colleges and, yes, a partnership with our provincial and federal governments. But my point is that those things have been incubated not necessarily because governments, either provincial or federal, have done things to increase investment in research and development.

So here we are, at a bit of a crossroads in our economy. Certainly I look at my colleague, the member from Manitoulin—Algoma—Manitoulin?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Algoma—Manitoulin.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I ought to put Kapuskasing at the end of it; that's a big, big one.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: No, no. Algoma—Manitoulin.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He understands as well as I do that we've gone through a massive downturn in the forestry sector. One of the things that I think chagrins us all at this point is that we never positioned that industry to go toward value added. We value add to a degree. We're not going to argue for a second that making paper is not value added, and we're not going to argue that making dimensional lumber isn't value added, but what about all the other sub-products that can come out of it? There have been some efforts, on the part of some entrepreneurs in Ontario and on the part of governments—by

and large here and there, but not in a real way—to look at what Ontario can do when it comes to positioning our forestry sector so that we can not only be the ones who harvest the logs, bring them into the mills and turn them into dimensional lumber, kraft or paper. But what can we really do in order to add value? Can we build window sashes, desks, hardwood floors? Can we do whatever we can do to increase opportunities from our own natural resources?

1520

I go back to my first point: Go back and look at the numbers. European nations are far ahead of Ontario, and Canada in general. This is not pointing the finger at only this government. The finger pointing can go all around. We had it so well for so long. European nations, because they didn't have the natural resources and some of the natural things that were happening in the Ontario economy, said, "All right, how can we position into the export markets?" They said, "We are going to have a policy where we use all the levers of government—training, tax credits, low-interest loans, you name it—in order to position our entrepreneurs to be able to take risks," and in order to develop what ended up becoming very strong, value-added industry and manufacturing sectors in places like Scandinavian countries, Holland, Germany and others.

We're at a crossroads in this province. We find ourselves in a situation where the fundamentals that allowed the Ontario economy to prosper for so many years are starting to be shaken. It is a whole conglomerate of things. Yes, the American dollar and the Canadian dollar are part of that. I understand that well. Being in a resource sector riding, where we have mining and forestry, we're very dependent on the exchange rate between the Canadian and American dollar. But there's a whole bunch of other things that have been eroded. Our cheap electricity that we had when we used to have a public utility that provided electricity at cost to our manufacturers and the people in the resource sector—in my riding, it's more than double what it used to be, and that's not even taking into account the inflation that would have normally happened.

The point is that I represent a riding where some of the largest customers of Ontario Hydro reside, and you have some in your own riding, with the pulp and paper mill in Espanola. It is very, very difficult for them to stay afloat. Some of them have gone down. Even with the programs that have been announced to date to try to offset the increases in the hydro costs that the Conservatives and then the Liberals perpetuated by way of partial privatization and deregulation of our hydro system, it is very difficult for them to stay afloat.

Some of the fundamentals that underpin the Ontario economy have been eroded. Electricity rates. We've not done well when it comes to positioning ourselves to what future markets could be. Our training initiatives certainly have not kept up to date with—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I could do that. It's a good idea. If you're running as a leader, you can do that.

Ah, c'est l'École L'Héritage de St. Catharines. Comment ça va, vous autres? There we go. Votre ami M. Bradley m'a fait noter qu'on a des étudiants de St. Catharines, où demeure même ma tante. Monsieur Bradley, vous avez besoin de savoir que ma tante vous aime bien, mais c'est son neveu qu'elle aime encore plus. Mais c'est toute une autre question.

I just say—oh, you're back in time. Good for you. I can't give you the floor from here.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I know.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry about that. The rules of the Legislature, right? We have all these arcane rules.

But my point—and I don't want to take up too much time, because I know Madame Gélinas has lots to say—is that the underpinning of what was our economy has changed. What we are now trying to do, this late in the game, is fix that by introducing measures here and there that may work in the end. Will this bill be a bad thing? Obviously not. Will this bill do some good? Of course it will.

The government says, "This is part of a five-point plan." I get real nervous when I hear governments talking about five-point plans, because that normally means they're trying to react because there isn't a plan. I know; I was in the Rae government when we had a three-point plan. It didn't work for us, and I don't think it's going to work for you guys. Then I heard the Mike Harris government and the Eves government talk about—how many points were in your plans? I can't remember what the numbers were. So normally, it's a communications exercise and not a policy exercise.

