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Wednesday 10 December 2008

Mercredi 10 décembre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 10 décembre 2008

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ROAD SAFETY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 8, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 126, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to make consequential amendments to two amending acts / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives à deux lois modificatives.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am pleased to rise in debate on Bill 126 at second reading. I need to say from the outset that I will be voting against Bill 126; I'll explain why momentarily. I would also like to take this opportunity to read into the record some of the very many e-mails and Facebook postings that I have received against this bill. In fact, I don't think we received a single e-mail or Facebook posting that was in favour of Bill 126.

Certainly, all of us have experienced tragic events where a young person at the wheel may have inadvertently gone off the road—a winter accident, matters related to alcohol. Probably all of us have grown up and lost a friend, sadly perhaps a family member, to such a tragedy. What happens is that the heart compels you to action. We have an opportunity as legislators to try to make a difference, to find ways to ensure that this sort of thing would never happen again.

We also have an important role, though, as a chamber of sober second thought to ensure that any changes that are brought forward through legislation would make a difference and would achieve the proper balance between controlling activities and allowing folks to function in modern society. That's why so much of an outcry was raised over the passengers rule and the harsh penalties assigned to minor offences like rolling through a stop sign. We have also received concerns about the zero blood-alcohol limit in the e-mails and postings to our office and the length of time that would be extended to.

When I first heard about this legislation when it was rolled out, it occurred to me, "Hold on a second, a 19-year-old could qualify for a commercial pilot's licence and fly a plane full of teenaged passengers, but under Bill 126 she is forbidden from driving more than one of them to the airport." Certainly in our area, with students going to Brock and Niagara College and Mohawk and McMaster, among others, the bill in its introductory form and in the proclamations of the minister and the Premier would mean that a 19-year-old Brock or Mohawk student, for example, with a full-time job, couldn't carpool to school or to work with others his own age without breaking the law. That was the major theme that was brought forward in the Facebook postings that I'll read, as well as a reaction to very steep, harsh penalties related to, in the grand scheme of things, relatively minor offences.

Christopher Van Lane posted on 20 November about the speeding: "Since when has any driver lost his licence on the spot for driving one kilometre over the speed limit? This sets a very dangerous precedent. I realize this is conceived in response to a genuine tragedy and my sympathies are with the bereaved father involved. Unfortunately, it perpetuates what has become a pattern with this government. Lacking either the will or the competence to enforce existing laws, the McGuinty Liberals respond by enacting draconian new laws, each more heavy-handed than the last."

Julius Parent from McMaster wrote: "Of all the traffic and driving-related changes that could be made, this is probably the least effective and the least necessary. How about better regulation of trucks on our highways? How about clamping down on erratic highway driving on drivers not signalling etc. Also, from what I've seen, the majority of speeders seem to be middle-aged men and women, not teens. Again, this just shows how out of touch Dalton is on the issues."

Colin Devries posted on Facebook: "This is ridiculous, draconian, even. The ethical problems with this legislation are severe and set a dangerous precedent." Mr. Devries's e-mail was long, but in the interest of time I'll go through a few more.

Ashley Struger wrote: "This does not sound very practical, especially for families who purchase third cars for their children to go back and forth to school. If there are more than two children, then does one have to walk?"

William Altie wrote in: "Style over substance, Tim. Major economic crises currently happening and he"—meaning Dalton McGuinty—"is dithering with this junk."

Tell him to get on with what's important. We are now a have-not province. Come on."

That's certainly a theme that we have received as well. There was dramatic news just over a month ago that for the first time in the history of Confederation, Ontario would be receiving equalization payments as a have-not province. The Premier and his economic ministers have yet to produce any kind of plan to grow us out of have-not status and, even more shockingly, seem to just take it as a natural course of business, a fait accompli, something that they can do nothing about. Their only strategy seems to be to put out their hand to Ottawa and saying, "Please, sir, may I have another?" in terms of equalization grants.

Dave Panko wrote the following: "I assume the premise of this proposal is so teens aren't driving around distracted and ending up in an accident where there could be multiple fatalities or serious injuries. That's all well and good, but instead of having five or six kids in the vehicle, you will now have three separate drivers on their way to the same party. Odds are pretty good they're going to have three DDs, right? And there will be no temptation to race, either."

Obviously a bit of facetiousness in the comments from Mr. Panko indicating, I think, in his suggestions that putting even more cars on the road would probably increase not only the impact on the environment but, importantly, the chances of an automobile accident if you have a series of folks coming back from a party in a series of cars.

While I do appreciate the fact that the Minister of Transportation is here listening to the debate—that is a longstanding tradition in the Legislature; not all ministers, however, follow that. I know that the Minister of Transportation is one who is always very respectful of what the opposition comments are on legislation that he brings to the Legislature.

I do want to commend to the minister, on a related topic, a very interesting column by Lawrence Solomon in the *Financial Post* entitled, "Ontario's Carpool Embargo." I don't know if it's this piece of legislation or others that he's been working with, but this is about—the subtitle: "With governmental blessings, you can carpool from home to work, but only under certain conditions." Mr. Solomon begins his op-ed by saying:

"Governments want us to maximize carpooling to take excess cars off the road, to save energy, and to clean up the environment, right?"

"Wrong, if the government is Ontario and provincial. In Ontario, carpooling is a prohibited activity that can only be allowed under strict government control, as determined by a government regulatory agency set up to oversee such conduct. Those who violate the law—as did a nonplussed outfit called PickupPal—can and will be punished with the full force of the law. With the government's blessings, you can share expenses by carpooling from home to work and back again, but only under certain conditions. You have crossed the line if you try to carpool to work across a municipal boundary—the gov-

ernment frowns upon suburbanites who commute this way. As for carpooling for a frivolous, non-work purpose—to school, to the hockey arena, to the doctor's office—this is outlawed outright, regardless of whether you cross a municipal boundary.

0910

"Ontario places other restrictions, too, on carpooling. First, you must demonstrate dedication by sticking to the same driver, day in day out. You can't catch a ride with Peter on Mondays if Paul picks you up Tuesdays. And you must never, ever be prompt in reimbursing your driver for your share of the ride. Once a week or once a month is fine. Try to pay more frequently and you'll get pulled off to the side of the road if you get caught."

This is in reference to concerns that PickupPal had, which is "an Internet start-up not yet one year old ... a phenom that already operates in over 100 countries, over 1,000 lower-level jurisdictions such as states and provinces, and tens of thousands of municipalities." Ontario is throwing up roadblocks.

I know we have a very sensible, thoughtful Minister of Transportation who reads the *Financial Post*, probably first thing when he wakes up in the morning, and I understand the minister has looked into this issue and is acting upon it. I wanted to commend that and call it to his attention, because maybe we have to realize that we're in a more modern world when it comes to people making arrangements through sites like PickupPal, and we want to ensure that carpooling is encouraged in Ontario.

In conclusion, I will be casting my vote against Bill 126. I appreciate the significant number—in fact, I think, of all the pieces of legislation, right up there with the WSIB bill, I had the most e-mails and Facebook postings on this bill. So I thank all the constituents and others who sent in their comments, and I'm pleased to read in the sample at the Ontario Legislature.

I wanted to commend my colleagues who have as well raised this issue in the Legislature. It seems like we're making some progress, but there is a ways to go, and I will be opposing Bill 126 at second reading.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to listen to the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook. He raised a number of very good points, especially his example about the young person, aged 19, who is able to fly an airplane with a number of passengers.

I should admit, clearly, the arguments made on this side of the House. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Bradley, has listened and responded. But there are a couple of small things that our critic, Frank Klees, is still unhappy about. We understand that this is going to committee along with, I think, Bill 118, which is another Highway Traffic Act bill that I'm kind of interested in because it deals with the technology piece—hand-held cellphones.

It's demonstrated here in this bill—these two bills, actually, 118 and 126—that we can improve the legislation by working co-operatively. I think the big thing

that rings clear here is the Premier's admission—he probably forced the Minister of Transportation to push this section in. I don't think it was the will of Mr. Bradley ever to be mean-spirited with young people. He has always been well known and well respected for his regard for others. I would say that he has probably gotten secretly to the Premier to get him to change his mind.

I would only hope, when it does go to hearings, that we look at a couple of the other parts. As I said, the incident management part, I think, is something that's important for congestion as well as road rage and a whole bunch of other things. But it's dealing with the liability of who is going to be responsible for those cleanups, and the insurance companies, and the tow truck operators. It's unnecessarily holding up, you could say, the economy of Ontario during a rough time. So that's a good section of the bill.

I think there's another provision that I'd encourage the minister to look at. When one of my daughters moved back from Australia, she had to reapply to get a G1 licence, even though she had been licensed here and in Australia for 10 years. When she came back, she had to start all over again. She had two little children and she couldn't even bring them to day care or anything without a passenger in the car who had a full G licence.

I think there are reciprocal agreements, provisions in the bill, that I would like to see amendments on.

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

There being no further questions and comments, the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I appreciate the comments from my colleague for Durham. He certainly is someone who very keenly follows transportation issues. I commend him for the initiative he brought forward for a tax deduction for those who use transit passes, which in fact became law in Canada, as a whole, with the recent Conservative budget. I congratulate Mr. O'Toole on that initiative.

He and I have had some fun debates about cellphones in cars and appropriate controls. He's also made some progress on safe driving when it comes to cellphones in the vehicle. I thank my colleague for his comments.

I look forward to the debate, particularly from my friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who has had some astute observations and gut reactions to this legislation from the day it was introduced. And I look forward to the vote.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on Bill 126, and I too will be voting against this piece of legislation.

This legislation was ill-conceived from the start. I want to begin by expressing my deepest sympathy to the families of the three people killed in the car accident that precipitated this bill. I can understand the reaction of Tim Mulcahy to the loss of his son. It's understandable: When someone is grieving, they do things based on emotion.

But I don't understand the reaction of our Premier, because legislation should be based on logic and science, and this piece of legislation never was. You should be ruling and passing laws because they will improve or change things in this province for the better, not because you're playing politics and paying a debt.

What happened to Tyler Mulcahy was a tragedy, but it was not a result of poor law. It was a result of poor judgment and bad decisions. Neither this Legislature nor any other earthly body is going to bring those young men back, but we do have a responsibility to maintain and keep and improve the safety on our highways. This was not going to do that because every existing law was broken that night. New laws were not going to change anything. Those laws were broken that night.

I have some real concerns when a Legislature decides to act like this, and I have even more concerns about how the Premier has conducted himself. You see, this legislation was introduced on November 18, and weeks before that, ads were taken out in newspapers by the family thanking the Premier for his promise to bring in this law.

The Premier announced yesterday that he's decided to withdraw provisions of this law based on discussions with his children. Did he not have any discussions with his children in August and September and October about this law? Why does he dismiss the views and the opinions of the opposition in this Legislature who told him exactly that, that this provision of the law that limited the number of drivers a teen or a novice driver could have with them was absolutely wrong?

He had no interest in that argument at all. As a matter of fact, he told the Minister of Transportation to trot out there and talk about how logical this was. If it is indeed logical, then why is he now promising to withdraw it? Because he never believed it in the first place. He played politics with this Legislature.

This provision would have inflicted terrible consequences on rural Ontario. Carpooling would be a thing of the past. Whether you're a teenager who participates in hockey or wants to simply join with a couple of friends in a responsible way to go to a movie, which in my town is 50 miles away—the nearest movie theatre is 80 kilometres away.

0920

Where was the consultation before this was brought in? I might add that each of the Premier's children would not be affected by this law; they're all over the age of 22. Other people's children would be affected by this law, but there was no consultation with those people on the part of this government.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: So you're objecting to the blood alcohol. Is that it?

Mr. John Yakabuski: There is no part of this bill—the three main provisions—that I support. None. The only part of this bill I will support, with amendments, is the blood-alcohol provision, provided it is based on the lack of experience of a driver, not the age. Under this provision, a person can be of legal age to consume

alcohol but cannot have even a single drop of it in their blood.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's already in it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not at 20 years old, I'm sorry, not at 20 years old. Sorry, you're wrong. So don't say that.

Now we want to base this, not on the experience or lack of experience of a driver; we want to base things on the age of a driver. That is categorically wrong. Those provisions are wrong. We need to base things on the experience, or lack thereof, of a driver. I would certainly support the zero alcohol provision provided it is based on the experience level of the driver.

When the minister was trying to sell this law, he talked about how everybody was supporting it, including the police. Well, we all know that the police are not going to criticize a piece of legislation brought forth by the government that purports to improve road safety. Now that they're withdrawing what was one of the main provisions in this bill, don't expect that the police are going to be out criticizing the minister for withdrawing that provision; it doesn't work that way. But they shouldn't use the police to try to sell their legislation. The police are not going to stand against that bill, even the way it was written. That's not the way they operate, and we all know that. They have a difficult enough job, and they do a very good job of it, but they are not going to stand against a piece of legislation, whether they agree with it or not, that purports to improve road safety.

The carpooling aspect of this bill, which got the most opposition, not only from people on this side of the House but from the general public, just made no sense. It never made any sense from the start, not only from a convenience point of view for many people who live in rural areas and others, but from an environmental point of view and also from the point of view of trying to limit drinking and driving.

Today, you could have several people who are legally of age to drink going to a function with a designated driver. Under the original provision, you might have some of those people getting into a car themselves and driving because they wouldn't be allowed to carpool. Either way, they're breaking the law, but the question is, which one are they going to take the chance on? They can physically be seen to have a group of people in the car. You can't determine just by looking at someone in a car whether or not they're drinking, but you certainly can determine if there are more than two passengers in the car. There might be fear that they are going to get stopped to see if they are of age to be carrying passengers.

So they did withdraw the provision. There's much work to be done on this bill at the committee level. I don't believe we should be bringing emotions into this House to try to improve road safety. It should be based on logic; it should be based on real facts. It is not the design of this Legislature. As I say, there's not a person in this House or anywhere else who doesn't thank the good Lord every day—I do—that they're not in the

position of any of the parents of these young men who were killed in that car accident, or any other. I'm thankful when I get up in the morning and I have not had a visit at the door by the police to tell us something that we don't want to hear. But, unfortunately, those things are still going to continue to happen in this world. We do not live in a perfect world.

We need to make sure that our roads are safe. This party supports any provisions that will make them safer, but we want those laws to be based on good logic, not the emotions of the Premier of the day.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was very outspoken and quite direct in his assessment of how this bill got here and what the bill intends to do. So I commend him for his directness and, on this side of the House, generally our critic, Mr. Klees, has made it very clear that there are a couple of things—bumping up the age on the blood-alcohol thing is something I would personally support. I think that the better description of age would have been that all novice drivers, regardless of age, should be prohibited from having any substance that could jeopardize their safe driving. So that would be an amendment that I think could easily go through and improve the bill. The intent of the bill, whether it's to address the Mulcahy family or whoever, is to make the roads safer and try to do that in a way that is not impinging totally on people's freedoms.

