



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 1 April 2009**

**Mercredi 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREATER TORONTO  
AND HAMILTON AREA  
TRANSIT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2009  
LOI DE 2009 SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DU RÉSEAU DE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN  
DE LA RÉGION DU GRAND TORONTO  
ET DE HAMILTON

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 163, An Act to amend the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la Régie des transports du grand Toronto.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a real pleasure to be here this morning. I wish I had a couple of extra minutes before I get started, but anyway, Bill 163 is dealing with transit in Ontario, and I have a couple of questions that I want to raise on it. I'm looking through my notes first to see if I can find those questions. They seem to be rushing this bill, or at least they're rushing me on this bill. I'm wondering about that. I'm wondering why they're actually rushing the bill, because an important issue in public policy is to have a properly designed, properly consulted plan for an ambitious, integrated transit system in the province of Ontario.

I'm the new critic, and that's why I'm in a bit of a rush here, because this morning I've been asked to speak for as much time as I can justify, which is another issue, on a bill that our critic, Frank Klees, extensively—he responded to the minister on the date of introduction, which was March 30, and now we're at April 1. It's almost like April Fool's Day in terms of, why is this bill being rushed? We'll refer to some of the things that Mr. Klees said, because I should be clear now: Mr. Klees is a declared candidate in the leadership for the Conservative Party, and I wish him well. He's a very well researched, hard-working intelligent, capable, competent person, as am I.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm saying that because there are probably going to be four people who run, and those four people will probably be Tim Hudak, as announced, Randy Hillier, who's out travelling, and of course, more recently, Frank Klees.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This ties into the bill, Mr. Levac. It does tie into the bill.

I'm hoping that Durham has a voice, because the transit system in Durham, the infrastructure there is very fragile and it needs to be improved. That's how this ties in, and we need a strong voice. I had been asked to run for leader, but because I'm over 65, some people think I should retire.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** No.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, that's a good idea. So I've refused to retire, but I am going to support that we need a strong voice for Durham, and that could easily be Wayne Arthurs, for that matter, because he's quite a good member, but he's in the wrong party. But I would say it could be Christine Elliott or Jerry Ouellette. We're going to wait on the decision on that.

But all humour aside, this is an important bill, and I think it's important for a couple of reasons. I did, in the brief time I had yesterday to respond in a couple of minutes, outline a couple of things. Essentially, it does two things. The first thing it does is change absolutely and completely the governance of Metrolinx or the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. The governance prior to that was, I believe, 11 members. I believe there was a representative from each of the regional municipalities of York, Durham, Halton and Peel. That's four members, and I believe Hamilton had a representative there; I'm not sure how that worked. But the city of Toronto I believe had five members, which would be sort of like David Miller and Adam Giambone and the big shooters there. Then the chair and the vice-chair were appointed by order in council, by Minister Bradley. Obviously representatives on behalf of the Minister of Transportation and the ministry and the McGuinty government, they were given their marching orders and they went to the board meetings and basically did what the minister wanted, I'm pretty sure.

Rob MacIsaac was the full-time chair and I think worked pretty hard. In fact, I met with him quite a few times when I was critic. They had done a couple of consultation papers. I'll refer to those papers once I get all my notes. I've had a bit of a short time getting prepared here, but I have read the report. We get a lot of reports here, as all members do, and these reports are often an

interesting read on the weekend as you're visiting with friends. This report here is called *The Big Move*. This is a big report, and it's the last report by Metrolinx under the direction of Rob MacIsaac. Rob MacIsaac has not moved on; he's not operating in a full-time capacity now. I think he's the new president of Conestoga College, or one of the colleges, I believe.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mohawk College.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mohawk. Pardon me. Mr. Arnott can tell me all these things. He's actually from Wellington-Halton Hills. Thanks for that.

The work he did here and in this report—this is quite an ambitious report. The report was recent, November 2008—at least just before December 2008. So it's a very current report. In fact it's the big plan for transit. I had some problems with it. The plan has been in the works for some time. The plan was to build 1,200 kilometres of rapid transit, more than triple what exists now, so that over 80% of the residents in the region will live within two kilometres of rapid transit, and with an emphasis on areas with large populations of seniors and low-income individuals that rely on transit to get around daily. Good for the environment, good for the citizenry. Who's got a problem with that? I just want to say this for sure: There is a plan to the extent that MacIsaac and the Metrolinx group have worked on it, and they worked on it. Respectfully, this is the deal: The representatives I described, whether it's Bill Fisch from York region or Gary Carr from Halton or Joyce Savoline, who used to be the chair, so she was probably on it for a while—she's a member here now and a very strong member—or Roger Anderson from the region of Durham, along with the David Miller and the other people—Mr. Smith was on GO Transit and I think he was on there as well—did a lot of work.

**0910**

"The Big Move is about values" as much about the environment as it is about having a transit plan. They worked "with over 100 priority actions and supporting policies. It moves the yardsticks in a wide range of transportation areas. Benefits will be widespread. It will help people get to the places they need to go more quickly, allowing them to spend more time on what is really important. Average commute times will decrease." This would be good, because I commute from Durham region, generally on a daily basis. It's about an hour and 10 minutes. That's once you're on the train and once you get off the train, and then you have to take the subway from Union Station up to here. I generally walk. This morning I'm actually quite heated up because of this speech, of course, but more importantly, because it's a long walk and I had a topcoat on, and it's a little bit warm.

But transit affects all our lives. We would not want to be perceived as opposed. This is the key message on behalf of our leader, Bob Runciman, and other leaders who may emerge in the next few months.

"More residents will be able to access jobs that were once inconvenient to reach by transit, while integrated fares and leading edge information systems"—here's the real crux of the problem. We've just started to get into

the detail here. Why did they do this? What is the rush? This remains as a prevailing question, the motive; always look to the motive. Here's my feeling of it: They've tried relentlessly, in open meetings and in closed meetings under Metrolinx, working with the power brokers at the time, and they have been unable to come up with the smart card. Now, the smart card is what this is all about. This may not seem very important to the members here, who aren't all listening—I think it's disappointing that they are not listening—but they can get a copy of Hansard, so that reassures me. The smart card will allow them to do the administration functions which I'll describe briefly here.

When you get on the GO train—and the young people, the pages, are all listening attentively, and they'll likely use transit more reliably and predictably than people from my generation because it's the new way of getting around. I commend you for that. When you get on the train or the bus now, whatever it is, you either present a ticket or a token of some sort. GO Transit has its own system and you usually buy a one-way ticket, a two-way ticket, a weekly pass or a monthly pass. I think a 10-trip ticket is about \$90. Not round trips; that would be five trips in and five trips out. That's basically what I buy each week. It's very important. This part here may be boring but it's important: If I have to get off GO Transit and get onto Durham transit or onto the TTC, I need another ticket—or another person making \$100,000 a year, according to the \$100,000 list this morning—to get a ticket. Do you understand?

What the smart card would do is it would be very much like a credit card. They have them in England. I have a daughter who lives in London, England, and they use the train all the time there. I see the Minister of Transportation is here; I'm very pleased about that. I'm happy he's here because he's actually a fairly decent minister and I know he's working and pushing forward; I question why he's in such a rush here, though. But I'm going to get back on track.

That card is the whole issue here, because now if you have people wanting a seamless transit system from Halton to Durham, and all of the kilometres of rail and bus links in between all have to be paid for and the bus drivers need to be paid, the money has to flow with the people who are using the system. To do that with tickets and transfers and all that stuff is just a bunch of clerks in an office fooling around with paperwork. It's completely redundant, not doable. You'd spend more money trying to transfer the money between the different transit authorities than you'd actually be making.

That's what this whole bill is about, and I would ask the minister to confirm or deny, but that's the barrier. TTC—Toronto Transit or Giambrone—they want to lead the pack. They have the largest transit system in Canada, I understand that, but they have to be part of the solution as well. While at the same time respecting their existing and current infrastructure, they've to get off their duff and start to implement a smart card.