What we need to do in this Legislature is challenge ourselves as members of this assembly, all sides of the House, to say: How do we need to rethink what natural advantages we can give our entrepreneurs to enable them to survive and invest and do the value-added and R&D that has to happen? What tools in government do we have that allow us to help make that happen? I think we know what some of those keys are, but I don't think we're doing them as well as we need to.

I end on this point: I listened intently to the right-wing parties making arguments about, "It's all about red tape and it's about reducing taxes and it's about getting out of the way of business so that business can do its own thing." Go tell that to the people who have lost their houses because of exactly that kind of practice in the United States and that somewhat is happening in Canada. We've allowed, quite frankly, mortgage brokers and banks and others to basically do that. The government said—and it was Mr. Bush, I remind people, contrary to what some people—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let's not go there. You're baiting me now, Mr. Brown; you're baiting me.

I just say that that experiment has been tried. It started with Reagan, Thatcher and eventually Mr. Mulroney, this whole idea of, "If only government can get out of the way, business can do it better." We see that, yes, some things are better for some. We take a look at the big

buyouts and bonuses of people at large corporations who have taken a lot of money out of those companies that could have been used for R&D investment and for the training that needs to be done. I don't argue, as a social democrat, for one second that we should impose new taxes on these companies and we should make life difficult for them, but on the other hand I certainly don't agree that we need to get out of the way. I think it's a question of building partnerships. If social democrats have learned something around the world, if you look at Scandinavian countries and others, it's that you build—

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Russia.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Russia is social democrats—they're Communists. Give me a break. You don't even know the political system. My God. Boy, oh boy; what a guy. The Conservatives—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's baiting me. Let's not go there.

My point is, social democratic governments out there have understood that it is really about building the partnerships that are necessary. It's about bringing all the players to the table, not just giving it a good effort by saying a couple of nice speeches here and there. Put labour at the table; put the communities at the table with business; put government at the table. Try to do things that need to be done with specifics of what's going on within that company, because there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to this. That, I think, is one of the weaknesses of this bill: We're really trying to put an emphasis on four or five sectors where, quite frankly, there may be emerging sectors that will be forgotten by way of this bill.

I want to thank you for the time in this debate. I want to say encore, à l'École L'Héritage de St. Catharines, bienvenue à notre Assemblée législative. Prochainement, vous allez entendre M^{me} Gélinas, une autre francophone, de Nickel Belt. Bonjour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The honourable member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi aussi, j'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux étudiants de St. Catharines. Bienvenue à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Ça me fait plaisir de vous rencontrer.

Le débat d'aujourd'hui est sur un projet de loi qui s'appelle Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts. Nous, on l'appelle le projet de loi 100. Du côté de mon parti—je représente le Nouveau Parti démocratique—nous allons appuyer le projet de loi, mais on n'est pas parfaitement d'accord avec tout ce qu'il y a dans le projet de loi. Je vais vous expliquer pourquoi on n'est pas tout à fait d'accord.

Dans un premier temps, according to the Ministry of Finance, this proposal will cost \$5 million in its first year and \$7 million in its second year. The cost can also be thought of as a program or initiative that is being put on the sidelines by the expenditures. One initiative that is being sidelined by the government's so-called innovation

agenda is basic research. For those unfamiliar with the term "basic research," to quote one definition, it is "a scientific study done to create new knowledge for the purpose of learning or finding truth." Basic research does not have an immediate commercial application but basic research is the starting point for commercialization.

Here's what Mike Lazaridis, the founder of Research in Motion, whose little BlackBerry everybody loves, says about basic research: "The number one reason to fund basic research well and with vision is to attract the very best researchers from around the world to Ontario. Once here, they can prepare Canada's next generations of graduates, master's, Ph.D. and post-doctoral students, including the finest foreign students." Everything "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 for their discoveries. But that is a natural progression and it does not need to be forced.