The member made some very strong arguments, especially speaking on behalf of his constituents who might have to drive 80 kilometres one way to a movie theatre, and how ridiculous the original inclusion in the bill, which has since been withdrawn, on the number of passengers.

Approaching this by improving driver education—it was mentioned in the auditor's comments about strengthening driver training—would be an important way. I would say, have a little module that shows some of the statistics of risk for young or inexperienced drivers, shall we say, not just young drivers, whatever their age, that their probability of being involved in a road incident is very much increased with the lack of experience. So show them the statistics of the number of young people or inexperienced people who are involved in accidents or, indeed, even death on our roads.

These are the things that these debates are about and the public hearings are about, and I look forward to the hearings on this bill so there will be amendments that can help us to support the bill.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I have the member from Pembroke beside me here, and I'm going to respond to some of his comments. I really appreciate the debate that has taken place, and I always respect the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the view that he takes of issues. He's a person who travels his constituency

often. He knows the people in the constituency, and therefore knows some of the challenges that they face.

One of the things that I think a lot of people don't realize—I know the member didn't say this—is that there is a prohibition, a zero alcohol content, at the present time up to the age of 19 in graduated licensing. So that is simply being extended to 21, as it is I think in every state of the United States, including those which are predominantly rural. So I have heard that message being put out there.

A lot of these things, as well, are by regulation. The stipulation about the number of passengers in the car was never in the legislation; it was proposed regulatory framework. So that won't even require an amendment.

However, I have appreciated the debate that has taken place. It has been, I think, very constructive. Many times in the Legislature what will happen—and I've been in opposition as well—is that you'll find the debate is simply a partisan rant back and forth. In this particular case, I think there have been some good points put forward. I don't agree with some of them, but there are some good points being put forward.

My friend the member for Durham is usually very moderate in these things. I heard he actually asked the other day for my resignation. I know it was just an emotional outburst at the time, and he doesn't really believe that; I know he doesn't believe that.

I want to thank all the members for their contributions, including the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who just gave a good speech on the bill.

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

There being none, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will have two minutes to respond when he returns to his seat.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have returned. I do appreciate the comments from my colleagues. I'm not going to respond directly to them other than to say I am aware of the zero alcohol provision today, but it is just until you have a G licence. You can have a G licence before the age of 18. So for him to say there is a zero tolerance provision to age 19 is not exactly correct; it's until you have a G licence. I think that's an important distinction.

My concern is about novice drivers. The problem I have is that if you are 22 years old today and go to get your licence, you're not affected by any of these provisions. You're still a novice driver. Let's say you have never driven before and you're 45, or my age, 51—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —I know you don't believe that; I am, honest—you should be under some further restrictions as well, because if you are 51 years old and have never driven, one of the reasons may be that you don't feel comfortable driving. Well, driving safely is a product of being comfortable on the road too, and all experts would agree with that. If you're more nervous on the road, you're more likely to be a poor driver on the road. Experience, education—all those kinds of things that can make our young people or anybody else a better

driver—are what we need to be looking for to improve road safety in this province.

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

There being none, pursuant to the order of the House yesterday, I'm now required to put the question.

On December 3, Mr. Bradley moved second reading of Bill 126. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Pursuant to the order of the House yesterday, the vote is deferred until following question period this morning.

Second reading vote deferred.

Pursuant to the order of the House yesterday, the business of this morning being completed, the House is recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 0933 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's my pleasure to introduce, in the east members' gallery, Dr. Barbara Alexander and Tony Alexander.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm delighted to welcome two guests from the great city of Ottawa, Danielle McGee and Adam Decaire. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have a couple of introductions this morning. One is that we have an active member of our Ajax–Pickering youth council in the west members' gallery, but we also welcome the wonderful parents of page Courtney Dodds, from Ajax–Pickering. Her parents, Kim and Karen Dodds, are here. Karen is on her way up the stairs as we speak. Also, very significantly, Courtney's grandparents, Donald and Patricia Dodds, are joining us in the Legislature today in the west members' gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the page Rohan Pavone to welcome his mother, Dr. Rosemarie Lall, sitting in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

On behalf of page Kush Thaker, his mother Varsha Thaker, is also joining us in the public galleries this morning.

I'd like to welcome a long-time friend of mine in the Speaker's gallery, Mark Cosens. Welcome to Queen's Park, Mark.

ORAL QUESTIONS

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Monday's Auditor General's report shows yet again how your government is so quick to rush taxpayers' money

out the door, never even bothering to see what they're getting for it. The auditor called this government for what it is on its training programs, a broken skills training program, noting that less than half of Ontario apprentices actually complete their training and get certified—48%, Premier, the lowest in Canada, a fact that your government apparently never even bothered to keep track of, so the auditor had to do it himself.

Premier, with over 200,000 unemployed manufacturing workers now being forced to consider new careers, will you address the weaknesses identified in the auditor's report and provide an apprenticeship program that actually works?

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

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very proud of our government's efforts in terms of apprenticeships. At present, we have 50,000 more apprentices learning a trade today than in 2003, and in the skills-to-jobs action centre in the spring we brought forward additional measures in the budget. I was pleased to see that in the Auditor General's report, he recognized that "the ministry has made improvements and been successful in increasing apprenticeship opportunities and registrations over the last several years."

I agree with the Auditor General that we need to put more of an effort into completion rates amongst apprentices. That's something we've been engaged with even before his report came out. In the March budget—and I'll be happy to outline in the supplementary—we outlined a series of measures aimed at completion rates for apprentices, and we have a series of undertakings—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier and Minister, your completion rates for apprentices are among the lowest, if not the lowest, in Canada now and your answer is cold comfort to the thousands of Ontarians who are getting pink slips in their Christmas stockings this year. Is it any wonder that completion rates are so low when your government's artificially high apprenticeship ratios mean that apprentices can't get jobs once they've gone through your curriculum? They cannot get jobs with employers in order to get their apprenticeship papers. Your ratios are artificially high.

You'll know, or I hope you know, that Saskatchewan and Newfoundland, as we speak, are lowering their ratios to what we've asked for. You are now going to be alone in Canada with a 3-to-1 ratio, for example, with electricians—three journeymen just to train one apprentice.

So I say to the Premier and the minister: Why at this critical time, when thousands of Ontarians need your help to get a skilled trade, to get into the workforce, are you continuing to put up barriers to their being able to do so?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I find it passing strange that a member who came from a government that cared very little about apprentices would stand in the House—perhaps he should take a long look in the mirror at his record. The fact of the matter is, we have made apprenticeships a priority. We have 50,000 more apprentices.

The March budget contained measures to increase and enhance the apprenticeship system. Just several months ago, we took the extraordinary step—the first jurisdiction in Canada—to announce a college of trades which is going to go forward and enhance and further improve the apprenticeship system and look at a variety of issues, including completion rates, ratios and the collection of data, to try to get a better understanding of what's going on in the apprenticeship system, to make sure more people enter the system, to make sure they're properly trained and that they complete their training.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd just like to remind the honourable member of our record: 1.1 million net new jobs created in this province under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves. You say what you want about those governments, but we knew how to create the economic climate so that entrepreneurs and businesspeople could create jobs. You're only able to create public sector jobs. Anybody can do that with a stroke of the pen. You have no strategy. The auditor actually says what we've been saying and my colleagues have been saying on this side of the House for the last two years: You have no strategy. He actually says you have no strategy to properly train people in this—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I realize that the members are very much looking forward to going home for the Christmas holidays. But I remind the members to look to the galleries. We have students here again. We instill in students how to act properly in a classroom. I would urge and remind each member of this Legislature—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): In a classroom, there's respect when the teacher stands up. I would just ask all members—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Welland isn't helping, either.

I would just remind all members to have respect and maintain decorum in this place and then you can have a month and a half to think about all the wonderful things and how well you're going to behave when we return in February. Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: In a spirit of decorum and calmness, I'll let the facts speak for themselves. When the Progressive Conservative government was in power in their first three years in office, there were 37,000 new apprentices registered. When the McGuinty government was in power during our first three years in office we had 60,000 new apprentices come forward. We have made apprenticeship a priority and the announcement of the college of trades is our commitment to further enhance and expand apprenticeships. It's a recognition that we need to look at all aspects of the system, including completions. As I said, the March budget that was brought down contained \$75 million for apprenticeships and

designated the issue of completions and the development of programs and targets as one of the priorities of the use of that money. We will continue to make apprenticeships a cornerstone of this government's knowledge and skills strategy.

SKILLED TRADES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jim Wilson: Clearly, the programs aren't working when less than half are actually finishing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Who is the question to?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Oh, I'm sorry. My question is to the Premier. Premier, clearly your programs aren't working. The Auditor General says the ministry has no strategy to increase registration in high-demand skilled trades, and those are plumbers, electricians and sheet metal workers, to name a few. Yes, you've had registrations. Most registrations have been in the service sector. In addition to that, 8,300 registrations have been in the call centre trades, which are not exactly the highest-paying skilled trades in the province.

So I ask you again: What are you going to do to address the auditor's recommendations that you bring forward a proper strategy and that you actually put to good use the taxpayers' money that you've been spending? Yes, you've been spending a lot of money. You gave \$25 million to the unions that belong to the Working Families Coalition to build training centres, but clearly you're not getting \$25 million worth of training out of those centres; are you?

1040

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: As I said, our government has made apprenticeships a priority and the college of trades is an important step forward. But the member stands and doesn't seem to acknowledge the fact that we live in a changing economy. The fact of the matter is, we need different skill sets; that's why we've expanded the number of apprenticeships that exist out there.

I don't join the honourable member in mocking call centre jobs. The fact of the matter is that the guidelines for apprenticeships in the call centre trades require approximately 4,000 hours of both in-school and on-the-job training, which is similar in guidelines to other trades, such as automotive glass technician, hoisting engineer, roofer and heavy equipment operator.

I think what the Auditor General gives us is good advice on how to move forward, but I'm proud of the fact that we've expanded the number of trades, that we are working with employers to find out where there are gaps—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: You gave \$25 million to the unions that belong to the Working Families Coalition, and we all know about the Working Families Coalition. My question will continue with the minister. They were a group

set up basically to defeat Conservative governments and Conservative parties in Ontario elections.

So I ask you, what are taxpayers getting for the \$25 million? Clearly the auditor, in his own words, says that you have a broken skills training program and that taxpayers aren't getting value for their money. In fact, he had to track how many people were actually finishing the program because your ministry started a project to do that, but, I guess for political reasons, you cancelled it because it was so embarrassing.

Anyway, what are the taxpayers getting for the \$25 million that you've given to your buddies?

Hon. John Milloy: The taxpayers are getting 50,000 more apprentices in the province of Ontario than when we took office. Yes, we have made investments in terms of supporting apprenticeship trade, and I guess the honourable member is opposed to that. He's opposed to the fact that over the summer we invested hundreds of millions of dollars in our community college system so that they could have the types of equipment and facilities needed to put forward training for new apprentices. Yes, we've worked with other partners involved in training—unions, yes; employers, yes; employer-union training centres—to make sure that our apprentices are being trained in the most up-to-date equipment in modern, state-of-the-art facilities. What we got from that is an apprenticeship system that is growing and is continuing to be enhanced. I'll put our record up against their record any day of the week.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: We know your record. The Auditor General has called it an abysmal failure.

So let's recap: You've given \$25 million to the unions that are members of the Working Families Coalition. That money went for union-operated training centres. We've been telling you since last year that your skills training programs are not working and this week the Auditor General said the same thing. Less than half the people in the programs don't complete them. We've also pointed out that your excessively high apprenticeship ratios are a barrier to job creation, yet you keep giving away millions of dollars to the same unions that are running these failed training programs.

So I ask you again, what did the taxpayers get for their \$25 million to these unions, other than a bunch of Liberal fundraising balls?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm happy to give some examples. Perhaps the member wants to ask his colleague from Burlington about the \$627,000 that went to a Burlington training centre to expand their ability to train construction boilermakers and millwrights on updated equipment meeting industry standards. Perhaps he would like to ask his friend from Sarnia about the \$100,000 that went to a Sarnia training centre to expand their ability to train carpenters. Perhaps he'd like to ask colleagues from Hamilton about \$645,000 to a Hamilton training centre to expand their ability to train welders on updated equipment meeting industry standards. Perhaps he'd like to ask

his friend Mr. Runciman who, when he was minister, said in a press release, “Developing a skilled workforce is key to a strong economic future. Upgrading skills of employees in the heavy equipment industry is vital for the sector.” He said it as he gave \$2.3 million to a union training centre.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. Ontario lost 66,000 jobs in November, 42,000 of those in the manufacturing sector. To avoid even more devastating job losses in December and in January of this next year, the McGuinty government needs to take some action now. There is no time to waste.

My question is this: Will the McGuinty government table a jobs stimulus plan in this Legislature before the Christmas break, or does the McGuinty government intend to go on holidays and leave tens of thousands of workers in limbo?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’m pleased to receive the question, and I will remind my honourable colleague once again of the stimulus efforts that we have in place and that are operating right now, including the \$9.9 billion that we’ve invested in infrastructure this very year. That is reaching into virtually every Ontario community. It’s going into construction projects as we speak, and it’s creating up to 100,000 jobs today, when we need them.

I know my honourable colleague well understands that to get a new infrastructure project going often requires extensive planning, followed by an environmental assessment, followed by other processes along the way, and that can mean it takes a long time. But fortunately, years ago, we put in place these kinds of projects. They’re taking effect right now; people are working right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier talks about infrastructure as if this government is doing something special. I want to send across to the Premier a page out of his own recent fall economic statement, because what it shows is that in this next year the McGuinty government is actually cutting infrastructure spending down to \$7.5 billion. You are cutting it by 23%. This sounds like Jim Flaherty and Stephen Harper: cutting infrastructure spending. That’s the real story, and we know what that means. It means fewer jobs. The McGuinty government won’t be helping things. The McGuinty government will actually be contributing to a loss of jobs.