The smart card could be something as simple as like inside a BlackBerry or technology—and you kids will get

this—inside these are what they call a SIM card. A SIM could be used, and is today in some transit systems; you just walk through the stile and it automatically bills you. It's like the 407 highway. You have a transponder and it actually bills you; that's how it's done. It's technology. It's not somebody sitting at a wicket taking tickets—that's finished. When you look at the operating costs, the biggest problem with transit is operating costs. With all due respect, GO Transit operates probably more efficiently than almost any transit system that I've heard of. I think about 80% of the revenue comes from the fare box, which is very good; it's very high. And Vancouver's quite good, but it's not as high as GO Transit. Those jurisdictions I think are what we need to look at and work with. There are systems today in Britain—I talked about London earlier. They have a card that's called the Oyster card. You just pay ahead of time and it just reduces how much is on your card. It's like a cellphone call card. You put in the card and it's been preloaded with so much value. They've got to move on with the system of dealing with the billing and transfer of revenue from the transit system on an integrated transit system.

We're supportive of the objective. We're probably supportive of the new governance model. I say "probably" because I'm going to raise my first concern. Mr. Watson's not here, but Mr. Bradley is. I'm not pointing it out to be mean, but I'm saying that first notice is this: There is a legislative requirement to consult with the municipalities. I'm wondering, was the memorandum of understanding, the MOU, exercised in this regard? Everything I read in the media is that David Miller and those people were taken aback. They were quite surprised that there was no consultation. This is a bit of a storm cloud approaching here on the horizon. It's not a good thing when you start ramming things down people's throat.

With the memorandum of understanding there's no representation on this new board. If you read this report, the Big Move, and I have read it—I was the critic, as I said, so I do like to read things like this that are boring. The reason I say that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, you should try to keep up. I know the minister has been briefed on it several times, so he could probably help me here today. It's not likely he will but he could. Because this is the big plan right here. It's been worked out by the board and they were members of the board. I think they agreed on a vision here.

This is the second part; it has a lot to do with the fare card. How are we going to pay for it? I think right now there has been money moved out under this, not directly under the current plan, but Ontario Move 2020 committed \$11.5 billion to begin the implementation of the Big Move and to get shovels in the ground. Often this money is federal, provincial and municipal money. But this plan here is \$50 billion. It calls for a commitment of \$5 billion a year, I believe—the minister can shake his head yes or no—for the next 10 years. That's kind of what they asked for—something in that range, anyway. So it's a fairly large commitment.

Here's the other part: I'm not happy when governments of whatever stripe are in the cabinet signing the paper with the gold pen there. That's very important, these cabinet minutes where they commit to doing these things in law, and the big seal and all those things are used. Here is the key: I want this to be sure to have government input or intervention—not to stop it but right now here is the key: We're going into a bit of a slow-down in the economy; that might be an understatement, but I'd like to understate it a bit. The economy isn't in its best condition right now. If the government has to make choices between the poverty agenda or persons in long-term care and in need of more support—our seniors, our vulnerable—or high municipal taxes, the province has to have the flexibility, at the end of the day, to intervene, make decisions and either support or change its priorities.

**0920**

I think there will be general agreement—I'm looking at Mr. Sterling, the most senior member here, and Mr. Bradley, and I would say they've been through times where it's tough and you've got to go in; governments make difficult decisions in difficult times. We see Barack Obama making tough decisions about how much he is going to spend. Those aren't always good decisions too. Governments have to sometimes say no to certain commitments.

We saw Premier McGuinty say that the other day. He sort of had a commitment that he was going to do the minimum wage thing, and then he started to—I give him credit for having a compassionate nature and thinking about the poor taxpayer paying for this thing. He said, "You know, I might not do that." But he was quickly whipped into shape. I think Dwight Duncan just about had a heart attack when he said it. Here he was, out pushing the budget, and he's waffling on major principles; he's flip-flopping or whatever they say. I say it in positive terms: I think he was struck by the circumstance of the economy going downhill and him being responsible.

This public policy on minimum wage: Let's think about that for a minute. The government makes these rules and it doesn't cost them a nickel. They sound like they're the heroes. It's the little variety store guy or woman who's paying it, not the government. They make the law; they don't spend the money, but they look like the hero. It's ridiculous. The little guy in the variety store, the family next to where my constituency office is—I often think of Paul and his wife, and they have a son. They work seven days a week; they have no one else but the family to run the store. It's tragic. Talk about employment standards and minimum wage. They'd be lucky to get a wage.

They're forcing them to pay. If they hired someone, what's going to happen? I've been told this by some of the leaders in my community who own the McDonalds and the Tim Hortons. They're the people on the hospital boards and the community living boards; they're the people who are community builders. Don't ever kid yourself: These are the people who are ponying up the money for the new hospital, park or recreation centre. You know that yourself, Mr. Speaker; you've been doing this for a

long time—some would say too long, but that’s another issue; that’s me I’m talking about.

The issue here is that the minimum wage is an example. How the minimum wage and the poverty agenda tie in is this: We are now transforming transit; we see on St. Clair and other streets in Toronto where the streets are being allocated to transit. I think the best way to encourage people to use transit is to not work on improving gridlock. People won’t have any choice; they’re going to be stuck in traffic so they’ll eventually say, “Reluctantly, I’ll get on that train or bus or subway” or whatever it is. That’s what they’re doing; they’re basically making it so that you can’t get around. We’ve heard that in Toronto.

We now have bike lanes on Wellesley. It’s quite interesting coming come across Wellesley. It used to be two lanes in each direction, roughly, or portions of it. Often they’d have no parking in rush times so that there would be two lanes of traffic. Now they’ve got the bike lane. It was quite interesting during the winter. The bike lanes were full of snow. I don’t think there are going to be many people riding bikes. I don’t think young professional women or young professional men with \$800 Boss suits on are going to be riding their bikes. I think it’s a good idea, maybe, in California. Ride your bike if possible; get chains for it or whatever. Now Wellesley is so congested because of the bike lanes—there’s nobody in them, by the way; not this morning, because it’s raining, or icy or snowing. You might be able to ride a bike probably half of the year. But you’ve got to have reliable transit too. I think what they’re doing is making it so congested that you’re going to have to take the bus.

If we follow the model of large cities—one of them is London; I’ve been there quite a bit, because I have a daughter who lives there and teaches high school there. They have a congestion charge. If you’re coming in from Kent—they live in Sevenoaks, which is outside London, and they take the train. But they have driven in, because when they pick people up at the airport and stuff like that, they drive, and they pay a congestion charge. It sort of operates like the 407. As soon as you go in the city—you get a bill the next morning. I think it’s about £20; £20 is like \$40. It’s expensive, so you don’t take your car unless you really have to.

That’s what is going to happen here, I think. The minister would be very courageous if he does it, because if they implement that, that would be like implementing the HST. There will be a lot of people against it, even though it’s a good idea.

Do you understand? When you do these difficult things—this is when you have to admire leadership that makes difficult decisions, because that’s basically why you’re elected. Anyone can say yes. Hey, you could send some of the pages in to do that. To say no is the job; that’s the job. I’ve learned, after 25 years of being elected, that it’s a difficult decision, which relates back to this: This is the plan—I refer it to people here—it’s called The Big Move. It’s a big report, and it’s called The Big Move. That report lays out a framework and a network of transit links.

How does it relate to John O’Toole and the riding of Durham? This is really where I want to get to the point. I am just amazed that there’s nothing in here for us. We’re 600,000 people in Durham. There are big parking lots. I’ve got a plan here. I’ve met with Smith and MacIsaac and I’ve told them, I’ve told the chair of the region of Durham, and now I’m telling the minister: I support the plan and I want to be part of it in a completely non-partisan way. Extend the GO train to Cobourg on the south side of the 401. And all the nodes—this isn’t stuff I’m making up. This is the way it works. I took geography in university, and the course I took was urban geography and urban planning. Transit only works when you have density. You have to have density; you have to have people on and off the buses, and density. Europe was developed—the theory was called the central place theory. It’s called the Christaller central place theory; that’s the academic quote for the book, and that’s what it is called. It’s built in concentric circles, with dense living.