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This province is putting a significant amount of resources into its commercialization plan. It has put over \$1 billion on the table, telling researchers that they will be rewarded for finding commercial applications for their findings. This is money that could and should go to basic research. We must ask ourselves what discoveries we are sacrificing by diverting funds away from basic research. The province is desperately trying to do something to create a new Research in Motion, but that's not the way new companies start. It begins with smart people working in high-class institutions with top-notch professors seeking answers to questions they may not have fully developed. Ontario universities have produced incredible and world-changing discoveries. Six Nobel Prize winners were educated or worked at the University of Toronto, right here. Two of those were Frederick Banting and Mr. J. R. Macleod, for their discovery of insulin in 1920. I might add that one of Mr. Banting's grandchildren lives in my riding. This discovery didn't require a patchwork of tax breaks and refunds. It was simply a commitment to basic research, to looking for new truths.

We agree with stakeholders like the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations that the province needs to focus on and fund basic research. This means hiring more professors and increasing support for graduate students. To quote several Australian scientists on their government's similar commercialization agenda, from the publication *Nature*, "Good scientific research is not done by corporations, or by the strategic teams beloved of politicians and administrators, but through ideas which develop in the minds of individual scientists." That is one problem.

There is a second serious problem with the bill and its effectiveness when implemented. Here's what Mr. Duncan said about the bill:

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

Well, those are all very nice words and I wish they could come true, but perhaps the minister didn’t talk to those in the business who might actually benefit from a program like that. In the New Democratic Party, we did, and here’s what we heard; I’ll fill you in on the details.

Several industries that represent different companies that invest in the commercialization of research say that it takes years—and they’re talking eight to 10 years—for companies that commercialize research in the advanced health and biotechnology sectors to become profitable. That means they don’t actually pay corporate income tax, so a refund on zero tax means zero refund. That doesn’t give them a whole lot of extra dollars to reinvest in their business.

Why would the minister introduce a 10-year tax refund bill that won’t actually help commercialize research? It sounds like a low-cost program to me, because, after all, the minister hasn’t been able to table the actual costs of the proposal. The tax breaks aren’t used, so it’s not going to cost the province a whole lot. In challenging times like these, when Ontarians are looking to the province to introduce new job creation opportunities in high-growth, high-wage areas, we need more than a lot of nice talk that is not going to lead to new, good-paying jobs.

So the minister can come out with a bill and say it will create jobs, but we don’t think it will. Those closest to commercializing research say that there will be little take-up on the program. New companies involved in these sectors simply aren’t profitable for 10 years to take advantage of this program.

Those who invest in new companies commercializing research don’t see the tax structure as a problem; rather, they point to a lack of capital funds. The venture capital market has never recovered since the meltdown of 2000-01. Some funds have simply stopped trying to raise capital because of the total lack of interest. The province’s response to this crisis has not been to invest more in venture capital. It has been this new gimmick of a tax credit which is not going to be that helpful.

There is also talk about eliminating the 15% tax credit for labour-sponsored investment funds by the end of 2010. Labour-sponsored investment funds are pools of venture capital flowing to companies commercializing research in the advanced health technology and biotech sectors. By cutting the credit, the government is signalling that it doesn’t want every Ontarian to invest in those small start-ups.

Sure, the NDP will support it. The government has decided to put commercialization before real high-tech growth policy. That’s unfortunate because the industry has put real proposals on the table, but those real proposals have been ignored. Instead we get a tax credit gimmick.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to comment on the comments from the member for Timmins–James Bay. I think what he is talking about is critically important, and it deals with this bill. There needs to be a paradigm shift here, I’m thinking. If there was some kind of meltdown in 2001, I don’t know what you’d call what’s going on today on Wall Street and Bay Street. The reality is that we really have to change our whole approach in many of these areas, and that’s why—there was a venture capital fund, the labour fund, it was called; it wasn’t working. Everybody in venture capital said the fund—so that’s been replaced by different investments our government has made, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund etc. It’s really unprecedented, what we are going through here. That’s why this kind of innovative approach in Bill 100 is part of this new approach. Whether it is the auto industry, high-tech, biotech or agriculture, yesterday’s axioms and bromides don’t work.