My question again is this: Instead of cutting infrastructure spending, is the McGuinty government going to come forward with a jobs stimulus plan, or is the McGuinty government going to continue to see more Ontario workers confined to unemployment?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’ll let the Minister of Finance, momentarily, speak to the fun with numbers that my colleague is enjoying. But let me speak about some of the infrastructure projects that we have in the riding of

Kenora–Rainy River. We have projects, in that riding alone, in Alberton, Chapple, Dawson, Dryden, Ear Falls, Emo, Fort Frances, Ignace, Kenora, LaVallee, Lake of the Woods, Machin, Morley, Pickle Lake, Rainy River, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Sioux Narrows and Nestor Falls, totalling \$4,988,339 this year—money that is at work right now, creating jobs right now.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The fact of the matter is that, when you look at the McGuinty government’s own recent fall economic statement, the McGuinty government is not engaging in added capital spending, in added infrastructure spending. The McGuinty government is cutting it by 23%. This sounds like a page borrowed from Jim Flaherty and Stephen Harper, that the McGuinty government is more concerned with looking after itself than it is concerned with looking after workers who are in danger of losing their jobs.

We have given the McGuinty government several ideas: (1) a real Buy Ontario strategy—not 25%, but 50%; (2) raise the minimum wage; and (3) add to infrastructure spending, don’t cut infrastructure spending.

Is the Premier going to do something or are we going to see more Ontario workers—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite is not engaging in an accurate read of the financial statements. What he fails to understand is that we booked these expenses a year ago; they’re reflected there. And you know what? The construction is going to happen in the coming year, when we expect the economy to be at its worst point.

Since 2003, infrastructure spending has tripled under this government. We have had the ReNew Ontario program—\$5 billion. And the next instalment—10 years, \$60 billion. That, sir, will be the next range of the stimulus that we’re going to do.

Finally, I would remind the member opposite that the federal government’s Building Canada funds still have not flowed. When they do, these numbers will come up.

What we need is for them to start voting in favour of these programs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question. The leader of the third party.

1050

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think the McGuinty government’s chart speaks for itself: a 23% cut in infrastructure spending at a time when we need to be adding more jobs, not cutting them.

To the Premier: Today marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sadly, the McGuinty government continues to violate this declaration. The UN is clear: Inade-

quate social assistance rates in Canada constitute a violation of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Social assistance incomes in Ontario have fallen by 30% since 1992—more than in any other province—and 675,000 Ontarians on welfare and disability support are forced to live in poverty.

My question: When is the McGuinty government going to stop violating the human rights of these Ontario citizens?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Well, there's always a real issue when it comes to poverty in Ontario.

The first thing that we did was we abandoned the NDP government's policy of freezing those rates. We've raised social assistance rates four times so far.

I think it's important to understand that there are also new sources of income that go into our low-income households now. A single mom with two kids on social assistance is now earning \$3,700 more as a result of new benefits, most of those beyond social assistance. A single mom with two children earning minimum wage will now take home 54% more than in 2003. So there have been some real improvements, whether you're on social assistance or find yourself in a low-income household, and those supports go beyond simply social assistance itself.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Those who study the situation have far different figures than the Premier. In 2007 dollars, in Ontario, between 1992 and 2007, a lone parent's social assistance benefit declined by \$5,500, or 25%; and a couple with two children saw a loss of benefit of almost \$8,150, or 28%.

The Premier says that his government has increased benefits. Yes, the Premier has increased his own pay by about 40%. After you factor in inflation and after you factor in the federal child benefit, the increase under the McGuinty government for somebody on social assistance has been about 4% over five years.

I ask again, when is the McGuinty government going to stop abusing—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, they froze social assistance; we have increased it four times. Beyond that, we've introduced something new. It's called the Ontario child benefit. That's what's very important: new supports for our families. Beyond that as well, we've just put in place, for the first time ever in Ontario, a poverty reduction strategy with a specific target to reduce child poverty by 25% over five years. That will lift 90,000 children out of poverty.

It's one thing to come up with \$300 million in a growing economy; it's another thing to come up with \$300 million in the middle of a global economic crisis. We've done that for all the right reasons, but perhaps most importantly because we believe we have a shared responsibility to help out families where kids are growing up in poverty.

All those are new measures, and we believe they will be effective.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The McGuinty government had five years of good economic growth, and what happened? What happened is this: A person trying to live on social assistance is actually \$5,500 behind where they were in 1992. What happened to a husband and wife and two kids? They're \$8,150 behind where they were in 1992, and the Premier says this is progress.

Premier, the other factor is this: You keep talking about your child benefit. The child benefit isn't going to do anything until 2011. If you factor in increases in the cost of electricity, increases in the cost of heating fuel, the fact of the matter is, it's not going to make a huge difference then. My question remains: When is the McGuinty government going to stop—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I don't want to underestimate the size of the challenge before us, and I don't want to underestimate the goodwill on the part of Ontarians of all political stripes to apply themselves and to find a way to move forward, but I think it's important to recognize, in honest fashion, our achievements. There is a new Ontario child benefit in place. It is providing, for the first time ever, \$600 per child. That benefit will continue to grow till 2011, when it reaches \$1,100, on an annual basis, per child.

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My friends ridicule that. They won't even support that, but we think it's an important step forward in combination with our poverty strategy—

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

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. On a number of occasions, I've raised the issue of the importance of government coming to the support of businesses, particularly the manufacturing sector in this province. The minister and the Premier have referred, for example, to the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, which I have attempted to help some of my constituents make application to. I'd like the Premier to share with us what the possible reason would be why the details regarding the number of applicants to that program, the number of applications that have been approved and the amount of money that has been paid out under that program are so secretive and why members of this Legislature are not allowed to have that information. Could the Premier please tell us?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Michael Bryant: That's just complete nonsense. The member knows very well, because he asked the

Minister of Economic Development during committee hearings, during estimates, which is the time to ask those questions and get those answers, a whole host of questions for hours and hours, I do believe. In fact, it was something like eight or nine hours, and the minister answered all the questions and provided all the information about that very program.

The member is right. It is a very important program that requires accountability, that involves a lot of dollars. The government has to be careful in the way in which it spends dollars. But let's be clear: Those dollars that the member is opposed to—this is a program that the member is opposed to—leverage, in fact, millions and millions of dollars of investment from other companies and literally thousands of jobs, and that's why this government is doing it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: First of all, I'm not opposed to the program at all. Premier, here's what I did. I put on the table a specific question on the order paper. I asked the following questions:

“—a detailed list of the applications that have been made by Ontario business to access the Next Generation of Jobs Fund;

“—a detailed list of the approved applications; and

“—a detailed list of the government funding that has actually been disbursed to each approved applicant.”

In response to that order paper question, this minister provided me with the following answer: “I would refer you to the Ministry of Economic Development's website.” There is nothing on that website that comes even close to the questions I have asked. What is the minister hiding? Why can't members of this Legislature have that kind of very specific question answered—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Firstly, the member says that he supports the program. Then I ask the member, why did you vote against it? When you had an opportunity to vote for it, you voted against it.

Secondly, as the member knows very well, for the government of Ontario to release information that involves commercially sensitive information about companies—companies that are in competition with other companies; companies that may not want to release the information that they in fact are applying for the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, information about the companies themselves and the dollar figures being sought.

There's no question that this government is using the Next Generation of Jobs Fund to create greater investments and to create greater jobs. I know that the member is against that, but this government is for it and we will continue to do it.

1100

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Why is this minister repeatedly forcing municipalities to the financial wall in

order to compensate for her total lack of child care funding in this province—not even to expand child care, but simply to maintain affordable spaces in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me start by just rejecting the premise of the question altogether. In fact, we are making some very good progress on improving child care for families in this province.

Our next big step, as the member opposite knows, is to bring full-day learning to four- and five-year-olds. This is a very, very progressive initiative. Dr. Charles Pascal is out consulting widely on the best way to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. It will make a very big difference—not just for the kids, but also for their families. It will also increase the number of child care spaces available to those younger children.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister has shown an appalling lack of commitment to child care in this province. Families in Ottawa were on the brink of seeing 700 subsidized child care spaces disappear just last week, but for the help of the municipality, councillors and citizens who fought against that cut.

She talks about a plan for full-day learning. When is that plan coming? Sometime on the horizon. It's not coming soon enough, and everybody knows it—every child and every parent knows it.

Passing the buck, whether it's the buck being passed to Ottawa or the buck being passed to some full-day learning program that's not even on the horizon, is inappropriate and inadequate.

Why won't this minister commit right now to adequate, stable core funding required to meet the needs of Ontario's children and families?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me take this opportunity to educate not just the member opposite, but all Ontarians, on some of the initiatives that we have made.

We have created 22,000 more child care spaces since we were elected. This year alone, we have expanded the number of people who are able to get subsidies for their child care: We invested \$23 million this year so that 3,000 more families could get subsidies.

We know that parents need their kids to be in good, high-quality child care so that their kids can thrive and so that the parents can work. We are committed to continually improving child care.

The work of Charles Pascal is well underway. The member opposite knows that he will be reporting in the spring. The early learning adviser is doing a tremendous job—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: My question is for the Minister of Health.

I know that our government is committed to giving Ontarians access to quality health care and that modernizing our health care system depends on modernizing our hospitals.

On October 28, 2008, Brampton saw the decommissioning of Peel Memorial Hospital. The 83-year-old hospital was out of date; it no longer met current building, environmental and safety codes.

My community is eagerly anticipating the site's redevelopment in downtown Brampton. I understand that the Central West Local Health Integration Network and the William Osler hospital are working on a proposal to redevelop the Peel site. Can the Minister of Health tell the House about the current status of the Peel Memorial Hospital project?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member from Brampton–Springdale. She is quite correct, the Central West Local Health Integration Network and William Osler Health Centre are working to further develop the proposal for this project.

Our government recognizes that there's a need for the redevelopment at the Peel Memorial site. That's why we have included this particular project as part of our Re-New Ontario five-year infrastructure investment plan. We want to ensure that the new Peel Memorial will serve the community's needs. That's why the local health integration network, the hospital and a task force have been partnered to develop the first stage of the capital planning process: a business case, including a master program and a master plan. I anticipate receiving and reviewing the business case proposal from the LHIN and from the hospital and then taking the next steps.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I'm really glad to hear this project is moving forward. It's very important to my constituents. Like most Ontarians, Bramptonians want to receive quality care close to home. Hospitals play a key role in maintaining the economic vitality and quality of life in our communities. Brampton is still growing quickly, and I know that many of my residents are concerned about access to health care. I want to ensure that my constituents get the care they need. Can the Minister of Health tell this House about the health care supports that are currently available in Brampton?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member. I certainly want to recognize the advocacy of this member and all the members from Brampton and Peel. I want to assure the House and members of the community that we are maintaining access to high-quality care in the Brampton community. Since the Brampton Civic Hospital opened last year, we've added more than 110 beds and three new operating rooms; in addition, we introduced new services for children and adolescent mental health. We are also increasing access to care in the Brampton community. Our province-wide, \$1.1-billion aging-at-home strategy is helping to ensure that seniors in Brampton and, indeed, around the province can get the care they need closer to home.

Since 2003, we've opened more than 460 long-term-care beds in Brampton alone. This year we've increased funding for long-term care by over \$300 million. I'm proud of the investments and confident that the residents of Brampton will continue to have access—

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

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance: As you know, Mercer, a respecting consulting firm, has said that the typical pension plan is experiencing at least a 30% shortfall, and that was as of September. They anticipate it has become much worse.

In estimates committee on October 29 and again on November 4, I asked you directly, as well as Bob Christie, the superintendent of financial services, to update the committee on the status of the public pensions in the province of Ontario. Minister, we have not heard back from you yet. You know this is a very serious issue. Could you tell the assembly what the shortfall is for the public funds like teachers, OMERS, HOOPP, and what kind of liability taxpayers are on the hook for?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member he will be getting responses to his questions according to the rules established by the Legislature. We will have some things to say about pension solvency rules, probably very shortly. There is no doubt markets are down about 40%. As you know, pension funds are invested in a diversity of assets, so that doesn't necessarily reflect what has happened in the individual pension accounts. But the issue for government now—and we'll look forward to the opposition's response—is how we respond in terms of things like solvency rules, how our response will compare to what Mr. Flaherty said in his fall statement and how that will reflect the attitudes and values that this government has versus others, and it will reflect advice we've had from Mr. Arthurs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister gave me a technical answer in response. The minister knows that retired civil servants and taxpayers are very concerned about the shortfall in the public pension funds, and I would expect an answer from the minister under these circumstances a lot faster than two months later.

The minister also knows that during this tough economic time many companies, facing steep payments to pension top-ups to meet solvency requirements, would perhaps take funds out of cash flow or investments, already exacerbating a dire jobs picture in the province of Ontario. Over 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled Ontario under Dalton McGuinty. The federal government has moved the time frame from five years to 10 years, subject to the agreement of the retirees, of the pension members, and with a line of credit from a financial institution. What is Ontario's plan, because most of the pensions fall under your jurisdiction, sir?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member is accurate about what the federal government has announced. There are a number of other measures that we believe should be undertaken that have not been undertaken by the federal government. Premier McGuinty will have more to say

about this early next week, I suspect, in terms of our government's full response.

I appreciate the tenor of the member's question; it's a legitimate question; it's a valuable question. It wasn't designed, obviously, to create any kind of fear among pensioners and others. I'll look forward to his response and the response of both opposition parties when the Premier makes that announcement, likely next week.

1110

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. Was the final offer presented by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario on Friday, December 5, within the government's financial parameters for four-year collective agreements, as the teachers claim?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member opposite knows, there were a number of offers and discussions that went back and forth between ETFO, the Elementary Teachers' Federation, and OPSBA, which is the public school boards' association. There was no agreement that the two parties could come to. There was no offer that had the stamp of approval of the government, because the only offer that would have been acceptable to the government was one that, yes, was within the fiscal requirements but also was agreed to by both the boards and the teachers. Unfortunately, both parties left \$800 million on the table. They could not come to an agreement, and it's most unfortunate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, you were there when the negotiations collapsed. This is your framework. With so much at stake, not to mention peace and stability, why did you not intervene and get a deal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Of 23 potential agreements across the province with different groups—22 have reached agreements. So I actually believe that this government has been extremely successful in building strong working relationships with everyone in the education sector.

It takes two parties to come to an agreement; it takes two parties to come to an impasse. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done in that moment to bring the two parties together. The deadline passed, and unfortunately, the \$800 million was not enough and there was not enough agreement to come to a resolution on Friday night.

RURAL ONTARIO

Mr. Jim Brownell: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Rural communities have made important contributions to the tapestry of this province, and all signs point toward rural Ontario playing a valued role in its future development. In this electronic age, rural Ontario has a voice like never before, and those in our urban centres are becoming

more informed about the benefits of our rural communities. E-mail, Internet, video conferencing, Black-Berrys: These tools have provided the residents of our rural communities with unprecedented connection to the rest of the province and the rest of the world.