There is the Places to Grow document, which is a good document by the government. It started under our government, of course, under the ministry. The ministry people lead all this stuff, anyway. Who are we kidding? We just get in the way every four years. Here’s the deal, though. The Places to Grow document talks about—the term they use is “intensification,” which is code language for “everybody living in a condo.” That’s what it really means. Individual homes, single residences—all finished. The future is that everybody is going to be living in stacks, in piles, called condos. And transit works good then.

Am I being humorous? No. If you look at the world today, the globe itself, the physical globe—this is all related. The physical globe is this size, and it’s not changing. Okay? Well, it is changing, because we’re polluting it, destroying it, defacing it, mining it. It’s really only this big, but the population is growing, so there’s less land and more people. The population in China, I think, is 1.5 billion people. One in every five people is from China or is Chinese. So it’s getting bigger, and the deserts are expanding and things like that, so there’s going to be more people on less land. How are we going to accommodate them for food and water, clean air and quality of life? They’re all going to live in condos, basically. Yes, they’re all going to live in stacks. I’m over 65, so it won’t be me, but it will be you. How do we deal with this? You’re going to have to have a transit system. It doesn’t matter what party you belong to.

The population in my riding of Durham currently is about 600,000 people. Let’s put that into relative context here. Newfoundland and Labrador is a beautiful province. You see their advertisements on television now: “Visit Newfoundland and Labrador.” Newfoundland and Labrador is about 525,000 people. Nova Scotia is a nice, beautiful province. Peggy’s Cove and all that stuff is very nice. It’s just under 600,000. So they’re all smaller than Durham.

#### 0930

Now, let’s put this thing into context, into a relative term that we can understand here. The region of Durham

is left out of this plan, basically. We have GO Transit that operates at peak times, that is, morning and evening, and then it runs every hour. In peak times, it runs about every 15 to 20 minutes; in off times, it's every hour or hour and 10 minutes. So if I miss the train, I'm sitting there for an hour. I could be home in an hour and 10 minutes. In non-peak time, my commute time is about an hour and 15 minutes or an hour and 20 minutes, to be fair, each way. That's a long commute, and I commute daily. Some of you probably commute to come here, but I've been doing this for 13 years now. It seems like 100 years.

The issue I'm trying to raise is the plan here is very expensive. If everything goes according to plan, there are going to be more people. Our region is 600,000, as I said. It's forecast, in the 30-year plan, I think, to be just short of a million people. In Toronto or the GTA, where we are, I think it's three and a half million; it's supposed to go to five million people. So there are going to be twice as many people, basically, in the same space. We're going to have to learn how to share the space, whether it's our streets, our parks, our schools or our infrastructure, i.e., transit. That's very important.

To get this thing to work, the minister has taken the courageous move of saying, "I'm going to take control here." That's basically what he's doing. In fact, he's ramming this thing through. He had the leadoff speech the other day and the response from the opposition today, then it will be all done. They'll have this done before we know it. I hope it's going to hearings. I'm looking for a signal from the ministry. Are there going to be public hearings on this, Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It's up to the House leaders.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, the House leaders will decide, I'm sure, but we would hope there would be hearings, because there's always some administrivia that's been overlooked in the drafting of the bill.

I think I've made the point that the key thing here is the governance, which we're supportive of—if you're given the authority, take the responsibility as well.

The other thing is the funding. Now the funding isn't as clear, but there are changes here. This is where you get into the Corporations Act and the other things. If the money flows through non-elected people—these are people who are government appointees. Let's face it, Robert Prichard—he's the former president of the University of Toronto, an impeccable person, not to be criticized in any way, but he's a Liberal; there's no question about it.

**Hon. David Caplan:** What about Roger Anderson?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Roger Anderson is now upset, I'm sure. He's not on the board anymore.

**Hon. David Caplan:** He's not elected.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Caplan points out that the chair of Durham region isn't elected. That has come up from time to time in my region, but let's leave it alone today.

The other point is, though, that there are issues in this bill that I think need to go to committee to be heard. I'm going to go through a few of them here. I said the new board is going to be 15 members, all appointed by

Minister Bradley, and he's specifically going to designate a couple of people. The first chair I believe is going to be Robert Prichard, former president of the University of Toronto, editor and chief of staff at the Toronto Star. I think he got \$1 million or \$2 million to leave that job, which is good.

I look at the \$100,000 list. Holy smokes, some of the public sector—it's just unbelievable. Imagine that: making \$2 million a year. What, are they baseball players, or what is it? I don't get it. I don't think any of us on either side get it. Hockey players I can see, because if they quit scoring goals, they're out of a job the next year; they don't get appointed to some board. That's what happens to most of the deputy ministers when they finish here—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Send them to the Senate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Senate would be good, too, for anyone who had done the appropriate amount of work to be entitled to the job.

Now there are going to be 15 people on the board. Here's the key: This is absolute power and control here by the minister. It's very specific, tightly worded. I guess they want to take control of Metrolinx. It says, "Under the current act, the chair and vice-chair of the corporation's board of directors are designated by the Minister of Transportation and the corporation's chief executive officer is appointed by the corporation." Rob MacIsaac is the chair, so there you go. He's a great fellow too. "The bill provides that the chair and vice-chair are designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the Minister of Transportation's recommendation." So Minister Bradley interviews a few people, perhaps over lunch or whatever, and eventually they're appointed. They usually go through a pretty serious vetting process.

These are usually outstanding people; there's no question about it. They just have made the wrong choice about which party they support; that's the only problem I have. But in all honesty, they have to appoint competent people. They want to get this right. They want people they can trust and who are competent, so it's the two requirements. "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may redesignate or reappoint the same people when making its first designations of chair...."; in other words, they can be reappointed as well. I read in the media that the new chair, Robert, is going to only be there for a year or so.

"Under the current act, the corporation is divided into divisions...." This is interesting. We're right down into the micro-level issues here in the bill. "The structure of the corporation is amended so that it is no longer required to be divided into divisions." That's probably a good idea for coordination. They have the plan and they've had the technical, the legal, administration and all these different divisions. Now they've got the big plan and they've got to get to work implementing this plan: "The powers and duties allocated to the various divisions in the current act now fall to the corporation as a whole."

Here's another part. This may not seem important, but it's in here for a reason. "The corporation's first stated object, in clause 5(1)(a) of the current act, is to provide leadership in the co-ordination, planning, financing and

development of an integrated” model. This has been done. It’s the report called *The Big Move*. “This is amended”—this is what’s happening—“to say that the corporation is also to provide leadership in the implementation of the transportation network. Another amendment to clause 5(1)(a) is the added requirement that the transportation network support a high quality of life, a sustainable environment and a strong, prosperous and competitive economy.” On the last one, the “strong, prosperous and competitive economy”—I think they’re failing on that one. It might be a bit too early to talk about it, but hey, on the rest, they’re probably doing fairly good.

“The corporation’s third stated object, in the unproclaimed clause 5(1)(c) of the current act, is to be responsible for the operation of the GO Transit system and the provision of other transit services”—this is the key. They’re going to integrate GO with Metrolinx. I agree 100%. It should have been done from the beginning. In fact, if I look back to when they implemented this—and I believe Minister Bradley was there. I was the critic and I said to them, “The governance is all screwed up and there’s no money.” Now they’ve got the governance fixed. So how can we disagree with it? He probably listened to our critical comments; I would hope that he did, or the ministry people.

“This is enacted again, with changes; the corporation is now to be responsible for the operation of the regional transit system.” My concern is the transit systems in the region, whether it’s Peel—Hazel McCallion wants something to say. That’s her system. Or York, Bill Fisch—that’s their system. Viva’s got a very good system. In fact, they’ve got federal money, municipal money, provincial money in it, and it’s touted as one of the more progressive systems. I’m not qualified to comment, other than what I read.