The member for Timmins–James Bay talked about the deregulation mania of Bush, McCain and company. You’ve seen what it’s done. It’s rewarded the fat cats on Wall Street who walked away with \$489 million in golden parachutes, and people are losing their homes. People are losing their pensions, their life savings because of the cowboy capitalism that’s dominated the west for too long. Our government is saying yes, capitalism is good, but it can’t go unregulated. The Harper, McCain and Bush cowboy capitalism is no good for Main Street.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I’m pleased to rise to comment on the points from Timmins–James Bay and Nickel Belt. I also think that when we talk about trying as a government to target specific sectors, we’re not going to win. There are particular sectors across Ontario that are exempted and will not be able to tap into Bill 100: auto, manufacturing, forestry, mining and agriculture. It’s almost as though the Liberal government has chosen the sectors across Ontario that are being hurt the most and is saying, “Here’s how we’re going to encourage innovation, but you can’t apply.”

Today, we had the Minister of Agriculture rise to mark Ontario Agriculture Week, and she crowed about the Premier’s innovation award. Somehow the Liberals can live with the dichotomy of handing out innovation awards to individuals who have innovative ideas and are doing innovative things on their farms, and yet they can’t qualify under Bill 100. I don’t understand how you could cherry-pick the industries that in Ontario are struggling so desperately right now, and say, “You will not be able to qualify.” It’s quite a slap, actually, to the researchers and students at the University of Guelph who have been responsible for so much of the innovation that we’ve seen in the agricultural sector in the last number of years. It’s unfortunate that they have chosen, with Bill 100, to pull away certain sectors that are in such desperate need of some encouragement and some creativity from our

provincial government, and to say, “You cannot qualify for this.”

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member from Nickel Belt has up to two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’d like to thank the honourable member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his comments. I agree that the labour-sponsored investment funds did not work as well as they had been planned to do, but they have been used by basic research and they have provided capital funds in an area that has a really difficult time finding capital to fund basic research. So to send it away because it had trouble—it might have been worth a second look.

As far as the cowboy capitalism comments, I will let this one slide, as I don’t think it has that much to do with the bill. I would also like to thank the honourable member from Dufferin–Caledon. She is absolutely right. The bill is specifically for two target areas in health care and it basically could have some potential in other areas of research, and she certainly mentioned a few, such as auto and agriculture, but those have been explicitly excluded. A bill that could have potential to do some good is targeted at an industry that takes more than eight to 10 years to be profitable; it is targeted at the commercial end of research, when basic research is what needs to be funded; and it is limited in its scope as to who can address it. So let’s just call it a very low piece of legislation that will do very little to help the 240,000 people who lost their jobs in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you for your contribution to the debate. Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I’m very pleased today to be able to speak in support of Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act, which is designed to attract individuals to bring forward great new ideas based on research in Ontario and across Canada, and turn that into innovative high-tech jobs for Ontario. What we’re talking about is giving people the incentive to make that step from basic research through applied research and into commercialization.

I want to begin by commenting a little bit on some of the previous comments, because having spent my life in a university town, I understand totally the importance of basic research. We do wonderful basic research here in Ontario. In particular, we do wonderful basic research in a number of fields at the University of Guelph. Obviously, agriculture is the one that we are quite well known for, but in the physical and biological sciences as well. A whole host of wonderful basic research happens and some very interesting applied research happens, but where we fall down is on that link of getting from the applied research idea to the actual commercialization, to the plant that is creating jobs and producing product. That’s what we want to support with this bill.

With all respect to RIM, I’m like everybody else—I’ve got my BlackBerry here; I use it all the time. It’s sort

of joined at the hip, literally. But one of the things, when you’re dealing with digital technologies is that a lot of the value in this particular machine is intellectual capacity, and intellectual capacity, in some ways, is easier to commercialize. When you move to a lot of the other areas, you’re actually in commercialization, having to move to producing a physical product. Getting to producing a physical product is a whole lot more complicated, in some ways, than in software, and I’ve got some background in both of these areas. So there are some differences here.

What Bill 100 would specifically do is provide that new companies that commercialize research that has taken place in a recognized Canadian research institution—it could be a college, it could be a university, it could be a research institute—usually based on public funding of the research, would get a 10-year tax break. That’s what this specific bill is all about.

I think, however, it’s worth noting that as part of our five-point plan, which has a focus on investing in innovation, this isn’t the only thing we’re doing. Listening to many of the comments from the opposition parties here today, you would think that perhaps this is the only approach that we’re taking. This is one of many pieces of our strategy to invest in innovation. For example, in our 2008 budget we actually had a total investment of almost \$300 million to support new investments, proposed tax initiatives and a variety of things. Let me tell you about some of those other initiatives so that you can get a sense that there are a number of things we’re doing here.