Minister, I know that you have worked tirelessly to ensure that rural Ontario has remained connected in this province and also to raise awareness of the issues that face our rural communities.

What has the government of Ontario done to ensure that rural Ontario has the access to technologies and resources that will help them to be a strong voice in today's global society?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I want to thank the honourable member. Our government has certainly been working very hard with our rural communities to understand how we can enable them to develop rural economies. That is why, in last year's budget, we committed \$30 million over the next four years to further expand and enhance broadband access within our rural areas. I'm very happy to say that on November 28 of this year, 15 successful projects were announced, and that represents an investment of \$8.8 million.

The good news is that we continue to offer for applications. Intake, too, for accessing these resources will close on February 12, 2009.

Rural Connections builds on the \$10-million investment that we made in 2007. We very much look forward to hearing from more rural municipalities that are—

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

Mr. Jim Brownell: Again to the minister: Recently, I was very pleased to announce that in collaboration with OMAFRA and their Rural Connections program, three townships in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry will soon have increased access to broadband Internet. After this program is implemented, the broadband coverage in the township of South Glengarry will increase access to the point where 95% to 99% of residents and businesses can be served. This initiative will also provide 100% broadband coverage to Ault Island in the townships of South Stormont and South Dundas.

The Rural Connections program is just one of the initiatives that has shown the commitment of this government to ensure that rural Ontario is not only represented in the growth of this province but will play an integral role in its development.

Minister, can you please tell this House about some of the other programs available to assist rural Ontario in remaining essential in today's society?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's really important that people in this Legislative Assembly understand how hard we work with our municipal partners, enabling them to have economic development occur in our rural communities. The rural broadband program requires that they build partnerships in their communities, and this has been very successful.

I would also say that we know how integral infrastructure is to attracting economic development, and to build on that, we have the rural economic development program. Since we came to government, there have been 192 projects approved with our rural economic development program. We're helping rural communities with broadband access and, when they have broadband access, they are able then to develop partnerships through our rural economic development program.

I will say that, to date, we have invested \$63 million in rural communities. That has generated some \$573 million in new economic activity right across rural communities in Ontario—

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

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the Premier. Your Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has stonewalled my questions on the York University strike from the moment I rose in this Legislature and asked the first one, weeks ago. He says I haven't any exclusivity on concern, but it's not about me, Premier. If the strike is not resolved within the next few days, 2008 is lost and, once the House shuts down tomorrow, there is no legislative recourse for 50,000 students. Our party is prepared to sit tomorrow morning, when nothing is scheduled for debate, to deal with back-to-work legislation. Are you prepared to introduce it, save the year for these people and not waste millions at a time when that's just unacceptable? Will you do it, Premier?

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

Hon. John Milloy: I repeat that I think every member in the Legislature is concerned about the situation at York University. We continue to ask and encourage both sides to come to the table for an agreement that's in the best interests of the students, and to come to that agreement quickly. But at the same time, I think the honourable member has to recognize that, despite his questions that he raises in the House, ultimately universities are autonomous. This government believes in the collective bargaining process, and we continue to encourage both sides to follow that process and reach an agreement as quickly as possible.

Mr. Peter Shurman: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities sounds self-righteous to me. He has no concern—no concern for the student body of York University, for the striking workers either, and his worker retraining programs are a farce too. He has no business in this portfolio; he has no business in this House. If something as rudimentary as resolving a highly punitive strike at a mainstream university is, in his opinion, in the autonomous hands of the university and the administration and not his problem, then he should resign. Fifty thousand students need help, and that's what this minister should be offering.

I ask again: Will this minister and this government end the nonsense, or will the minister get out of the way and allow someone to take the job seriously?

Hon. John Milloy: I've been very proud to be part of a government that has made post-secondary education one of its hallmarks. I've been very proud to serve with a Premier who made one of the largest investments in post-secondary education in our history. I am concerned about the situation at York University, as is every member of this Legislature, and despite the member's theatrics, I think he recognizes that universities are autonomous institutions, and we have a collective bargaining system in this province. That means sometimes there are strikes. That is unfortunate, and we call on both sides to get back to the table and to resolve this dispute as quickly as possible, in the best interests of those students at York University.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The clock is stopped.

The member for Welland.

1120

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a question to the Minister of Health. Down in Niagara, there's a crisis in mental health care. There are no beds for children and youth with urgent mental health needs and the emergency adult facilities for mental health treatment have been recently cut in half. Why does the McGuinty government find this acceptable?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, I disagree with the premise of the question. There is nothing acceptable about a mental health system—in fact, we seek to improve on the foundation which we found when we assumed office in 2003.

To review a little bit of context: Back when my friend was a minister of a previous government, funding for mental health was cut not simply in Niagara region but around the province some \$23 million, in 1992; again, in 1994 and 1995, a further \$42-million cut by the member opposite and by his colleagues. There was no base increased funding under the previous government for eight years.

Upon assuming office, we have since invested an additional \$200 million into mental health and to expand services. I acknowledge there is much more to do. One of the reasons why I've supported the call from my colleague opposite from Whitby-Oshawa for a select committee—

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The cuts I refer to have been made since this government was elected. Just recently, a

14-year-old child had to be admitted into an adult psychiatric facility because there are no beds for emergency treatment of youth and children.

The Auditor General's report refers to the tragic and condemnable patchwork of services for children and youth with mental health issues. We don't even have a patchwork down in Niagara. Why won't this government adequately fund fundamental mental health services for children and youth in Niagara?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, funding has increased some 66%, a two-thirds increase in funding, over what we've seen previously. So I think the member's characterization is quite false and unfortunate, for the member to be able to make—

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

Hon. David Caplan: I'll withdraw it.

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

Hon. David Caplan: It's certainly unfortunate that the member would characterize inaccurately the kind of investments that we have seen from this government, particularly in light of his own conduct and his support for absolute cuts to the mental health services in this province.

In fact, in this year, in 2007-08, we've invested \$640 million for the provision of community mental health services in Ontario, and a year later, we're enhancing mental health service funding with a new annualized funding of an additional \$40 million.

I acknowledge that there is more to do. That is why I've called together an advisory from around the province on ways to address many of the gaps.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Road safety is a priority for our government. Recently, much of the discussion has been around the introduction of Bill 118, which, if passed, will prohibit the use of hand-held wireless communication devices while driving. In addition, you have introduced Bill 126, which proposes extending the graduated licensing program from two years to three, and implementing zero blood-alcohol concentration for drivers aged 21 and under. However, I know that there is more to be done.

Can the minister please share with this House what else his ministry is doing to address road safety?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to thank the member for a very good question. She'll know that one of the areas where we listened to the concerns of the public was on the issue of the speed of trucks. Therefore we passed in this Legislature speed limiter legislation, which would put a regulation forward to not allow trucks to go in excess of 105 kilometres per hour. That was supported, by the way, by the Ontario Trucking Association and many organizations in the United States. What we're doing there is, we're working closely with the province of Quebec to implement this on exactly the same day. That will

be January 1, 2009. There will be an educational period to allow carriers, particularly those outside of Canadian jurisdictions and the US, to bring the vehicles they operate into Ontario and Quebec into compliance with the new speed limiter rule.

As you would recognize, there are also—

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

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again my question is for the Minister of Transportation. I'm pleased to hear that there will be an educational period on this important change for large trucks, and I agree that this initiative will help improve the safety of our roads.

Minister, the seasons are changing. With winter here and the weather getting worse, driving conditions can change almost instantly. With this change in weather we also see an increase in accidents on our highways. Could the Minister of Transportation share with this House and my constituents of Hamilton Mountain just what his ministry is doing to keep our roads safe for winter driving?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Again, another good question. Our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in all of North America, with the current technology, the tools, the methods to keep roads safe for winter driving. They include the following: a road and weather information system to forecast and monitor conditions; changeable message signs that warn drivers of poor weather; and liquid salt solutions that are used to prevent black ice and snow from bonding with the pavement.

But as Cam Woolley used to say when he was with the OPP—and still says on television—and Commissioner Fantino has said on many occasions, it's still important for all of us, as drivers, to take into account winter conditions: not to go out on the roads when it's recommended that we don't go on the roads if we don't have to; to drive more slowly; to watch for any eventuality that may cause great problems for—

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, for months you have told me and the people of Halton that our hospital is delayed because of a lack of capacity. You have consistently said that there are not enough bidders to ensure a competitive procurement process. Yet it appears to me that you are simply assuming this. It appears to me that you have not even begun the request-for-qualifications process.

Minister, if you have not sought applications or even surveyed the possible bidders, how on earth can you say that there's a shortfall in capacity?

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member is thinking in the right direction on this point about the survey of actual bidders. Through the work of Infra-

structure Ontario, which is managing the development of the large-scale projects—19 of which are currently under construction in the province of Ontario—we have been working with those large general contractors, which are relatively small in number, to coordinate bringing to life new projects in a fashion that is timely and within their capabilities. So, indeed, the resequencing on the Oakville hospital and the hospital in Markham were related to a sophisticated conversation about general construction capability with those very same companies.

In a recent meeting with the chair of Halton region, I made that commitment, as I've made in the presence of my friend and colleague Kevin Flynn in Oakville, that it's our effort, with the Oakville community, to move forward as fast as possible the initiation of construction related to that project.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Minister, we're talking about the health of my constituents here, so the only answer I'm prepared to accept right now is that we will begin the process in Oakville immediately.

Since 2004 in Peel, to the east of Halton, there have been over \$1 billion invested in health care infrastructure. The Trillium hospital and Credit Valley Hospital have both been expanded, just like the hospitals to the west of us in Hamilton, where all three Hamilton hospitals have been expanded.

Minister, in Halton there's a dearth of expansion. It's surrounded by new, expanding hospitals. But in Halton is the fastest-growing community in Canada—in the whole country—and yet your government hasn't spent one red cent in expansion in either Oakville or Milton.

What's wrong with the people of Halton? Why don't they deserve the same health care as other people in Ontario? Why don't you start the RFQ process to get the hospital started at this time?

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, what the honourable member is not in a good position to do on any of these fronts is talk about any investments that occurred through the eight years that he was a privileged member of a caucus.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Where is the Oakville hospital?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's very, very important that the—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Tell us the truth.

Hon. George Smitherman: Now, Mr. Speaker—

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

1130

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I can't withdraw that if he's not going to stand in front of this House—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I will not withdraw that as long as he will not start that process. The people of Oakville deserve a new hospital—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): For the third time, I'll ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment. Will the honourable member withdraw the com-

ment? I have no other recourse, then, but to name the member, Ted Chudleigh, from Halton.

Mr. Chudleigh was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question. The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the member for Durham—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Throw them out.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): —and the member for Peterborough.

The member for Timmins–James Bay.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As long as you're not throwing me out, Speaker, I'll be all right.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation. You'll know that the US economy is tanking; ours is following suit. There are 30,000 independent trucker owner-operators who are really feeling the pinch in this economy, but your government is moving full steam ahead with the speed limiters on trucks. They're going to have to drive 105 kilometres in jurisdictions in the United States, where their speed limiters are set way ahead of that number. At the very time that truckers need our support, why is your government forcing them to spend \$4.5 million for technology that won't make our roads safer and will make it even harder for those truckers to compete against American competitors?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm surprised to hear the member actually ask that question—he asks so many good questions in the House—because the statistics show very clearly that speed limiter legislation and the regulations that go with it will in fact increase road safety tremendously. The Ontario Trucking Association, which represents most of the truckers in Ontario, was very enthusiastic about this being implemented. Next door, in the province of Quebec, they have already passed legislation and will, in synchronization with Ontario, be implementing this on January 1, 2009. This will have a profound, positive effect not only on highway safety, but your fellow colleagues who are concerned about the environment will know that this is very positive for greenhouse gases and for other emissions that are forthcoming from large vehicles—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, if you're disappointed in my question, I can tell you that independent truckers are disappointed in your answer and would expect a much better answer from the Minister of Transportation.

Listen. The experts have come before committee and they've said when it comes to making our highways safer, this legislation in fact will make it more dangerous because of the requirement of speed limiters. Number two, and here is the big issue, they are going to have to compete against American truckers—also independent truckers and fleets—at a disadvantage because their

speed limiters are set at higher speeds due to the speed limits in the United States.

So I ask you again, will you not support the independent truckers of this province and allow them to compete on a level playing field, or at the very least pay for the installation of the technology?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As you know, the technology is such that it can be changed according to the jurisdiction you are in. So that can happen.

But I want to share with the member—I know he is interested in facts—increased road safety: Research shows that excessive speed is a factor in 23% of crashes; 100 million fewer litres of diesel fuel will be used by the whole trucking industry; a 280,000-tonne reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is the equivalent of 2,700 tractor-trailers off the road each year.

Now, your friend who is competing with you for the leadership of the party, Mr. Tabuns, is not going to be happy with that question. I have a quote. I remember you said this. On March 19, 2008, you were very good when you said, “In principle, we don’t have a problem.” I agreed with you then and I still agree with that statement—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Time for question period has ended.

We have a deferred vote on Bill 126. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1135 to 1140.

DEFERRED VOTES

ROAD SAFETY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 126, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to make consequential amendments to two amending acts / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives à deux lois modificatives.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bradley has moved second reading of Bill 126. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Best, Margaret
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Broten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Brownell, Jim
Bryant, Michael
Cansfield, Donna H.
Caplan, David

Duncan, Dwight
Fonseca, Peter
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Horwath, Andrea
Hoy, Pat
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Kormos, Peter
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
Mangat, Amrit

Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Paul
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Naqvi, Yasir
Phillips, Gerry
Qaadri, Shafiq
Ramal, Khalil
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Smith, Monique
Smitherman, George
Sousa, Charles

Colle, Mike
Craitor, Kim
Crozier, Bruce
Dickson, Joe
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duguid, Brad

Marchese, Rosario
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGuinty, Dalton
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil

Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Elliott, Christine
Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia

Klees, Frank
MacLeod, Lisa
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Savoline, Joyce

Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Sterling, Norman W.
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakubuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 60; the nays are 20.

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

Second reading agreed to.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek consent for the House to take the routine proceeding reports by committees immediately; following which the orders for second and third reading of bills Pr19 and Pr20 shall be called consecutively, the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills being put immediately, without debate; and that Ms. Jeffrey may move the motions for second and third readings of the bills on behalf of Mr. Dhillon and Mr. Sorbara respectively.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.
Motion agreed to.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Paul Miller: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pr20, An Act respecting the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ABLE INSURANCE BROKERS LTD. ACT, 2008

Mrs. Jeffrey, on behalf of Mr. Dhillon, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Able Insurance Brokers Ltd.

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

Second reading agreed to.