And the same in Durham. They’re working tirelessly to integrate their system within Durham. At one time, there was a different transit system in Ajax, in Pickering, in Whitby, in Oshawa. Clarington never really had one, nor did Brock, nor did Scugog or Uxbridge, but it was integrated to the extent that GO Transit played sort of a spinal role, if you will. Now they’re trying to work in coordination of schedules and stuff like that so they have one transit instead of four or five, and there’s been some bloodletting over those integrations within the regions.

But they’re going to take over the whole thing and they have no representation on the board? I don’t know about this. The only way they’re going to be able to get their attention is to wave the cheque in front of them. If they wave that cheque, they’ll start saying, “Yeah, we go along with you. Give me the cheque.” They’ll be chasing Minister Bradley down the street for the money, and I have no doubt that he will have them chase him.

But here’s the other thing, the system and prescribed passenger transportation systems in the regional transportation area. It says right here, “to make regulations prescribing passenger transportation systems, whether proposed or existing, for the purpose of this definition, and also specifying that all the assets of a prescribed sys-

tem be owned by the corporation”—whoa. We’re talking about Durham transit buses or York Viva going to be named Metrolinx? That’s symbolic. But if those assets then become—they’ve just expropriated all those assets from those regional transit systems.

The big problem with transit, as I tried to point out earlier, isn’t so much the capital; it’s the operating. That’s the problem. I’m serious. Transit is a big money-sucker for operating. If you operate a bus seven days a week, 24 hours a day, it takes five people.

#### 0940

We saw on the \$100,000 list that there are a lot of people in the TTC making \$100,000. I don’t have my clippings, but I’m sure one of my supportive members in the caucus will give me them. I could pull them out and read them, but I left them with my staff, I guess. All I’m saying is there were about 200 or 300 people who make that kind of money in the transit system. Do you have your clippings, Julia? You don’t? You should get them.

I am not trying to be hard on them. It’s just very prohibitive when you don’t have the density or ridership to provide transit. It sounds good, it feels good, but it isn’t good. Do you understand? Toronto, you should have it more of it; that’s good. London, Hamilton, Toronto, portions of eastern GTA and the western—Halton—there’s an area similar to Durham in terms of density. Ottawa should have good transit. Centres that have population should have good transit systems, and that takes money.

This whole idea of who is going to own the assets and the liabilities becomes important. It becomes very important implementing this to have a smart card. Whatever the name of that card, there has to be a card to do the administrative background transferring of money to support the operating systems. That’s critical, and I am supportive of that being the first agenda item that they move forward with, saying, “Adam Giambrone, step aside. Here is the card we’re using.” They have experts. I met with them, and as I said, the SIM card solution or other solutions are absolutely critical.

I’m going to add one more. This is my second observation for an amendment. I had a private member’s bill. The idea was given to me by people from my riding of Durham. I met these people on the GO train, and they said, “Oh, you’re John O’Toole. You take the GO train?” I said, “Yeah, I’m no different than you. I’m going to work today, every day, like you, and I take the train when necessary.” They got talking a second or third time. Pretty soon it became almost a regular event, and they would ask, “Where were you yesterday?”

Anyway, they said to me one day, “Do you know what it costs?” It was a husband and wife, a nice young couple, too. They said to me, “It costs us about \$10,000 a year to take transit.” I said, “That’s unbelievable.” They said, “Well, it’s \$100 a week.” I started to figure it out. It’s \$100 a week; that’s significant coin. Two of them, there’s 52 weeks; we’ll give them a couple of weeks off. That’s \$5,000 each. It’s more than \$5,000. I just started thinking about it. Think of this pressure: \$5,000 each? That’s



\$10,000. You've got to make \$20,000 in your pay to put that much in your pocket with taxes, because 50% of what you earn is taxed.

So I introduced a bill that would give you a tax credit for expenses for the purpose of public transit. I throw this on the table today to Minister Bradley: Put a little sugar in the café latte here. Put a little sweetener in it. If you want to move riders onto transit—and you know something? TTC now gives you a refundable tax credit when you use a TTC pass, a weekly or monthly pass. I believe when they implement this card, Mr. Bradley—and I'll be the first one to shake your hand and pat you on the back if I'm here, because this would get riders out of the cars. Imagine \$5,000 a year from people coming from Hamilton or Halton or Peel or Durham, and all these young families that have student debt and all this stuff. As an idea that I'm putting out, give them a transit tax credit now.

I introduced the bill, but it isn't my idea. Our job is primarily to listen to people. Now, I submitted this. I gave that bill to every province in the country, and I gave it to the federal government too, because they have a ministry. It was Lawrence Cannon who was the Minister of Transport at the time, and I gave it to him. I was at an event where Lawrence Cannon was. I knew he was there. I like lobbying even though it's not part of my job. I gave him the bill and said, "Look, why don't you just run with this federally?" They did. The federal government implemented the bill. That is a true story. It'll be written in Hansard tomorrow, and you can take it to the bank.

I'm asking the minister to use the idea. Look, none of us have the corner on good ideas, not the Conservatives—we have most of them, but not all of them—nor the Liberals. We all have good ideas, the people here. Even Howard Hampton had good ideas, I think. When he was the leader, I was always impressed. And I would say even Floyd Laughren; he was a great guy. But on this bill that we're talking about—there's so little time to talk on such a large report. This bill here and the money part of it is very important, and that smart card and the functions of the funding, the operating budget, are very critical. I'm hoping that the minister goes through with it.

Now, Mr. Klees did say that we would very probably be supporting the bill. I'm putting in a proviso that I need to have a briefing, which I'm getting this afternoon or this morning on the bill. It's too bad I didn't have it before I spoke on it; there would have been a little bit more content in the debate this morning. But what I am going to do is bring up a couple of the ideas there, because I did listen yesterday when they had the member from Brampton–Springdale. She's here this morning. She spoke. She's the parliamentary assistant, and I'm sure that she has listened—in fact, I noticed her writing down some of the ideas I was putting on the table here. The member from London–Fanshawe and the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Colle, spoke yesterday as well, so I do listen to their comments.

But there's one other thing I want to put on the table here that's a little troubling. I am not a lawyer, so I'm not

qualified to interpret it and to understand—the bill we're talking about, when it refers to another piece of legislation, a statute that it's amending, you really can't understand from reading this bill until you look at the current bill it's amending. That's a long way of saying it. This one here is the portion dealing with the development charges.

Now, the development charges are, indirectly, a tax on a house. They're a one-time tax. The development charges, I think, are about \$300 or \$400 per household for transit in Durham. That development charge is a levy—we used to call them lot levees, but they're called development charges now—developed to fund capital, primarily. They can't fund operating but they can fund capital. I'm not sure if there's anything in this bill—it says here, "Clause 42(2)(c) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"(c) prescribing a date for the purpose of clause 30.1(2)(b);

"(d) prescribing a date after which no amount is payable in respect of GO Transit under a development charge bylaw referred to in section 30.1, and may prescribe different dates for different municipalities;

"(e) resolving conflicts between the provisions of a transportation planning policy statement issued by the minister and other provincial plans and policies, including determining which provisions of a transportation planning policy statement or other provincial plan or policy prevail." And it says something here about the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Transit Implementation Act, 2009.

They used to pool funding from the GTA for transit, and I think that has been resolved; they don't pool it anymore, which would then allow them to subsidize Toronto's TTC. The TTC could be subsidized, because some of the people like me, coming in from Durham or York or Hamilton or whatever, get on the TTC, and the TTC is being used by people outside the region, so that's how the money is transferred. I'm interested in that part of how the development charges are going to be changed, how the money's going to flow.

Having non-elected people on the board with this much power to spend \$50 billion, I would hope the minister has some way of an exit strategy—although they're his people. They will be appointed by him and they'll only be doing what he wants, I would hope.