The innovation demonstration fund provides financial support of up to 50% of eligible costs to help Ontario companies with the commercialization and initial demonstration of their innovative technologies.

The Next Generation of Jobs Fund actually has three streams within that program. The first is a jobs and investment program which is designed to help companies in a range of sectors to expand in Ontario and develop innovative products for global markets. There you can get up to 15% of eligible project costs in grants. The second component of the Next Generation of Jobs Fund is specifically targeted at the biopharmaceutical investment program, and it supports the expansion of research and advanced manufacturing by pharmaceutical and biotech firms—up to 20% of eligible costs. The third component of the Next Generation of Jobs Fund is called the strategic opportunities program. It supports industry-led public-private collaborations focused on increasing Ontario’s innovation expertise in the bioeconomy and clean technologies, advanced health technologies, and creative industries—again, up to 25% of eligible program costs.

In addition to that, there’s the Ontario research commercialization program, which provides grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$750,000 a year for up to three years. This helps fund Ontario research institutions and not-for-profit organizations with technology transfers, with research transfers.

So there are certainly a number of things going on in Ontario, but Bill 100 is specifically focused on encourag-

ing people from all over Canada to come here and invest in Ontario and to give companies that take that research and start up new companies a 10-year tax break if they carry through on this investment.

I want to tell you about a marvellous event that I was at on Friday afternoon in Guelph with the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, because it was just the sort of enterprise that I see this sort of a grant, if this legislation is passed, actually helping along. We were celebrating the opening of something called the Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre at the University of Guelph, specifically focused on taking research that has happened in agriculture and in biology—pure research, applied research—and pulling that to the next step, not into just agricultural research or biological research, but actually pulling it into bioproducts discovery and production, and taking it that extra step.

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It is supported by the province of Ontario. Dr. Amar Mohanty, who is the director of the bioproducts discovery centre, is supported by a Premier's research chair in biomaterials and transportation.

This was a really exciting project, from my point of view, because what Dr. Mohanty and his research colleagues are doing is taking what he described as waste products and underutilized products from the agriculture industry—but also from the forestry industry; there are a lot of unused wood chips—and taking those by-products of other things that are going on, growing soybeans, growing corn, growing wheat, the parts that don't actually become food, and looking at those by-products and saying, "What can we do with those things to turn them into bioproducts?"

It happens that Dr. Mohanty is actually not a biologist, he's not an agriculturist; he's actually a chemical engineer. So what he's doing is marrying the expertise that already exists with the University of Guelph with his knowledge of chemical engineering. At the moment, they're actually focusing on—plastic substitutes, I guess, is what you would call them—products which could be a replacement for plastics. They have in fact already developed products made out of soy meal that are a substitute for plastics, and products that are made out of a variety of other combinations of bioproducts that are subjects for plastics. They actually had commercial extrusion plastic moulding machines set up in the lab, which I would normally find when I'm touring a factory, and were demonstrating how they could take these new formulations of bioproducts and produce substitute material for plastics.

Think of the advantage of that. Not only is it a great boost to agriculture—because there are now secondary uses for products that are really now just waste, so it's a great opportunity for agriculture; in addition, it's a wonderful opportunity for the environment, because instead of taking nonrenewable, oil-based resources in order to produce plastics, you can now take biological, renewable materials and use them as a substitute for plastics. This is cleaner, it's greener and it's better for the environment.

But the third advantage is that if we can get some of those jobs in Guelph and in Ontario, they will substitute for some of those traditional manufacturing jobs that are disappearing. In fact, the province happens to own some surplus lands in Guelph, and we've been working very closely with the city of Guelph and the University of Guelph to look at the future use of those lands, and exactly what we want to do with those lands is to set up a bio-innovation district. So the support that the province will be offering, if this bill passes, to move that process along is exactly what Guelph needs for its economic development.