ABLE INSURANCE BROKERS LTD. ACT, 2008

Mrs. Jeffrey, on behalf of Mr. Dhillon, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Able Insurance Brokers Ltd.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

JOSEPH AND WOLF LEBOVIC JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS ACT, 2008

Mrs. Jeffrey, on behalf of Mr. Sorbara, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act respecting the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus.

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

Second reading agreed to.

JOSEPH AND WOLF LEBOVIC JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS ACT, 2008

Mrs. Jeffrey, on behalf of Mr. Sorbara, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act respecting the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: It is a privilege and honour to welcome Bill Nemerson, who is 80 years young and a

great community activist for the community of Etobicoke, joined, of course, by his loving family, entourage and supporters. Welcome, Mr. Nemerson.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: It's my privilege to introduce to the House today the president of Redeemer University College, Dr. Justin Cooper, who is here with us, and Mr. Peter Curtis.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. John O'Toole: This morning, our member Jim Wilson, who is the PC critic for the training, colleges and universities ministry, asked the minister to explain why less than 50% of the apprentices actually completed their training. This, following the Ontario Auditor General's report which stated that Ontario provides "\$227 million in grants to unemployed individuals to help learn new skills." It went on to say, "In essence, it's not clear what bang the government got for its buck." The minister did not have an effective strategy, he went on to say.

Also Mr. Klees, our member, asked Mr. Bryant publicly about the take-up of the Second Career funds, and the minister gave him no clear response. With the collapse in the Ontario economy, we need to be more effective in job training, as noted by the Attorney General.

In my riding of Durham, the ACE program, which is a grade 12 equivalency certification, has been widely supported. However, the ACE program has been cancelled in Bowmanville due to lack of funding. I want the McGuinty government to ensure that job training programs like ACE get the funding they need, the people they need and the support they need for jobs in the future. It's like all ridings in the province of Ontario: suffering job losses. Retraining is important, and it appears that the McGuinty government has no plan that's working and no way of measuring the outcomes of those plans.

RHENISH CHURCH OF CANADA

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I recently had the pleasure of attending the dedication service for the new Rhenish church located in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. Initially brought to China from Germany by missionaries, the Rhenish Church was established in Canada by immigrants from China in 1984. A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, it has since grown exponentially in membership and has established itself in Cornell in Markham, in a very pleasant park-like setting.

The event began outdoors, where Bishop Michael Pryse of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Eastern Synod, and Rhenish Church senior pastor the Rev. David Tin presided over the official opening of the doors and the unveiling of the church's new sign. A gathering of approximately 300 church members from across the greater Toronto area then proceeded inside to

celebrate the impressive new building with its first service. A wonderful choir of young children sang hymns of joy, to the delight of all. The event was marked by a palpable sense of pride in the new church, which had been the focus of much fundraising, planning and hard work. That pride carried over to the heritage house located on the church's land, which has been preserved by church members and is now home to a youth group and other community activities.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Rhenish Church of Canada on their new church, which will undoubtedly be enjoyed by the community for years to come.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Kuldip Kular: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to discuss the McGuinty government's latest initiatives to enhance Ontario's outstanding cultural sector. This government recognizes that investing in arts and culture not only builds strong, sustainable and vibrant communities, but also greatly contributes to our economic prosperity.

Ontario's cultural sector generates almost \$20 billion for the provincial economy and creates over 250,000 jobs, which the McGuinty government has taken important steps to not only sustain but to ensure that it flourishes. Some of these initiatives include increasing the Ontario Arts Council's annual funding by \$20 million. This has increased the OAC's budget to \$56 million this year and, when fully implemented, this will represent a 140% increase in OAC funding since 2003. We have also increased our domestic film and television tax credits to 35%, and for foreign film productions we have increased the tax credit to 25%. We are the first government in 30 years to strengthen the Ontario Heritage Act, giving municipalities the tools needed to identify, designate and protect their historic treasures.

These investments in various arts programs display the level of the McGuinty government's belief in Ontario's cultural sector and work hard to provide it with the tools to sustain—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member for Toronto—Danforth.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Today I was contacted by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and told that another piece of Ontario's heritage, the Erie Street United Church, dating from 1876, located in Ridgetown, Ontario, is going to be demolished. Once again, the Minister of Culture has failed in her responsibility to protect Ontario's heritage.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario requested that she issue a stop order to save this Henry Langley church, designated by the municipality. Ministry staff were in contact with the chief building officer and the local congregation and managed to negotiate a two-day pause but couldn't get a voluntary agreement to stop.

The congregation can't afford to maintain the building; it needs about \$1 million in repairs. But as one of the engineer's reports said, the building would last another 300 years if it had been maintained. The chief building officer was persuaded to issue a demolition order. The minister had the power—and a request—to issue a stop on that. She didn't.

We lost Alma College in St. Thomas—lost to fire—after the minister refused to act. At the rate the minister is going, we'll see an awful lot more buildings lost in this province.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I am pleased to share with the members of the Legislature how the McGuinty government is continuing to build strong relationships with our municipal partners, including in my hometown of Ottawa.

I hear from my constituents in Ottawa Centre how pleased they are to see us working together with our municipal representatives to address the concerns and issues of importance to them. Through the work of community members, the positive tone and tenor of the relationship has resulted in much-needed financial investment in the city of Ottawa.

Just this past Friday, our government announced the 2009 allocation of the 50-50 municipal land ambulance funding. Due to this announcement, the city of Ottawa is receiving an additional \$765,239 to maintain the 50-50 cost-sharing agreement. In total, the government will deliver more than \$408 million in province-wide funding for municipal land ambulance operating costs, an increase of \$20.1 million from 2008.

The investment numbers alone do not tell the real story. This investment means an additional 38 new paramedics and five additional vehicles for the ambulance service in Ottawa. Our government truly understands the importance of having land ambulance services that our residents can count on.

I am pleased that the McGuinty government continues to work diligently with our municipal partners in bettering the lives of and services for all Ontarians.

TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thunder Bay—Atikokan has greatly benefited from the substantial investments of our provincial government. The enhanced investments at our three main hospitals in Thunder Bay—Atikokan are a testament to our government's commitment.

Atikokan General has seen an increase in base funding from 2003-04 of 30% or \$1.4 million; Thunder Bay Regional has witnessed an increase of 38% and \$46.1 million; and St. Joseph's Care Group's funding has grown by \$13.8 million, or 20%. That is a total increase of over \$61 million, or 30%, in base funding.

1510

Our government is making substantial investments to help expand and improve public transit services. For

example, Thunder Bay has received well over \$6 million in gas tax funding from the province since 2004. Thunder Bay–Atikokan has also received well over \$11 million this past fall to move ahead with infrastructure priorities such as improving roads and bridges, expanding transit and upgrading social housing as a result of the Investing in Ontario Act. The new \$7.4 million, state-of-the-art Thunder Bay provincial communications centre just opened this past September, and we're also investing \$6 million for a new forensic ID unit for the OPP in Thunder Bay.

We can also look forward in 2009 to the provincial announcement about the construction of a new courthouse in Thunder Bay to serve our city and district, consolidating court services, something our city has been searching for for the last 10 to 20 years. These are just a few very small examples I can raise from my chair over here this afternoon for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: It is my pleasure to congratulate Redeemer University College on the excellent student ratings it achieved in a recent survey.

Redeemer is a Christian undergraduate university located in Hamilton, Ontario, which serves over 860 students, 90% of whom call Ontario home. For the second consecutive year, Redeemer has earned an A in overall student satisfaction in the Globe and Mail's University Report Card.

This survey of 43,400 university students graded 55 Canadian universities on a number of key criteria. The full survey can be accessed at globecampus.ca, and clearly shows that Redeemer's overall results are among the best in the country, which is a real credit to the faculty, students, administration and supporters of this undergraduate university.

Excellent post-secondary education is one of the key elements of Ontario's research and innovation strategy in the new knowledge economy. The results of this survey show that Hamilton and Ontario can be proud of what Redeemer is contributing to this important initiative.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I seek unanimous consent to stand down our two members' statements. The members are occupied, as their private members' legislation is receiving royal assent, courtesy of the McGuinty government, and it would be a respectful pleasure at this time of year.

We have one here right now. They'll be here.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member has arrived, so I don't think we're going to have to deal with consent.

GROVES MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Mr. Ted Arnott: I wish to inform the House that Groves Memorial Community Hospital, in the township of Centre Wellington, is continuing to prepare to meet the health care needs of our residents in the 21st century.

At the end of this month, in partnership with the county of Wellington, Groves will purchase 34 acres of land in Aboyne, between Elora and Fergus, for its planned brand new hospital.

I want to express my thanks to the members of the board and the foundation, the volunteer association, all the hospital staff, as well as the county of Wellington and the township of Centre Wellington for their hard work and support on this important project.

We are ready to proceed with this new hospital. The community wants to see progress and wants to see this project proceed. But I ask once again, when will the Minister of Health be ready to proceed?

As members know, I have raised the need for a new hospital many times in this House. As the Minister of Health knows, I have written countless letters about this issue, most recently in the fall. I say again that we need to be on the ministry's five-year plan for new hospital construction. We urge the Minister of Health to do what needs to be done to make this happen.

I hope he will not allow the Waterloo Wellington LHIN to become a scapegoat for delays in the approval process for this much-needed hospital. The minister should not put the LHIN in that position. The minister must acknowledge the need and the hard work of our community. We are ready to go, but we need the minister to say yes.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It is with great sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to a family that gave so much to the people of Oxford.

Richard and Laurie Hawkins and their children, Cassandra and Jordan, were much-loved members of our community. Through her outreach work as an OPP constable, Laurie Hawkins touched the lives of people throughout Oxford. Richard was an accomplished hockey player, who shared his love of hockey with the next generation through coaching. Both Cassandra and Jordan were active in sports and in their schools.

Tragically, the family's bright future was cut short by carbon monoxide poisoning. This is a devastating loss to their family, friends and our entire community. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone who knew them.

It is sad that it took this tragedy to remind Ontarians about the necessity of having a functioning carbon monoxide detector in every home. Carbon monoxide is colourless, odourless and impossible to detect without these alarms. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission has stated that carbon monoxide is the largest cause of accidental poisoning in American homes.

We are most vulnerable during the winter, when we are heating our homes. This is the time to check and make sure that you have a carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home and that they are working. Check the batteries; make sure they're plugged in. If they're more than 10 years old, replace them. This simple device saves lives and can avoid tragedies. Please make

sure that you, your family and your friends all have functioning carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a special report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario entitled *Progress in a Climate of Change*, a review of Ontario's climate change action plan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / *Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.*

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 minister for a short statement.

Hon. David Caplan: I will make a statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PATIENT SAFETY

Hon. David Caplan: I rise in the House today to speak to a piece of legislation that, if passed, would strengthen patient safety and the quality of care provided by all regulated health professions and all regulated health professionals in the province.

We're proposing to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, or, as it is called, the RHPA. This amendment would provide all health regulatory colleges with the tools that they need to support their mandate—specifically, the protection of the public. It would give colleges the power to conduct comprehensive inspections where health care services are provided. This is a priority for me.

Recent incidents of substandard cosmetic surgery provided by physicians have brought to light the need for change. In November 2007, the College of Physicians and Surgeons established a multi-pronged plan for responding to these incidents. This included regulating the

practice of high-risk procedures such as cosmetic surgery. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and to thank our partner, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, for its leadership on this important matter.

Enhancing inspection powers is also becoming more important for other health professionals, especially as they expand their scopes of practice and deliver more health care services outside of regulated settings such as hospitals and independent health facilities. Regulatory colleges already have the authority to inspect premises. That includes equipment, accounts and reports. However, the current provisions of the Regulated Health Professions Act do not provide the colleges with the authority to directly observe a regulated health professional performing a procedure during an inspection. This limits the ability of the colleges to adequately inspect places where potentially unsafe health care services could be provided.

In some cases, the safety of a facility and its equipment can only be determined by directly observing the regulated health professionals who work there or observing the equipment in the facility when it is being used by the regulated health professional. That's why giving power to the colleges to directly observe a health care provider delivering health services is so important.

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The McGuinty government is committed to enhancing patient safety and quality of care provided by health care professionals. In July 2008, an amended regulation of the Public Hospitals Act was enacted to require hospitals to disclose to patients and their families any critical event that resulted in serious injury or death. In September 2008, we began full public reporting on the first of eight patient safety indicators, beginning with *Clostridium difficile*, otherwise known as *C. difficile*, as part of a comprehensive plan to create an unprecedented level of transparency in Ontario's hospitals. This is but the latest in a series of initiatives designed to reduce adverse events and protect Ontario patients.

Speaker, I hope all members of this House will support the legislation that has been introduced, and I thank you very much for affording me this opportunity today.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm pleased to rise today to present our government's first annual report on Ontario's climate change action plan. Faced with the reality of worldwide climate change, governments today have a clear choice: They can do nothing or embrace the transition to a low-carbon, green future. Ontario has chosen to be a leader.

Our climate change action plan, which we introduced last year, is wide-ranging and includes ambitious reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions 6% below 1990 levels by 2014 and 15% below 1990 levels by 2020. It includes programs designed to promote alternative energy and energy conservation, create more sustainable

communities, increase Ontario's commitment to environmental research and development, and provide the foundation for a greener economy.

Achieving our greenhouse gas reduction targets is a priority. The annual report shows how we are delivering on our objectives in the transportation sector, in innovation and job creation, in creating green energy options, in building greener communities and in reducing the government's own carbon footprint.

As the first-ever annual report on our climate change action plan, the report focuses on the starting points and documents our actions over the last year. It shows Ontario is on track to meet its aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets and adapt to climate change impacts. The report shows that Ontario has reduced its CO₂ emissions from carbon-fired electricity by 20%, and more than 2,600 megawatts of new renewable power supply has been contracted. We are protecting more than 225,000 square kilometres of the far north boreal forest region, a globally significant carbon sink.

In this report, Ontarians can learn about our efforts in implementing Move Ontario 2020, the largest commitment to public transportation in Ontario's history, and how we have streamlined the environmental approval process for public transit projects to get them up and running sooner. The annual report also shows our actions in developing programs and partnerships with other provinces, the federal government and jurisdictions in the United States.

A low-carbon economy and a culture of conservation are essential to creating sustainable future growth and prosperity for our province and for our children. In light of the difficult economic times we face in Ontario today, it is only right to remind ourselves that creating a low-carbon economy is a tremendous environmental opportunity as well as an economic advantage.

Our plan is an economy-wide plan. It is also a government-wide plan, with every ministry making a contribution. In February of this year, we set up the climate change secretariat to help coordinate our efforts across government and ensure policies and programs that will produce real results. My ministry, the Ministry of the Environment, along with other government ministries, is working closely with the secretariat, and that is reflected within the pages of this annual report.