The other thing is that these meetings—it's my understanding today that the meetings of Metrolinx are open meetings. It's very important for stakeholders—transit, urban planners etc.—to stay up to date on what is going on. But under this Bill 163, there's a suggestion that they are going to be closed meetings. How are these regional transit authorities ever going to learn about the goings-on in Metrolinx and where these new routes or plans are? I'd like to see this changed. I am not big on this closed meeting.

#### 0950

Here's the issue: When Greg Sorbara announced the York-Spadina extension to the university, that had been

talked about for some time by Lorna Marsden, who was the president. It had been talked about back then; she's not the president anymore. That land would go up in value like that. As soon as you have transit, the condos and commercial properties around the transit, especially where there's going to be a station, would go through the roof. So some of this stuff with property and the implications with that should be in private; I understand that. But the timing and circumstance should certainly be in the open.

I am putting on the record number 3. To the member from Brampton–Springdale: There should be another amendment here mandating that the meetings be open. That would be the third kind of amendment that I think should be brought forward.

Governance: no problem. I'd like a provision where the minister can directly report to the Legislature when he's going to make major expenditures, like \$5 billion a year—wait a minute here. Rural Ontario is part of Ontario and there's no money from the provincial government for rural transit. Transit in rural Ontario is called roads and bridges, not buses. I want a level playing field here. I really do. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke says that 50 times a year, almost to the point where you wish he would stop talking, but the issue here—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** So when are you going to stop talking?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, whatever. But I think that what we're trying to say here on our side is that this—Metrolinx, the \$50 billion—is all good stuff for density and trying to accommodate new Canadians, young people, universities and all these things, but rural Ontario, which is the forestry, the mining, the pulp and paper, the hard work, the wealth generators of this province, doesn't have transit. They want roads and bridges that are safe. We're putting that on the table too. Let's not ignore the way Ontario was built as a strong, terrific, prosperous province. Not everybody wants to live in a condo in Toronto. I don't. That's why I commute every day. It's a beautiful city if you like the opera, but I would sooner cut the grass.

I refer to this report several times, and I think members here should get a copy of it. Stay tuned, because this is the playbook; this is the background for Bill 163. The bill itself is not that big and it's fairly technical. There are a lot of references to the Corporations Act, the Development Charges Act and the Municipal Act.

One of the other concerns I raised very early on: I'm concerned because they signed a memorandum of understanding, sort of like a United Nations accord thing, with all the municipalities in Ontario—with AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. They signed a memorandum. What was that? That they would consult with them. I'm not sure that a lot of consulting went on. This came as a big surprise.

Now I'm—"suspicious" is too strong a word; "surprised" is a much more accommodating word—surprised

at the rush. I'm very concerned about the rush part of it, because if they're going to take over these municipal and regional transit systems by a new name, when all the taxpayers in those communities of Bowmanville or Oshawa or—not Mississauga; it should be called Hazelville—I would be very surprised if they expropriate it by the bill. I do not know that's happening, but there are things in here that lead me to believe that they're going to say, "You either co-operate with us when we wave the cheque or you don't get the cheque." This is going to do that, and they'll get the transit system working. They'll start chasing the Minister of Transportation. Whenever he does an announcement, they'll be there with their hands out.

There is a lot in this bill and, as I said, I probably spoke longer than necessary, but that won't be the first time I did that. I would only say that when you have Hazel McCallion approving it, it's probably been vetted. The consultation probably occurred at a very high level with people that they could trust. Robert Pritchard is an intelligent man and a former president of my alma mater, the University of Toronto. I would say that Rob MacIsaac—I've met with him several times—is a very, very capable guy. I'm fortunate to have known him; he's that capable. He's a former mayor and a very highly regarded fellow. Peter Smith, as well, with GO Transit, is very capable. He's run an operation that is the best in Canada in terms of how much revenue they get from the fare box.

I think the consultations—they came to a decision that they had to move forward, and that's an appropriate name for the report: The Big Move. So in Bill 163 I am proposing number 5 amendment. It should be called the Big Move. Let's get on with it. Bill 163 is called An Act to amend the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act. This morning, let's just rename it to the Big Move, because they're going to be taking a lot of money: \$50 billion. It's a scary amount of money.

Here we are in the middle of a recession. We're implementing a whole new tax; it's called the harmonized tax. That tax actually takes 8% out of everybody's pocket. That's basically what it does. You can start with the exceptions, the houses under—it takes 8% out of your pocket when you die. The funeral, the headstone, the pallbearers, all these various things you pay for—8%. You pay your bills, you get gas for your car, put heat in your home.

I'm wondering, if when you buy a transit pass it's going to have this HST on it. "Oh no, they've just increased the price of transit. I never even thought of that. I'm going to have to start"—that's terrible. Transit has just gone up 8% as of this morning, or when this bill passes. It's disgusting, really, when you think of it. At a time when the economy is going one way, their spending is going the other way. It's simple economics. It doesn't work. It's called a deficit and they're into an operating—what I call a structural deficit now. This bill and how good it is—and it's a reasonably good plan done by MacIsaac and Smith and all those people. We have no money. Why don't we have any money? We have poor tax

policy. Everybody is running away. And it's not just Premier McGuinty's fault, either. I want to be on the record clearly here today that he's trying his best, but he should have saved a little bit for the rainy day. They have had huge—they have increased spending by some 60%.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It's because you asked us every day to do it.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I know, but it's the unwise choices you make. This isn't a time—and the minister is right. Wise choices—they are telling us that \$50 billion is in this bill. That's a wise choice? I put it to the people of Ontario: Let's put it on a ballot. Let's find out if \$50 billion is a good idea.

I think helping seniors and people in long-term care who built this country—that's my first vote. Let's not put them in the poorhouse. Let's make sure that people with special needs—we have Community Living here today—are taken care of.

These grand, wonderful plans—and I see them in London and I see them in Paris and I see them in other countries. We can learn from their mistakes. They've got this huge infrastructure to support, and this is what this amounts to. Once you build it, you've got the ongoing cost of it all. It's not one-time. The operating budget on that kind of system would become the largest single expenditure in the province. It would cost more to operate a transit system than all the hospitals. That's a fact. Remember, for every bus that runs seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year—or maybe take Christmas and New Year's off—it takes at least five people. Each of those people should be paid and trained appropriately, with uniforms that get cleaned and all that stuff. They should probably make \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. That, times five, is \$3 million per bus per year. How many people on that, how much per day?

I put to you that this strategy needs a fuller hearing. It's fine for the experts here, these urban planners, the Christaller central place people, telling us what to do. Of course, they like transit; that's their livelihood. That's where they make all their money and their training and knowledge etc. But I think there are other ideas in transit. I think light rail is more important than subway. I also think that smaller footprints in transit are important. Why have these big 60-some passenger buses in areas where there aren't 60 people living in this small community? They should have smaller buses.

**1000**

Why not give people who commute with more than one person in the car a tax break? Why not? Say you live in Uxbridge and you want to get down to Bay Street and you could prove, demonstrate—audited—that you are carpooling. I think they should be getting support, rather than a great big bus running around with nobody in it. So there are some ideas from the people whom I hear from in my riding, and I'm sure other members do as well, which could easily solve some, but not all, of this problem.

Bigger footprints like Toronto, Hamilton, London, Ottawa—big cities, big buses; small cities, small buses. I

put to you, in my town—in fact, I've said it to the mayor—we have about 80,000 people in my community. It's very spread out. It's quite large. It's called Clarington. It's made up of many smaller communities within the municipal area called Clarington. For the amount of people using the buses, they could actually give them a series of taxi chits. You could get the taxi chits for—let's say it would be \$10 for four tickets. Those would allow you a trip within the town's borders. Subsidize it municipally, rather than having a bus with nobody in it driving up and down the street with the carbon diesel going out the windows.

I'm telling you, there are other solutions here—and this bill isn't all of them. But the structure of the bill and its intent—it's well intended.