I am absolutely thrilled that the Minister of Finance and our Minister of Research and Innovation are bringing this whole package of innovation ideas forward, in particular this one, because I think this will do great things for the future of Guelph and for the future of the larger Ontario economy.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member for Guelph on Bill 100, Ideas for the Future Act, 2008. This is a tax rebate, I guess, for new businesses, and we'll probably support it, but it has a very narrow focus on a tiny segment of our economy. I would say, based on the classifications of who qualifies and who does not qualify, it really is the government once again picking winners and losers in terms of enterprise. I can tell you, on this side of the Legislature, we support more broad-based tax initiatives where we let the individual businesses figure out for themselves who are going to be the most successful. I would point out that many economists agree with that perspective. I note in *The Globe and Mail* on September 22, Roger Martin, dean of the Rotman school of business, points out: "What we need to do is make sure Ontario is a place where businesses have the strongest possible encouragement to invest, and that has a lot to do with our marginal effective tax rates on investment, which are among the highest in the world," said Mr. Martin. "We have one of the dumbest tax structures on the face of the planet."

So we obviously have taxes that are affecting all businesses. This particular bill is affecting a tiny part of the economy. We need to lower our corporate tax rate, which is one of the highest in the country—corporations, 14%; this government raised it from 11%—and we have to be competitive with the rest of the country and the rest of the world if we want to keep our existing businesses and, in fact, attract more businesses, and we need to deal with the red tape and regulations that this government has created.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you for giving me the chance to comment on this speech from the member for Guelph. I want to congratulate the member on her excellent speech because she outlined the intent and goal of Bill 100.

I know I've been hearing for the last two days many speakers from the opposite side speaking about totally different things, especially now the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, when he was talking about private enterprise. How can he not support it? I wish he was paying attention to the member for Guelph when she was outlining the importance of Bill 100, which talks about intellectual property, how we can support researchers and innovators when they come to Ontario and allow them 10 years with no tax and give them the chance to explore their ideas and science in this province.

We also have another support mechanism, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, to support private enterprise, if a company wants to expand and wants to update their factories, their machines, to be able to compete at the international level. The member for Guelph outlined the whole idea behind two things: intellectual property, Bill 100, and the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. I think she was perfect when she talked about those two elements and how important they are for our government, for our society, for our economy.

She also spoke eloquently about how, in her riding, the researchers come together to create products from waste and reuse it again to benefit the community and society and protect the environment.

I think when we have a good member, they speak eloquently and represent their riding very well. I want to congratulate the people from Guelph for sending that member to our Legislature in order to represent them very well, to work on their behalf, to understand the issues, to be a great advocate on behalf of her constituents and also the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member from Guelph has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to my colleagues from Parry Sound–Muskoka and London–Fanshawe for their responses.

Just in summary, I would like to emphasize that this is just one piece of a whole host of initiatives we have set up to encourage innovation in Ontario. If passed, Bill 100 would allow us to take innovative research that has happened throughout Canada, and if a firm can bring that to commercialization, it will be entitled to a 10-year tax break. It's as simple as that.

Now, it's true that there are regulations to determine which products, which projects, which research institutes and which companies qualify, which is exactly what you would expect a responsible law or regulation to lay out. As we've just seen in the US, when you abandon the private sector, or any sector, to a lack of regulation, we can have bad investment of funds, both public and private. We are responsible. That means we have put controls in place to make sure this money is spent appropriately. But I do believe there are people out there who want to make the investment.

I'd just like to close by telling you about one of my almost-constituents. He lives a couple of hundred yards away from my boundary; he used to be a constituent before the boundaries changed. Agricultural entrepreneur Peter Hannam donated \$100,000 to build the new centre for bioproduct discovery and development. He donated a further \$400,000 for research products. I should tell you that Peter's primary business is as a soybean producer—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you, honourable member. Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Duncan has moved second reading of Bill 100. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed? I heard a no.

All those in favour of ordering the bill for third reading, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

Interjections.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Speaker, I have a suggestion. I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That's what I was expecting you to do.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Christopher Bentley: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates, that notwithstanding the order of the House earlier today, the Standing Committee on Estimates may meet at its regularly scheduled meeting times to complete consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Labour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Do we have unanimous consent to introduce the motion? Then I'll just read the motion.

The honourable Attorney General moves that "notwithstanding the order of the House earlier today, the Standing Committee on Estimates may meet at its regularly scheduled" meeting "times to complete consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Labour." Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Orders of the day?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Bentley has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 7, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1604.

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