When Premier McGuinty introduced Ontario's climate change action plan last year, he made it clear that our activities and our progress would be transparent and accountable. The progress cited in this annual report has been verified by Deloitte and Touche, and will be reviewed by the Environmental Commissioner. As a matter of fact, the Environmental Commissioner filed a report today as well, and amongst other things he states, "I am pleased with the efforts the government is making in charting a transparent course to ensure Ontario will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions." That is as stated by Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner.

The progress cited in this report has been verified, as I mentioned before. We are proud of our progress, but we

still have a long way to go. All of us have a role to play to meet our 2014 emission reduction targets. Ontario residents have a right to know how our plan is working. They also want to know how they can help and what is being asked of them as citizens and as business owners. We face this challenge together as Ontarians. Only by working together will we achieve our shared goal, that of a more prosperous and brighter future for generations to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm responding on behalf of the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, who has given me the liberty of reading Gord Miller's report here. I had a look at it, and in responding to the minister, it's a matter of perceived progress; that is really my interpretation. Or is this just another Liberal patting themselves on the back?

I would like to take a few minutes and touch on some of the salient points that the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Gord Miller, has brought forward in his independent review released today.

It is interesting to note that while the ministry's climate change action plan has been billed as a "progress report" on government emission reductions initiatives, there's very little in the way of actual numbers with which to track the claimed progress or lack thereof. I would think if the government really wanted to highlight the results of an action plan, they would provide actual numbers to back them up. Or is this just part and parcel of the usual McGuinty "show and sham" politics that we've become so accustomed to in the last four or five years?

More to that point, the Environmental Commissioner mentions in his review that there is a very real concern that while emissions may go down in the province, these reductions have no connection to any government initiative whatsoever. I'm adding my own impression, which is that it's more a result of the collapse of the Ontario economy and some 250,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector that may be an explanation. In fact, any credit for emission reductions today may be better attributed to the government's inaction, which has resulted in the economic tailspin that we now find ourselves reeling in.

In fact, if I go on here, the commissioner points to a very real concern that this government may simply take credit for carbon reduction resulting from a shrinking economy and the shutting down of industries, rather than taking the steps called for to meet the plan's real goals. Mr. Miller points out, "It will be important for the government to clarify the extent to which these reductions are permanent or only transitory."

There's more to say on this topic on this side of the House. We support any plan or any action that will result in a better quality of life, not just in emissions but in our economy generally.

PATIENT SAFETY

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the PC Party to respond to this new regulation entitled the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008.

We all remember that about a year ago, in September 2007, Krista Stryland, a Toronto real estate agent and 32-year-old mother, walked into her doctor's office to undergo a routine liposuction treatment. Tragically, she never came out. She died of cardiac arrest. Of course, this case was one of several high-profile deaths which have put the spotlight on cosmetic surgery and the need for action. We've certainly had other examples as well.

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While some Canadian provinces, such as Alberta and British Columbia, strictly regulate those who perform cosmetic surgery, Ontario has been slower to do so. In both of the western provinces, all surgeons and surgical facilities must be licensed for each procedure they perform; as well, doctors cannot advertise themselves as cosmetic surgeons without holding a surgical specialty.

Our own College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario proposed regulatory changes in 2008 that would prevent doctors from calling themselves "cosmetic surgeons," a term applied to doctors who are not plastic surgeons and who perform procedures including facelifts, tummy tucks and liposuction. I would like to point out that this term is not formally recognized by licensing bodies. So, the CPSO has been trying to do what they can. They have taken some initiatives and they've attempted to pass a policy, obviously, which requires doctors to report changes in their scope of practice etc.

Today, in an attempt to protect patient safety, which obviously must be of paramount importance, we have the ministry stepping up to the forefront and proposing that we would allow for inspections of facilities. Not only would the CPSO have this power, but all regulatory bodies would. This is important.

I look forward to hearing the colleges' response. I don't know how much consultation there has been with the colleges regarding this legislation, but obviously the government needs to listen to the colleges.

Certainly, this is a step in the right direction—

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

PATIENT SAFETY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to rise today to speak on the amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act.

It is imperative that Ontarians have confidence in our health care system, and patient safety must always be a key concern among all health professionals. But in 2007, this confidence was shaken, most notably after the death of a young woman as a result of a physician providing substandard cosmetic surgery in an out-of-hospital facility. That's why the government is introducing this legislation today.

Following this tragic accident, the College of Physicians and Surgeons recognized the need to better monitor cosmetic surgery in Ontario. In particular, the college discovered gaps in the Regulated Health Professions Act that limit the college's ability to directly observe their members in practise.

The college has also submitted to the ministry other changes to better protect Ontarians that will come forward as regulatory, not legislative, changes. For example, the college has now changed its policy of voluntary self-reporting, which resulted in some physicians, but not all, reporting and undergoing the training, supervision and assessment required by the policies. In October 2007, the college made it mandatory for all of its members to submit a detailed account about the cosmetic procedures they are providing to their patients. As well, a regulation will soon be forthcoming to limit the use of specialist titles such as "cosmetic surgeon." The college recognizes that the medical community had not kept pace with the expanding field of cosmetic surgery and that patient safety in Ontario was being compromised. Recognizing that you have a problem is the first step in solving it, and I commend the college for taking these actions.

I must note that the college submitted a number of regulations and bylaw amendments to the ministry in March 2008, and it has taken nine months for the government to come back with this small amendment.

I urge the ministry to continue working with all health regulatory colleges to make sure that proper safety standards are in place for all high-risk procedures. The work done by the College of Physicians and Surgeons is a step in the right direction. I look forward to seeing the ministry act swiftly to strengthen patient safety so that all Ontarians have confidence in our health care system.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to talk about the Ontario climate change action plan annual report. As you would know, the NDP has long recognized the urgency of the threat of climate change, and we were the first party to raise this issue in the House of Commons.

Canadians produce more greenhouse gas emissions per capita than any other population. The government of Ontario is committed to reduce GHGs, greenhouse gases, by 15% below 1990 levels by 2020. To meet this target, this government is going to have to be far more aggressive than it has shown to date. In particular, when we talk about suburban sprawl, the plans that have been put forward and approved by this government are not adequate to contain sprawl. We know that 60% of new development is going to take place on greenfields, meaning that far more cars will be driving far longer distances for people to get to and from work. The Metrolinx plan will in fact not stop sprawl, will not slow down the car culture. Absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions, under Metrolinx, will increase over the next 25 years, given the plan that has been put forward.

I want to note as well that this government is stubbornly and profoundly committed to nuclear energy. It is

pursuing maximum targets for nuclear energy and pursuing minimum targets for renewable energy. It's not taking advantage of all the energy efficiency and conservation measures that are available, and it's capping the long-term development of solar, wind and biomass far short of the levels that are deployed in other jurisdictions.

There's no question that this is a government that's committed to conventional power at the heart of its energy and climate planning and that, because of its commitment to nuclear, by 2020 the replacements that are necessary for coal will not be there. We will be either burning a lot of gas, continuing to burn coal in coal-fired power plants, or buying electricity from other jurisdictions that are burning coal.

The environmental organization Greenpeace has shown that the government will miss its greenhouse gas emission targets by one third because of its commitment to nuclear.

The report from the government on its action plan is not encouraging; in fact, it's completely discouraging.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Hon. James J. Bradley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for a statement on human rights—five minutes to each party.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): If you're going to say that it's seven minutes, that was my understanding.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Really, we don't need the unanimous consent at this point.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Unanimous consent for seven minutes? Agreed.

Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's a privilege for me to rise today to mark International Human Rights Day. Sixty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to further fight discrimination and oppression.

La déclaration représentait la première reconnaissance formelle internationale que les droits de la personne et les libertés fondamentales s'appliquent à tout le monde, partout et toujours.

The declaration represented the first formal international formal recognition that human rights and fundamental freedoms apply to everyone everywhere and always.

Ontario's own human rights system benefited from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it is based on the experience of ordinary Ontarians like the late Hugh Burnett, who worked tirelessly for civil rights in the late 1940s and 1950s in response to his first-hand experiences of racial discrimination. I met recently with his daughter to hear his story and look

forward to working with others to find a fitting way to recognize his unique contribution to human rights in the province of Ontario.

As a province, we've always taken a leadership position within Canada when it comes to protecting human rights. Sadly, one of those leaders, former chair of the Human Rights Commission Dorothea Crittenden, passed away earlier this week at the age of 93. Dorothea and all others who've worked for the cause of human rights have our gratitude.

It's fitting that the theme for the 60th anniversary of the declaration is Dignity and Justice for All of Us. This past June, we celebrated the launch of a stronger new human rights system for Ontario. Through our new human rights system, this government is committed to ensuring dignity and justice for all who face discrimination.

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The new system respects the dignity of those with discrimination claims by giving them the ability to bring forward complaints themselves through direct and effective access to the tribunal. The new Human Rights Legal Support Centre is now representing those who would otherwise have difficulty accessing justice, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission will now be better able to proactively address systemic societal human rights issues. In this last year, almost half of the 4,000 outstanding human rights cases that accumulated over the years were closed.

Michael Gottheil, Barbara Hall and Raj Anand deserve recognition for their inspirational leadership over the past months and years in building and promoting Ontario's new human rights system. Together, they have made Ontario an example for the rest of the world.

La justice est une fiducie que notre gouvernement détient pour la population de l'Ontario. Elle doit fonctionner pour tous les habitants de la province et être accessible à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes.

Justice is a trust our government holds for the people of Ontario. It must work for everyone in the province and be accessible to all Ontarians.

We are determined to ensure that Ontarians have access to justice, and that's why we're relentless in our efforts to reform our system of justice—whether it's criminal, civil or family law—so that Ontarians can find justice when they need to find it and when they need it most. We're committed to making it simpler, faster and more affordable for Ontarians to resolve their disputes.

These reforms, the changes we recently made to our human rights system and our government's commitment to reducing child poverty speak directly to the theme of this year's 60th anniversary: Dignity and Justice for All of Us.

Governments have a clear responsibility to protect human rights—to ensure dignity and justice for those who face discrimination, for families and for everyone. We all have an individual responsibility to uphold human rights in our communities, to respect one another's rights and to speak out against discrimination and harassment.

Today we pay tribute to those who originally drafted the declaration 60 years ago, and those who have worked so hard in the province of Ontario, both before that and since, to make that vision a reality.

Mr. Peter Shurman: December 10 indeed marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and I am honoured to rise today, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, to celebrate this important day in history.

On the United Nations website, one can read the following: "...human rights are inherent to all and the concern of the whole of the international community.... The declaration and its core values, including non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality, apply to everyone, everywhere and always." Lovely words, and definitely words with which no civilized person could disagree. Where it gets contentious is when we begin to think about where and often whether these words carry real meaning.

When this declaration was created, the world was still in turmoil as a result of the Second World War. The declaration reflected, and still does reflect, humanity's aspirations for a future of prosperity, dignity and peaceful coexistence. These are still our objectives, but that world and today's world are two very different places.

It was a Canadian from New Brunswick, John Peters Humphrey, who, as the first director of the human rights division of the United Nations Secretariat, became the principal drafter of the universal declaration.

Canada has its own human rights declaration and, as a country, we should all feel very proud of our record. No, we are not perfect, but there are many, many examples of human rights abuses in our world that we can plainly observe before we engage in any self-criticism. Nonetheless, persevere we must.

As we celebrate our own record, we need to think about those who are not so lucky. The Secretary General of the United Nations has said, "The challenges we face today are as daunting as those that confronted the declaration's drafters."

Today we face a global financial crisis, which we in Ontario are all feeling, and more expert people than I suggest it will get worse before it gets better. That said, we know there are food shortages in many parts of the world that are impacting the lives of men, women and children. Eating should not be in any question when we discuss universal human rights.

Political repression is all too present in many countries. We, as Canadians, have a record of fighting hard to end this. Our federal government speaks to these concerns at every opportunity, and we in Ontario support that.

The most vulnerable in the world are hurt the most by abuse, starvation and lack of comforts that we all take for granted. We are lucky to live in a country where we have the freedom to express ourselves through words, religion and in literally any other way we wish. I am not Pollyannaish on being Canadian, just very proud.

We are among the luckiest in the world. For the most part, we are spared the hardships that others have to face. That does not mean there aren't starving Canadians and it doesn't mean that every one of us is well treated, but we can always strive to do better, and strive we shall. We cannot ignore what is happening around us and we cannot sit back and say, "Let someone else do it." Sitting back and doing nothing is not part of our national make-up. Since 1992, Canada has participated in UN missions in Rwanda, the Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Prevlaka, Mozambique, Guatemala, East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, or Ivory Coast, and Sudan. And now we support the fight for human rights with over 3,000 of our finest men and women stationed in Afghanistan.

Canada is a country that believes in human rights, and we will continue to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves, even as we improve the lot of our own less fortunate. Let us remember today, on this international day for human rights, what the original intent of the United Nations declaration was. I repeat as I began: "Human rights are inherent to all and the concern of the whole of the international community."

Mr. Peter Kormos: On behalf of Howard Hampton and New Democrats here at Queen's Park, I'm proud and pleased to join in this recognition of International Human Rights Day, indeed on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Here in Canada and Ontario, we tend to become very self-righteous as we point out, expose and condemn human rights abuses and violations throughout the world, yet fail to recognize human rights abuses and violations here in our own home, here in the province of Ontario. It's our responsibility and obligation to speak out, fight and struggle against human rights abuses internationally, but somehow it seems that the obligation to address human rights abuses falls even more heavily on us when we're talking about our own province and our own country.

Of course, human rights violations in this province, some would say, are hidden better, less exposed. It's not that there aren't human rights abuses and violations and it's not that they don't affect a lot of people, but it's that the people who are disproportionately affected are some of the most vulnerable and marginalized in our society: new Canadians, low-income Canadians, poor Canadians, women, those from racialized communities, disabled persons and members of First Nations communities.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states very, very clearly:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

This means that even in an economic downturn, there's no excuse for being in violation of any of these

standards or the numerous others listed as rights in the declaration: education, unionization and access to justice.

We remain incredibly concerned about this government's dismantling of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and its privatization of human rights advocacy so as to limit access to the system by those who need it most—some of the most vulnerable and some of the poorest in our province. The most gross violation of human rights in depth and breadth surely is among the first people of this country in aboriginal and First Nations communities. Whether it's contaminated water, inadequate access to housing or health care, shameful child mortality rates, lack of access to employment or outright violation of land claims, this province has not met its responsibility to First Nations people, and especially the young in those First Nations communities.