I've certainly rambled on here a while, but I hope it's been informative and that I did advance five specific ideas. I would hope that the minister, who has been here—that's a compliment. Often, they're so busy making phone calls and putting fires out that they're not allowed to come to the House. The parliamentary assistant was here too, and I know that she was listening and I think she took notes.

I'll look to see the Presto card brought into force. If they delivered that one thing, I'd be supporting the bill. I'd be there for the photo op—not in it, but taking the picture. I think that's what they need to do: Get the smart cards working—currently, the one they're looking at is called the Presto card—so they can deal with the administrative of transferring the money between Durham, Halton and all these places.

With the very little time I've been allowed to speak this morning, I would hope that the minister realizes that this is one bill we can celebrate, because most of the ideas here we've been supportive of, or at least we've advanced them. Again, I'm going back to first principles.

Frank Klees—I'm going to finish up that way—when he was the minister, started a lot of good things; he really did. Minister Bradley actually made them law in many cases, and here's another case where he's doing roughly the same thing. I think this bill here, as Mr. Klees said in his remarks, is the right thing to do.

I just don't want Durham to be ignored in this. Durham region and GO Transit should stay on the south side of the 401. People who want to come from Peterborough, Millbrook, the city of Kawartha Lakes—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** That's not what Jim Flaherty says.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Jim Flaherty doesn't know what he's—on this issue, I'm right.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no, just this issue. I don't want to get into trouble here. But his wife is a person who I have a lot of time—Mrs. Elliott is a person whom I have the highest regard for, and I'll listen to her opinion on this because I know she uses transit as well.

Thank you for your attention this morning, and I'll leave a few minutes on the clock here.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's always interesting to listen to my good friend from Durham because he does raise good points in debate, I must say. Sometimes he digresses a bit, and I guess there was a bit of that this morning, but that's all in fun.

I just want to respond to a couple of points that he made.

We agree that there needs to be a better coordination of commuter services across the GTA. I think the point that the member makes is a good one: that this might be a first step toward a solution of trying to better coordinate services in the GTA. But we can't lose sight that there are many cities and towns and areas across Ontario that really do need special attention when it comes to coordinating their transportation services. If you're in eastern Ontario or northern Ontario or southwestern Ontario, it's much the same issue. Up where I come from in Timmins-James Bay, there's only really the city of Timmins that has a transit system. The member made a good point: A lot of these municipalities are struggling, trying to pay for transit services so they can help their citizens get off the roads and out of their cars and into transit, but it's pretty hard to do when you don't have the type of support we used to have from the provincial and federal governments. More and more, municipalities are having to go on their own.

The other issue is the coordination of transportation services beyond just the GTA. Again, where I come from, transportation is mainly cars and highways because there isn't transit in many places. So we need to look at how we can move people out of cars and how we can move freight off of cars and onto trains and other means of transportation. We own the Ontario Northland Railway, and it has always been an issue of contention in northern Ontario that the province is not using the ONR facilities as effectively as it could. Later on in debate, I'd like to be able to speak to that to a greater degree, because we really need to have a provincial integrated transportation strategy, not just one for the GTA.

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

**Ms. Helena Jazcek:** It's a pleasure to comment on the remarks of our colleague from Durham, who is actually my neighbour. My riding abuts his at the Whitchurch-Stouffville-Uxbridge border.

I am obviously very much in support of Bill 163. This legislation is going to mean that things will happen faster; implementation will occur more rapidly than it has. This is incredibly important to the residents of my riding.

Minister Bradley came to my riding to open the Lincolnville GO station last summer—a tremendous asset not only to the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville but also those from Mr. O'Toole's riding who come over from Uxbridge. It has made a dramatic difference to the Stouffville station. Now, with the Lincolnville station, people can park more easily and get on the train. The people right in the heart of old Stouffville appreciate the fact that their parking lot is not so congested. So these are great steps forward.

Our colleague made, I think, a very important remark in relation to those regional chairs, those political representatives from the municipalities who have served so excellently on the GO board and in their own transit systems, and what they've done. In particular, I would like to commend regional chair Bill Fisch, who really was the architect in York region of our amalgamated transit system, the YRT, which brought together the various local municipalities' transit systems. He did that in the face of some opposition. He showed great political leadership on that. He served many years on the GO board, providing his strategic expertise. Now this bill is the next step and moves us towards implementation.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to offer a couple of comments in response to the member from Durham. I think that in his remarks he was able to identify some of the really difficult issues that we face in this whole issue of transit in the GTA.

Certainly the effort to be made with regard to a smart card is one that I think everyone will applaud. It needs to be something that is seamless, that allows people to move freely on public transit throughout the GTA.

The question of the level of commuter service is a real conundrum, because certainly in parts of my riding the object is to see if there's anyone on the bus besides the driver. The other complaint that I hear from those who do use it is that the routes, by virtue of this issue of the population, have to wind around areas. You can sit on the bus for such a long time and only have gone a very short distance simply because of these lengthy, circuitous routes. Then, naturally, people in my area who face these kinds of problems look at the kind of investment that's required and ask me to justify it.

So I think that as the government moves forward, as we move forward with some of the issues, this has to be kept in mind, that we need to provide a public service, a public transit service. Certainly, I think that there is agreement all around about the need to get people out of their cars.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I just want to say a few things about my colleague's very lengthy dissertation on this bill and on many other things which he found the opportunity to include in his conversation and discussion of the bill. First of all, I want to say to him that during his speech he actually said that once in a while I have a good idea, and I just want to caution him to be careful. I don't want him to go overboard and say anything here that he might later regret.

The reality is that I think my colleague has captured the essence of what is going on here. This has been a McGuinty government that has had lots to say about transit. In fact, it's the McGuinty government that has given a number of self-congratulatory speeches about transit, that has used all the right rhetoric about transit, that has made announcement after announcement about

public transit, but people are still waiting to see when anything is going to happen.

Sad to say, if you actually look at this bill, this bill still doesn't do anything. It is another shuffling of the cards in the deck. In this case, I would argue that the major thing that's happening with this bill is that public representatives are being shuffled off and private, corporate representatives are being shuffled on. What will come out of that? People will have to wait and see. But I think my colleague from the Conservative Party in part has effectively captured what is not happening under this government—lots of talk and no action about public transit.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to thank the members from Timmins–James Bay, Oak Ridges–Markham, and Stouffville, as well as the member from Kenora–Rainy River.

I guess there were really five points to summarize briefly: One is the memorandum of understanding, the consultation process prior to the bill, the requirement to have open meetings to the public as well on any large expenditures; tax credits for transit users; the development charges implications for property owners and affordable housing; the smart card implementation, which is important to proceed with right away; and to always recall that Ontario is not just one big city. How about rural Ontario? The transit system there is roads and bridges.

But if I bring it back to my riding—the regional chairman, Roger Anderson, said, in response to The Big Move report, that the region of Durham isn't well served in the plan. In fact, the only thing they got in a 25-year plan, a \$50-billion plan, was a bus rapid transit system on Highway 2.

I don't disagree with the importance of moving forward, as I said, with these five recommendations. I think the bill is a framework to get on with making transit in urban areas much more friendly.

The comments made by the member from Timmins–James Bay were probably the best remarks when he realized that Timmins, in far northern Ontario, is emblematic of a community where they probably have fewer resources, and therefore probably less waste, so we should look at small-town Ontario as a good model of how to do public things in a way that's more efficient.