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The school in Attawapiskat is still not a reality. That community and those children have gone to great lengths to create a broad-based campaign to try to get some swift action on what is their fundamental human right being denied them, here in this province of Ontario.

The human rights declaration affirms the right to an adequate standard of living through provisions such as a fair minimum wage, adequate social assistance, access to affordable housing, child benefits and child care, pay equity, unionization, amongst so many other things. Ontario is the child poverty leader in this country, with one in nine kids growing up in poverty. That amounts to 44% of all children in poverty in Canada, the highest percentage ever.

Parents and children are entitled to child care and assistance in this province. We see a persistent cut to child benefits under the auspices of redistribution and prolonged rollouts. The fact is that previous dollars that helped parents in preparation for the new school year or for winter have now been cut drastically.

The average low-income family is living over \$7,000 a year below the poverty line. Forty-five per cent of low-income children live in families where at least one parent is working full time all year. No one who is working should be living in poverty. No one who is denied the ability to work should be living in poverty either, yet that's the case in Ontario today. New Democrats have stated clearly that we need to see a \$10.25 per hour minimum wage now so that working Ontarians, low-income Ontarians, can at least begin living at the poverty line.

The shortage of affordable housing deepens the hardships experienced by low-income families, with waiting lists for users numbering more than 125,000—those lists as long as 21 years, like in Peel region. That is a violation of the fundamental right to decent housing and shelter.

The right to form a union, the right to collectively bargain, is a right still denied agricultural workers in this province, workers working for some of the lowest wages, in some of the most dangerous workplaces and under some of the most abusive conditions. This government persists in denying those agricultural workers the right to

belong to a union and collectively bargain, notwithstanding that the Ontario Court of Appeal in a unanimous decision has made it very clear that that's a violation of the Canadian Constitution—and I say to you it's a violation as well of the Ontario human rights declaration.

As well, the right to join a union has to be accompanied by the right to form that union, and when this government continues to deny the vast majority of workers, the poorest workers in this province, card-based certification, it continues to deny them a fundamental human right.

We must challenge the status quo in this province if we are truly committed to celebrating this day.

PETITIONS

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mrs. Julia Munro: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the 48 Sluse Road, Holland Landing, East Gwillimbury Sluse Road location is on the short list for the province's proposed northern York region peaking plant; and

“Whereas this proposed site is only 500 metres from Park Avenue Public School; and

“Whereas this proposed plant represents significant health and safety risks to the children and staff at Park Avenue Public School;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to reject the proposed Sluse Road Holland Landing peaking plant project.”

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Kim Craitor: I am pleased to read this petition on behalf of my colleague the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, Mr. Bob Delaney.

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre:

“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 plan-

ning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

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

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition provided to me by Mike Howes, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I agree with the petition, I affix my name thereto.

INTERPROVINCIAL BRIDGE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas:

"(1) ROCHE-NCE, a consulting firm hired to study potential sites for an interprovincial crossing between Ottawa and Gatineau, is recommending that an interprovincial bridge across the Ottawa River be built at Kettle Island, connecting to the scenic Aviation Parkway in Ottawa, turning it into a four-lane commuter and truck route passing through downtown residential communities;

"(2) Along the proposed route are homes, seniors' apartments, schools, parks, the Montfort Long Term Care Facility and the Montfort Hospital, all of which would be severely impacted by noise, vibration and disease-causing air pollution;

"(3) A truck and commuter route through neighbourhoods is a safety issue because of the increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists and the transport of hazardous materials; and

"(4) There are other, more suitable corridors further east, outside of the downtown core, which would have minimal impact on Ottawa residents;

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

"To reject the recommendation of a bridge at Kettle Island and to select a more suitable corridor to proceed to phase two of the interprovincial crossings environmental assessment study."

I affix my signature to this petition and send it to the table via page Swapnil.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I have a petition given to me by Don Corry.

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of both the children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

I agree with the petition and I will give it to page Tess.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mario Sergio: I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I do concur with the petitioners and I will affix my name to it.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition. The first signature on here is by Deborah Hartt from Cambridge. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

I'm pleased to sign this, present it to Sahara and endorse the petition.

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."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition signed and provided to me by Linda Lantz.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I agree with this petition, I endorse it.

BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from new Canadian students at the Bathurst Heights ESL learning centre.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students across the city; and

“Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can” get a job and “succeed in their career ... ; and

“Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

“Therefore we, the undersigned,” request “that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location.”

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

OSTOMY SUPPLIES

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas there are thousands of ostomy patients across Ontario, many of whom are on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the assistive devices program currently funds \$600 annually for ostomy supplies, which in some cases is merely a third of the annual cost;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request the McGuinty government increase funding to those who must purchase ostomy supplies in order to survive.”

I am pleased to present this to Zac on his third-last day as I sign and endorse this petition.

LUPUS

Mr. Kim Craiton: I’m pleased to introduce this petition into Parliament today. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

“Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

“Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

“We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario.”

I’m pleased to sign my signature in support of this petition.

GYPSY MOTHS

Mr. John O’Toole: It seems it’s an endless job petitioning on behalf of the people of Ontario. This petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas gypsy moths pose a dangerous threat to our forests in Norfolk county and across the province of Ontario”—certainly not at this time of year, but we’re preparing for the spring, since there’s no action plan on the other side.

“Whereas many properties in Norfolk and Haldimand counties have been deforested and dramatically harmed by gypsy moths” this past summer; “and

“Whereas the province of Ontario has previously funded a cost-shared gypsy moth spraying program;

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

“That Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources immediately fund”—in the spring—“a gypsy moth spraying program to assist landowners and municipalities attempting to control further gypsy moth infestation” in the province of Ontario.

I’m pleased to sign this in support of it and present it to Zac on his third-last day.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The time for petitions has expired.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to protect Ontario’s children / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l’enfance et à la famille afin de protéger les enfants de l’Ontario.

Bill 98, An Act to promote the sale of Ontario produced agricultural products by amending the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act / Projet de loi 98, Loi visant à promouvoir la vente de produits agricoles ontariens en modifiant la Loi sur l’aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun.

1610

Bill 99, An Act to protect and restore the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed and to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act in respect of water quality trading / Projet de loi 99, Loi visant à protéger et à rétablir la santé écologique du bassin hydrographique du lac Simcoe et à modifier la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l’Ontario en ce qui concerne un système d’échange axé sur la qualité de l’eau.

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007 / Projet de loi 100, Loi modi-

fiant la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

Bill 111, An Act to proclaim Emancipation Day / Projet de loi 111, Loi proclamant le Jour de l'émancipation.

Bill 124, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act with respect to cigarillos / Projet de loi 124, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée en ce qui a trait aux cigarillos.

Bill Pr9, An Act to revive 2029652 Ontario Ltd.

Bill Pr10, An Act respecting Master's College and Seminary.

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive Eugerry Investments Limited.

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Porcupine Goldtop Mines Limited and to change its name to Porcupine Goldor Mines Limited.

Bill Pr13, An Act to revive 2076467 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr14, An Act to revive 1068080 Ontario Limited.

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Able Insurance Brokers Ltd.

Bill Pr20, An Act respecting the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the following committees be authorized to meet during the adjournment and/or, in the event of the prorogation of the first session of the 39th Parliament and notwithstanding such prorogation, during the interval between the first and second sessions of the 39th Parliament, and/or upon resumption of the first or second sessions of the 39th Parliament, as follows:

Standing Committee on Government Agencies: February 9 through 11, 2009, inclusive and the afternoon from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the first Monday following the resumption of the House in 2009; and

Standing Committee on Public Accounts: four days commencing no earlier than February 17, 2009, such days to be determined by unanimous decision of the subcommittee on committee business; and

Standing Committee on General Government, which is authorized to consider Bills 118 and 126 concurrently during the week of February 9, 2009, for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the bills in locations in Ontario at the discretion of the committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The deputy government House leader has moved a motion regarding certain committee meetings and meeting dates. Deputy government House leader?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I am pleased to put forward this motion on behalf of the government. It will help us to get our business done during the break. I know that one of my colleagues, at least, has something to say

on this motion today. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. We have agreed that there won't be lengthy debate on this matter, not lengthy at all.

This is a relatively routine process at the end of each session of the House. The operative words here, though, are "in the event of ... prorogation," and I'm going to have more to say about that because there's going to be a little more discussion about the next motion that I expect the government is going to be putting forward today.

This, as the deputy House leader, for whom I have the greatest admiration, affection and respect, says, is designed to let committees sit during the break. Had there been lavish junkets, as this government so often designs into its committee hearings during breaks, I would have resisted this type of motion. But this is a relatively and remarkably frugal and delightfully frugal approach to—

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's always delightful to go to Sudbury in January.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The deputy House leader is doing the best job she can to erode my affection for her, but I can resist. There's nothing she can do or say that's not going to make me like her as much as I do. So we support this, as I say.

The operative word is "prorogation," and the next motion lends itself to a far more thorough discussion of prorogation and exactly what this government has in mind or, more frankly, doesn't have in mind for over a quarter of a million Ontario workers who have lost their jobs in the last three years, those unemployed workers, those families, and the tens of thousands more who will be losing their jobs during what could well be a very protracted vacation for Mr. McGuinty and his backbenchers.

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

There being none, Ms. Smith has moved government motion A, a motion to authorize certain committees to meet during the winter adjournment.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day.

STATUS OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding prorogation, the following business remaining on the Orders and Notices paper be continued and placed on the Orders and Notices paper of the second sessional day of the second session of the 39th Parliament at the same stage of business for the House and its committees as at prorogation:

(i) all government bills, except Bill 1, An Act to Perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right and Bill 24, An Act to amend the Assessment Act, Community Small

Business Investment Funds Act, Corporations Tax Act, Education Act, Income Tax Act, Land Transfer Tax Act and Taxation Act, 2007; and

(ii) the following private members' public bills:

Bill 18, An Act respecting the disclosure of information about marijuana grow operations;

Bill 87, An Act to regulate the motor vehicle towing industry in Ontario;

Bill 91, An Act to amend the Public Vehicles Act respecting bicycle racks on public vehicles;

Bill 101, An Act respecting energy rating for specified residential buildings;

Bill 106, An Act to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods;

Bill 109, An Act to provide a tax credit for the purchase of equipment or devices for persons with disabilities;

Bill 131, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 with respect to retailers of electricity and gas marketers;

Bill 132, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act; and

(iii) all private bills; and

(iv) the ballot list for private members' public business;

and that a new ballot for private members' public business be conducted prior to the commencement of the new session and appended to the existing ballot list; pursuant to standing order 98(c) any member may exchange places in the order of precedence with any other member on either ballot list.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved government motion B.

Further debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I won't be speaking long to this, as I know one of my colleagues in particular has a lot to say, but I am pleased that our government is putting forward this motion today to allow us some flexibility as we move into the break time. We are looking forward to continuing to work with the members on the other side of the House in the new year, and I wanted to take this opportunity, as I may not be speaking tomorrow, to wish all of the members of the House a very happy holiday, a very safe and happy time with their families, and I look forward to hearing what the other members of the House have to say on this motion.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I would also like to take this opportunity, as I may not be here tomorrow, to wish all persons, staff and members, a Merry Christmas, happy holiday, and a safe time during this intersession.

But on the specifics of the motion, I'd like to mention a few things that I'm a small bit disappointed in. This may be self-serving, but that won't be the first time that's occurred here.

I would say that I'm quite happy that the Minister of Transportation has brought forward the two bills to the general government committee, Bills 118 and 126, with

hearings the week of February 9. I certainly look forward to participating in that.

I want to mention a couple of bills that I thought could have been moved in the private members' section. I caution the government, because I'll have to introduce these again; there will be another amount of time used to get to first reading.

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit: The federal government has adopted it. I'm giving it to the Minister of Transportation, or of public infrastructure, whoever, to do the right thing. This would help Metrolinx. This is the right thing to do, and I think the hearings on that would have been a very important contribution.

The second one is Bill 36, which is an act that has been troubling. There were some comments today with respect to the agricultural community and the challenges there on food quality, food safety and the auditor's report. Bill 36 is An Act to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids on agricultural land. I think this bill's time has come. There are a number of agricultural leaders here who would agree with that.

1620

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of cellphones and other technologies: I think Mr. Bradley has seen the light on that. It has now been kind of folded into Bill 118. I will probably be moving an amendment to rename it the O'Toole bill, but that might be a bit too productive as well. It may not be supported, but we'll see. I'll always be hopeful.

There's one other bill that I think, to be serious, is a good bill. Currently before the House is Bill 133, which deals with family law, and I have a bill that persons have brought to my attention, Bill 10, An Act, in memory of Lori Dupont, to better protect victims of domestic violence. In a serious tone, what this bill does is provide for restraining orders to be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to victims of domestic violence through a JP or a family court judge. I think there is some merit in that bill, and I'll probably be reintroducing it. But they could fold it into Bill 133, a current bill that has been referred to committee.

In the spirit of the season, some of what I said is meant just in the respect that I was listening and, secondly, to wish the best of the season to everyone. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I am going to be here tomorrow, so I'll not make any premature greetings to colleagues.

My dear, dear friend the deputy government House leader moves this motion as if it was some sort of normal, everyday kind of procedure that should be passed on a nod and given no attention. This motion wouldn't be necessary, and would not have been moved, were the government not contemplating prorogation of the House. What does that mean?

We have a protracted and attractive Christmas break. The House rises, based on the House calendar in the standing orders, on December 11, and the standing orders say that the House doesn't resume until the third Tuesday in February. That would be February 17, according to the calendar attached to member Lalonde's Christmas card, which he just handed me. I suspect that is a statutory holiday, which means we'll be coming back not on the 17th but on the 18th.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, do the math. We're already talking about December through January through February, two months plus of Christmas vacation. There are a whole lot of workers out there across this province who are going to have time on their hands this Christmas but they're not being paid because they've lost their jobs. Every member of this assembly will continue to receive their rather attractive paycheque.

Leaving December 11? Yesterday, the government was patting itself on the back. People were in the galleries welcoming the government's amendments to the Employment Standards Act, which restored some most modest of things to workers in temp agencies—the poorest workers, the lowest-income workers, some of the hardest-working workers in this province.

Our critic, the member for Parkdale–High Park, told the government we would be more than pleased to sit through the course of next week—my goodness, to work through to December 18 rather than go home to our vacation time on December 11—to address the interests of the poorest workers in this province. What a modest proposal.

I recall that it was two years ago, just about to the day, that Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals had no hesitation whatsoever in sitting an extra week to give themselves a 40% pay increase, and that was in a climate in the province of Ontario where jobs were evaporating, where the province was haemorrhaging good manufacturing and resource sector jobs.