To the members who participate in this, we are setting the framework for a very broad policy into the future. I wanted to thank the board members who did serve on Metrolinx. Almost all of them were municipal mayors or councillors. I would also like to thank Paul Bedford, who is an academic with Ryerson University; Fred Eisenberger from Hamilton; Norm Kelly—he's a planner and councillor; Hazel McCallion; Adam Giambrone; Bill Fisch; Peter Smith; and Rob MacIsaac for the work they've done on this report.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** It's a pleasure for me this morning to introduce three people who are in the east members' gallery, they being my friend Craig Demers, who is with Community Living Essex County—you'll get to know him better later today; Mathew Berthiaume, who works with Community Living Essex County; and Nancy Wallace-Gero, executive director of Community Living Essex County.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I would like to introduce Monica and Colin Costello. They are actually from the riding of my neighbour in Richmond Hill. They won their attendance today through a silent auction fundraiser.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's my pleasure today to introduce to the House Steven Muir, who is a member of my constituency staff and also a self-advocate with Community Living, and Dianne Garrels-Munro, president of Community Living Ontario.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's a delight for me to introduce, in the members' east gallery, Chris Grayson and members of Community Living Peterborough.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would like to recognize all the people from Community Living Durham today, as well as Gary Cooke, who's a good friend of mine. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery Mr. Jesse Flis, former federal Member of Parliament for the riding of Parkdale–High Park. Please join me in welcoming him today.

We also have with us in the Speaker's gallery a parliamentary delegation from the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, led by Madame Truong Thi Mai. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today. Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** To the Premier: Welcome to April Fool's Day. Sadly, this is also a dark day in the history of our province, a day that Ontario officially becomes a have-not province—have-not status for the first time in our proud history, thanks to the mismanagement, out-of-control spending and lack of priorities by the Premier and the folks around him.

Less than 24 hours ago, we found out that under your direction, taxpayers are on the hook for the bloating salaries of high-priced staff. The \$100,000 sunshine list has grown by more than 10,000 since last year alone, to well over 53,000. You couldn't fit them into a stadium. Premier, how do you suggest we tell our friends and neighbours who have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay their bills and your taxes that their taxes are going toward paying more than 53,000 public service workers over \$100,000 a year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I welcome the question. First, I want to say that one of the questions that I've

been asked is that we index the original \$100,000 to inflation. Had we done that, 70% of the people on the list would not, in fact, be there. The reason that I've said no to that is because we believe—but, more importantly, families believe—that \$100,000 is a lot of money.

We also believe in transparency, and that's why we have, notwithstanding the approach brought by the previous Conservative government, through the sunshine law now uncovered OPG and Hydro One salaries to make sure that those are public. We're proud of the work that our public servants do for us, but we also feel a heavy responsibility to ensure that they are paid in keeping with the ability of Ontario taxpayers to pay them.

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

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The Premier can dress this up all he wants, but it's clear that he's not the one in charge over there. While over 300,000 Ontarians have lost their jobs under your misguided direction, you've allowed the salaries and bonuses at the lottery corporation to nearly double since you took office. The Ombudsman said that the OLG violated the trust of Ontarians and is out of control. This is an agency that has spent the past three years apologizing for blatant abuse of Ontarians' good faith.

Premier, why don't you take some control, show real leadership and roll back these salaries and bonuses and apologize to the people of Ontario for this agency's lack of respect for hard-working Ontarians?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We've got to keep an eye, obviously, on all these salaries and do what we can to manage costs.

I want to tell you a little bit about the Ontario public service, those folks who work directly for us. We have the fewest civil servants per capita of any province in Canada. We are the second-most efficient public service in the country. Ontarians are paying 32% less than the average pay for public servants, so to speak, across the country.

With respect to the sunshine list, the average salary of Ontario public service members on the list increased by just 1%. Those are the people over which we have immediate control, people working within the Ontario public service. We will do everything we can to respect the ability of Ontarians to pay and to ensure that we're being accountable to our families.

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

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I've said it before and I'll say it again: The Premier is living in a very comfortable, taxpayer-subsidized bubble. It's clear he can't appreciate the impact his policies are having on real people in this province. You've driven this province into have-not status. You've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs—100,000 in just the past two months.

Premier, do you have any idea of the message you are sending to struggling Ontarians when you sit idly by and let a discredited agency in the midst of the worst recession in 70 years hand out bonuses to fat-cat officials? Premier, show us you do understand, roll back those bonuses and fire the CEO.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** You know, the leader of the official opposition keeps disparaging his own province by saying that somehow we lack the capacity to generate the necessary wealth. I want to remind him of a couple of things.

First of all, Ontarians don't believe him. They understand that the recession we find ourselves in is global in nature. I think they also are on to the notion that we send tens of billions of dollars on an annual basis to Ottawa for distribution in the rest of the country. The fact is that we continue to generate a great deal of wealth in the province of Ontario. We have an ongoing conversation with the federal government; we'd like to keep a bit more of that so that we could use it to make ourselves stronger.

My colleague has a point when he says we need to continue to be prudent and responsible when it comes to protecting taxpayers' dollars.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Back to the Premier: The Premier abused the trust of taxpayers in two consecutive elections when he promised not to raise taxes along with a mountain of other broken promises. It's to the point where his broken-promise policies and out-of-control addiction to taxing and spending have brought us to this very sad day in history where Ontario is now in have-not status and taking federal handouts. Let me remind you of the massive health tax grab, the biggest tax increase in our history. Let me remind you of the Premier's latest tax grab on Ontario's hard-working families through his last budget.

Premier, how much more abuse of taxpayer trust have you in mind?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think it's a good opportunity to remind ourselves of what the Conservative government did in its day. I will remind you that what they did they did during a period of economic growth. They cut health care by \$557 million in their first two years, when the economy was growing. They cut over \$1 billion out of education in their first two years, when the economy was growing. At a time of economic growth, they cut social assistance support by 22%. Then they froze that for eight years. They did the same thing to the minimum wage: They froze that for eight years. They did all those things at a time of strong economic growth.

I will gladly compare and contrast, in terms of our commitment to our public services and our vulnerable, against their approach any day of the week.

1040

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

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** We have a great deal of respect for the voters of the province and we know whom they can trust, and it sure ain't you.

I want to quote today's Toronto Star, when referring to the Premier's latest so-called harmonized tax scheme and the challenges faced by Liberal backbenchers: "...MPPs privately express disappointment at being 'misled'" by Mr. McGuinty. According to the same article, on March

10 you assured your backbenchers that “nothing had been decided” on this.

I'm not sure if your Minister of Finance is operating behind your back, but he actually signed the deal on the same day you were supposedly seeking input from your caucus.

Premier, you haven't been straight with Ontarians, and now you're not being straight with your own caucus. They are just simply trying to bring their concerns to your attention. Do you actually know what you're doing? Premier, who's in charge over there?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the leader of the official opposition's genuine concern about my caucus and his longing to enhance relations. But one of the things that I would draw to his attention is an article—in fact, an editorial—that appeared in the Vancouver Sun, and I'll quote from that. It says: “The case for BC to harmonize its sales tax with the GST has long been strong. Now it is even more compelling.”

Ontario is “an aggressive competitor. We can ill-afford to leave unchallenged this new, major tax advantage” that Ontario is creating for itself.

I would ask my colleague at some point in time to tell us whether or not, as a party, they intend to move ahead with a single sales tax in the province of Ontario, or whether, if given the opportunity, they would undo that and reinstall two separate sales taxes.

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

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Speaker, I'm not sure about you, but I certainly didn't hear an apology to his caucus and all of the constituents they represent for blindsiding them and not giving them the facts in terms of what he's doing in this massive tax grab. He kept his own caucus in the dark. He's hurting constituents and the ability to represent their interests.

The Premier doesn't seem—if that's not the case, the Premier clearly doesn't know what's going on. We just have to look at his recent flip-flop on the minimum wage. And let's not forget his lack of knowledge on the pesticide legislation. What about his comments a few months ago about it being crazy to raise taxes in the middle of a recession? What happened last week? A massive tax grab.

Now he has made it clear to his own caucus that there's no need to attend those meetings; they are going to be ignored anyway. You're going to—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Listen, that was an interesting—

**Interjection:** Rant.

**Interjection:** Conversation.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Whatever. It was interesting.

**Interjection:** Exchange.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** An intervention, an assertion. We can get caught up in these kinds of things, but

what we've got to ask ourselves is, what do Ontarians want us to talk about? What do they want us to focus on?