So let's understand this: The standing orders provide that in the normal course of events, we'd have, give or take, a two-month-plus vacation with pay. It bothers me and disturbs me that in an economic climate where we have not just lost a quarter of a million jobs but stand to lose tens of thousands more literally in the weeks ahead, this Legislature wouldn't be sitting, talking about a plan, talking about policies that would provide relief for those workers and their families who have lost jobs, that would provide protection for the jobs that we have left, that might even try to restore some of the jobs that have been lost. But the government chose not to do that, as is its right.

Back to the motion: Let's understand that this motion is all about prorogation. This motion is about the government exercising its power—prorogation has been written about a fair amount in the last week, hasn't it, member from Peterborough? Mr. Harper has been condemned in so many circles for abandoning Parliament with a prorogation rather than addressing serious issues

affecting working folks across this country. Yet here we have Premier McGuinty, who, rather than condemn Mr. Harper, appears to be wanting to emulate him, because this motion is about the prospect of the government exercising its power to prorogue, just like Mr. Harper went to the Governor General exercising his own. Mr. McGuinty won't go to the Governor General; he'll go to our very capable Lieutenant Governor. It's clear the Lieutenant Governor has no choice but to grant a prorogation request. If anything, the Governor General's decision earlier this week indicates that the Governor General has very little authority to refuse a prorogation request. What does that mean? It means that we won't come back on February 15-16; we may not come back on March 15; we may not come back on April 15; we may not come back until May 15.

Prorogation is used for many reasons. One of the reasons that prorogation is used, as Mr. Harper so eloquently demonstrated, is to flee the responsibilities of government and the consequences of Parliament and its procedures. Good grief. Down where I come from, thousands of jobs—it is going to be a cold, cold winter and a bleak, bleak Christmas and holiday season for a whole lot of families, not just in Niagara but across this province, everything from 800 workers at John Deere to the smaller number of, but no less significant, workers at Frito Lay.

This government talks about a feeble, ineffective, feckless and, quite frankly, underutilized—and I'll tell you why in just a minute—retraining program. Down where I come from, workers have already been retrained. We've lost all of what I call our first-tier jobs: the manufacturing jobs, the unionized jobs, the good jobs, the jobs with good wages, the jobs with pensions attached to them, the jobs with benefits attached to them. Those workers have already been retrained. They retrained to work in the small jobbers' operations, in the machine shops and in the smaller shops that you see along the Queen Elizabeth Way, if you drive down there through Beamsville and on to Vineland. What that meant was, tradespeople and industrial workers making \$28 an hour are now making \$13 and \$14 an hour.

The problem is, though, that with the collapse of the auto sector and with the failure of this government to produce any plan whatsoever and the failure of Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals to produce any policies whatsoever that would have any hope of addressing the devastation in the auto sector, those tier-two jobs are disappearing, too.

We've noted, and I had an occasion just the other day when I talked about David Chev Olds and Gillespie Pontiac Buick down in Welland—car dealerships—because, when we're talking about auto, we're talking about manufacturing and assembling; we're talking about auto parts, whether it's Magna or GDX down in Welland; we're talking about the small machine shops that do contract jobs for auto plants. We're also talking about car dealerships. I made note of the fact that in small-town Welland, those two dealerships alone—I hadn't gotten

the same correspondence from the Ford and Chrysler dealerships—employed over 100 people with reasonably good jobs at reasonably good pay. So when the auto sector collapses, it's going to be those jobs too.

1630

The government says it's going to retrain those unemployed workers. Retrain them for what? Those workers have already been retrained down in Niagara. They were retrained to work in the casino. They were trained as blackjack dealers or slot machine technicians. But you see, the casino is laying off people too. It's reducing its workforce, one, because the revenues are dropping, and that in and of itself is of concern, or should be, to a government that is addicted to gaming revenues—but also, in the fervour to preserve revenues, jobs are being destroyed in the casinos.

There are no jobs left for these people to train for. Why, just earlier today, the Minister of Training, amongst other things, talked about 4,000 hours of training for call centre workers. I believe that same minister has earned himself a Ph.D.; he didn't spend 4,000 hours earning a Ph.D. You talk about 4,000 hours training call centre workers? And the call centre jobs are leaving this province, as well. Try it: The next time you call Sympatico, the next time your Sympatico system with your computer—and break down it will—after you've been put on hold for Lord knows how long, and you talk to a technician whom you plead with to help you get your box back up and operating, just happen to ask, "Where am I speaking to?" Again, people in south Asia need work too and have every right to work. But, you see, the call centres that were at one point considered the panacea for job losses here are now being exported to south Asia, amongst other places. People know what I'm talking about. The insurance industry that increasingly uses direct sales rather than brokers—not all of it, but a big chunk of it—uses call centres. If you call those call centres and ask where you're calling to, you'll find yourself talking to some people in some of the most exotic places in the world. It's like a National Geographic tour to try to do domestic household business on the telephone as you're routed from a call centre from one continent to another. So the call centres are at risk, as well. Four thousand hours for training a call centre worker? I don't think so.

Let's be a little more frank here: There are no more casino jobs for the workers who lost their jobs at Frito Lay to be trained for, and the casino workers are losing their jobs.

I don't know what this government has got in mind with their proposals to dress up some of those John Deere workers in tutus and send them down the road here in Toronto to the new ballet centre and have them dance in the Nutcracker Suite, but that's how nonsensical this whole proposal—"Oh, don't worry, we'll retrain you"—from this government is.

The economy is going to Hades in a handbasket. We're losing jobs hand over fist.

I was with the Premier this morning when he did his media availability. Like a deer in the headlights, the Pre-

mier said—I was there, and the press gallery heard him because they were interviewing him—"It's not about me; it's about the people of Ontario." No, Mr. Premier, it's all about you and your lack of leadership, your lack of policy development, your failure to protect Ontario jobs, and now your flight from Parliament, which is what a prorogation is all about and what this motion lays the groundwork for.

The Premier said to the press gallery with, I presume, a forced smile, because I'm sure he doesn't find this humorous, "Don't worry, next year is going to be a far better year." You know what, Speaker? This House is rising tomorrow. This Parliament may not resume for months, and it's not darn likely to be a far better year for workers in Ontario next year, as this government hides from its responsibilities and flees from its obligation to protect jobs, protect workers, protect their families, protect their kids, and to provide some relief for them in what are going to be, for a whole lot of folks, very, very difficult times.

I say to you that people should be very frightened of the message that this pre-prorogation motion sends. People should be very wary of a government that wants more than a two-month vacation this wintertime, and in the course of doing it will shut the doors to this legislative chamber and preserve for itself, I'm sure, the occasional photo op and media availability and announcement of something that's to come, because everything we've heard from these people so far has been stuff that's to come, and none of it's made-in-Ontario policy. Look, the government is contemplating proroguing, and this morning the Premier, once again—where has he been for the last three years? For years, the Premier of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty, has insisted that there wasn't a problem out there. We might have lost some jobs here and might have lost some jobs there, but we're a net creator of jobs—horsefeathers. Net creator of jobs? Horsefeathers, because we were losing good manufacturing jobs, unionized jobs, and resource sector jobs. When people were able to find work, it was minimum wage jobs, part-time jobs, temporary jobs.

We are in a crisis, and Mr. McGuinty appears to want Ontario's economic policy to be written in Washington, DC. Why, the economic development minister, Mr. Bryant, went down to Washington with his friend Tony Clement from Ottawa, and people weren't even answering the door when they came knocking. You get the image of Mr. Bryant, the Minister of Economic Development, standing there down in Washington, DC, trying to knock on the door of American political leaders, and they'd stare through the peephole, and then they'd run and turn the lights off and turn the TV down—you might have done that yourself from time to time—so that Mr. Bryant could keep knocking, thinking that maybe nobody was home. Nobody in Washington wanted to see him. Nobody in Washington wanted to talk to him.

Now, this morning Mr. McGuinty said that he's waiting for Washington. Let me tell you this, Speaker, please: If we rely on Washington to write the auto sector

stimulus package without writing our own independent auto sector stimulus package, and without developing a made-in-Ontario process, the United States will have all of our auto jobs, every single one of them. I don't want to see our children and grandchildren living in a Canada, living in an Ontario, that has been stripped of good jobs for which the high-wage economy is but a distant memory, and when social programs inevitably collapse. If working people, working folks, the working middle class aren't making decent wages, then nobody is paying taxes. If nobody is paying taxes, there are no social assistance programs, there's no public health care, there's no public safety. I, quite frankly, fear that this legislative gap that the Premier will create with his totally unjustifiable prorogation will be a huge time frame in which we may well see the restoration and the return of the Harris cutting policies. Do any of us want to suffer those again? Because the Harris cuts haven't been restored, and to cut more means to gut even further important public programs.

1640

The government has a majority. It's going to get this motion passed. Quite frankly, this motion isn't necessary for it to prorogue. What the motion does is preserve government bills in the event that the House does prorogue, because a prorogation, of course, means that all bills simply evaporate. They blow away like dust in the wind. But in the normal course of business—we're only about a year and a month or so since the election, a most unusual time for a prorogation, isn't it? A most unusual time in the midst of this economic crisis to not have this Parliament sitting and working and debating policies that just might save some jobs for a change—policies like Buy Ontario, something that Mr. Hampton and the NDP have been talking about for a long time; policies like an industrial hydro rate so that industry, heavy electricity users, will know with predictability what their electricity costs will be over a significant period of time; and when there's financial assistance to faltering industries, insisting that that assistance be accompanied by job guarantees. How many millions of dollars so far of taxpayers' money paid out by this government, cheque after cheque, with not a single job guarantee, resulted in yet more pink slips? You can bet your boots that down in Washington, DC, American political leadership is talking about the need for job guarantees, if and when they provide any financial assistance to faltering industries.

Let me say this: The failure of this government and now the impossibility of it to regulate those people just south of us here down in the financial district—why, there was a lobby group. You know we have lobby groups come in here from time to time. As a matter of fact, quite often they have little soirées in the evening, a couple of platters of cheese, some Ontario wine. There was a group of financial advisers, and I don't know what their organization was called but it was their lobby group. My colleague Paul Miller walked in there and said, "Good God, you guys should be wearing bags on your heads."

Do you know what's been happening out there? Ferd Slevar just died down in Welland. The "Mayor of Broadway" just passed away this week, a World War II veteran and hero in the RCAF and just a delightful man I've known all my life. Ferd Slevar operated a textile store for years. That's where women—my grandmother used to go there—bought textiles by the yard. She used to buy that striped ticking that you make the feather pillows with. That's what women in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s and long before that did. I know those people down in Welland South—a big Croatian community. They worked at Union Carbide; Union Carbide shut down. They worked at Atlas Steel; Atlas Steel was shut down. They worked hard, they worked dirty, they worked tough, they worked sick, and they saved money. They saved \$20,000, \$30,000. For a lot of those old-timers, making 80 cents and then \$1.20 and then \$1.50 and two bucks an hour, to save up \$20,000 or \$30,000 was pretty significant. It took a long time, but a whole lot of bankers and financial managers finally persuaded these people—some of them, not all of them, but far more of them than I wish—that the returns in a mutual fund would be far greater and would make them far more prosperous than the modest interest rates earned in a savings account. Do you know what's happened to those people's modest savings? They're gone. Disappeared.

You know, when I was a kid people used to worry about not living long enough. Now I talk to folks, seniors, in my constituency office, down at the Welland market, down at Canal Days, any number of places—the Wainfleet fair, wherever it is you want to go, which church basement, which Tim Hortons, which Legion Hall. When I was a kid, people worried about not living long enough. I'm talking to folks now who are worried about living too long, because they can't afford to stay alive. The "crisis"—oh, we treat it so clinically and so detached. The Freddie Macs, or whatever they are, of the world and the Enrons of the world and the thieving Conrad Blacks of the world—he's been convicted, sure and good; I only wish he were doing harder time—are the people who are in no small part the authors of the devastation that's being imposed upon folks who live down off Broadway Avenue in Welland South, hard-working folks.

The young families, the young ones like John Deere workers who worked overtime so they could put some money away into a mutual fund, into an RSP to supplement a pension, with fantasies of helping kids through college and university, fantasies of maybe spending a couple of weeks in the wintertime in a warm place when they retired at, oh, 58 or 59—first of all, there's no retirement in sight because there's no job to retire from. They got terminated. And again, those RSPs? All but worthless. "Oh, the market will rebound," the financial page writers say. Most of them are shills and hacks for the financial investment industry. The market will rebound, but it might just rebound at such a rate that a fellow maybe your age would have to live to be 140 before that money was ever recovered.

I have a great deal of difficulty—this is a sad, sad observation—that we in this chamber, 107 of us, are going to travel off to our ridings. I'll be here at Queen's Park throughout the weeks. I'm not sure I'll be here Christmas Day, but I'll be here a good chunk of that time. But others may be warming their toes in the tropical waters of the Caribbean while folks like where I come from are turning the furnace down yet a couple of more degrees to save a few more bucks on heating fuel, because they don't have any income. There's no paycheque, and you know what? They know that there's nothing left to be trained for.

These are desperate times, sad times, tragic times. We need political leadership that can and will rise to the occasion. Instead, we've got political leadership that revs up the engines, points the compass southbound and takes off on the first available airstrip. The prorogation that this motion facilitates—oh, it doesn't facilitate it; I have to tell you that. The government can prorogue with or without this motion. But the motion just makes life a little easier for the government, and I don't think that at this point in time anybody should be making life easier for this government. People should be demanding that this government fulfil responsibilities, that the voters call upon it to act when those voters—you don't need government when things are going well, do you?

Things aren't going well. Things are as tough as they've been for a long, long time. Things are as tough as

they've been since your grandparents' time, and I say, you don't need government to act on the economy when things are good; you need them to act when things are bad. Things are bad; real bad. And what does this government contemplate doing? Not just taking a two-month vacation, but extending that by Lord knows how many months more. Shame on Mr. McGuinty.

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

Ms. Smith has moved government motion B, a motion to carry over certain business of the House and its committees to the second session of the 39th Parliament in the event of the prorogation of the first session. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House is adjourned until 10:30 of the clock, Thursday, December 11.

The House adjourned at 1652.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
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Charles Sousa
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Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
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France Gélinas, Randy Hillier
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
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Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
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Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

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Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

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

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

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

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

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

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Second reading agreed to4625

**Able Insurance Brokers Ltd. Act, 2008, Bill Pr19,
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Road Safety Act, 2008, Bill 126, Mr. Bradley / Loi de 2008 sur la sécurité routière, projet de loi 126, M. Bradley

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