There's a tremendous economic challenge that we're facing. Families have a great deal of anxiety. Communities, in some cases, have been devastated. People are losing jobs. I think they want us to keep our eye on the ball, and the ball is to find a way to move our province forward, not left and not right. I would respectfully submit that we've gone a long way towards doing that with our budget. We're cutting taxes for businesses. We're cutting taxes for people. We're trying to build a more caring and competitive Ontario.

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Spring is definitely in the air.

The leader of the third party.

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The budget missed a golden opportunity to use infrastructure dollars to create good, long-term jobs in this province. Yes, the government committed \$27 billion for infrastructure. But without a buy-Ontario policy, there's no guarantee that Ontario is going to land the value-added transit and green energy jobs. Why did the Premier reject a strong buy-Ontario policy that would have created the long-term jobs in addition to short-term construction jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** First off, we appreciate the acknowledgment of the leader of the third party that in this budget there is a very substantial investment in infrastructure. I would caution her that there are opportunities, over the course of many months, to roll out programs in all communities in the province of Ontario that will be extraordinarily beneficial, not just from the standpoint of the shorter-term stimulative aspect of work for people, but in transitioning and transforming our economy to one that's more productive.

The focus on transit, as an example, is very substantially important in the greater Toronto area, where we know that gridlock is something that imposes costs on business and makes us less efficient. So I do quarrel with the assumptions of the honourable member, and in the supplementary, I'll look forward to opportunities to demonstrate just how many of these dollars are going to land here, to the benefit of the people of province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Twenty-seven billion dollars out the door, and the government will only have short-term jobs to show for it. With a 50% transit requirement for vehicle manufacturing and a 60% requirement for energy manufacturing, the light rail, the wind farms and the solar projects of the future could actually be made right here in Ontario, with steel from Hamilton and Sault

Ste. Marie and manufacturing expertise in places like Thunder Bay, Mississauga, Oshawa, Windsor and Niagara.

Why are the Premier and his minister rejecting proven policies that create good, long-term jobs and value-added jobs?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the contrary, nobody rejects the responsibility that we have in making the allocation of infrastructure dollars so that they should have maximum impact here in the province of Ontario. I think that we've demonstrated, as an example, on transit projects, that the all-in impact of those projects—over 80 cents of those dollars are spent and have impact here in the province of Ontario.

Yesterday, I toured a new gas-fired power plant being built in Halton Hills. The biggest value-added piece of that entire plant is from a Siemens factory that, if I'm right, is in the very member's riding, or at least in a riding of the honourable member's party.

These are examples of how our investments in the renewal and renaissance of our energy system, in the renewal of our communities, in our roads and in our transit will all have very substantial impact, on the short term through labour and through components, and on the longer term by transforming our economy to one that is more productive and able to meet the needs of the people of province of Ontario. And in green energy, we will demonstrate even more progress—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In terms of job stimulus, the McGuinty government is proposing a nudge when what we need is a jolt. Sometimes I think the Premier forgets, and this minister forgets, that we are talking about real people here. Sue, for example, has built light rail cars in Thunder Bay for 23 years, but without a government requirement that Ontario transit contracts create manufacturing jobs here, Sue has to worry about her future.

Why are the Premier and his minister so proud to support long-term value-added jobs in Germany, the US, China and Mexico, while Ontario's manufacturing sector is crumbling?

1050

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do think it's very, very important to note that at the plant in Thunder Bay that the honourable member references, those workers were disheartened when the honourable member's party stood up and said, "No, we're not in favour of the expansion of subways in the greater Toronto area to the scarcely populated York region where only a million Ontarians live." Those workers know that the government of Ontario, through its investments in public transit, in subway cars and in double-level cars for GO Transit—the expansions in those areas, we know, have a positive impact in Thunder Bay. We have those workers first and foremost in our mind. We wonder why it is that the honourable member's party says that expansion of subway lines to York region is a wasteful exercise because that is a scarcely populated part of the province of Ontario.

We've said in the context of green energy—it's embedded right in the legislation—that we will establish domestic content rules which will enhance the investment here in the province of Ontario, enhance the economic impact for the people of the province of Ontario.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is back to the Premier. The budget is cutting more than \$2 billion in corporate income taxes. To benefit from corporate income taxes, however, companies need to be profitable. Can the Premier explain how across-the-board corporate tax cuts help hard-hit, money-losing companies that are shedding Ontario jobs by the tens of thousands every month?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question just to ensure that my honourable colleague understands. While we're cutting business taxes by \$4.5 billion, we're cutting them for people by \$10.6 billion, just so we're clear.

We talked to Ontario businesses. They told us at the outset, a number of years ago, that the most important thing we should do, and what we are doing, is to eliminate capital taxes. I think my colleague knows that. We then asked what would be the next most important step that we ought to take together. They said, "You've got to find a way to move to a single sales tax." They said, were we to redesign our tax system all over again, we would not require our businesses to collect two different taxes, send them to two different governments and deal with two different sets of regulations and two different auditors. They said, "Give us one sales tax." That's what we're doing. That in and of itself will result in considerable savings, and when you get savings you grow stronger and you hire more Ontarians.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Here's the Premier's economic strategy as I see it: Give already profitable companies more, and ignore struggling companies that are forced into laying off their employees and cutting hours, and then turn around and hammer Ontario families with an 8% tax hike. It's bad economics at the very time that it matters the most for the people of this province.

How can the Premier possibly tell Ontarians that giving more to highly profitable companies is the right thing to do, while ignoring those that are already laying off workers? How can he say that that is smart economic policy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The NDP, of course, is saying that this is heavily weighted in favour of business. Business is saying it's heavily weighted in favour of our most vulnerable. We're actually not about left or right; we're about moving forward on behalf of all Ontarians.

I want to remind my honourable colleague that she voted against, and her party voted against, a direct \$190-million rebate to manufacturers last year when we retroactively eliminated capital tax for them. Now she tells us that she's in favour of finding ways to move more quick-



ly on the capital tax front. We are moving on the capital tax front. We are reducing corporate income taxes. But we're also increasing the Ontario child benefit; we're increasing the minimum wage; we are investing in affordable housing; we're investing in health care, education, post-secondary education; and we're creating 300,000 jobs. It's a balanced, positive, progressive package that's suited to the values shared by Ontarians.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Just last year, the Premier was telling the Conservatives that they were wrong when they wanted the government to cut taxes. He said in Hansard, "They want to cut taxes in the province of Ontario.... That is not going to help businesses that are struggling today." That's what you said a year ago.

Tax policy does matter. But there was another option that he could have chosen. A refundable manufacturing investment tax credit would have traded job-creating investments for tax savings. It would have benefited companies that are losing money. That's targeted tax policy, and it's proven. It has worked in Manitoba, and it has worked in Quebec. So instead of giving money to companies that don't need it while imposing an 8% tax on Ontario families, why did the Premier introduce a manufacturing tax credit?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to be clear, 93% of Ontarians will be getting a tax cut as a result of our package.

Again, we've already eliminated the capital tax for our manufacturers. It will be eliminated for everybody else next year. We're also moving towards a single sales tax and we're reducing corporate income taxes. We feel that it's absolutely essential as part of the package to putting Ontario on the road to recovery, but we will not lose sight of our most vulnerable. Again, we're increasing the Ontario child benefit from \$50 a month per child to \$92 per month per child. We continue to increase the minimum wage. We continue to invest in affordable housing. We're reducing income taxes on our lowest income-earners to the lowest level in Canada. From an objective perspective, you cannot help but conclude that this Liberal government is moving forward in—

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

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. As of today, April Fool's Day, we all know that history has been made. It's official: Ontario is a have-not province. You can't just blame this on the decline of the rest of the industrialized world. All the other provinces within the Dominion of Canada have been subject to the same kinds of economic pressures.

Minister of Finance, my question is: How did it come to this? How did you manage to get the great province of Ontario into this pickle? Will you please explain?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ontario will in fact be getting some of the money back now that it has put into the

federation—our own money. I would say that it's the result, as Mr. MacKinnon and others have said, of a gerrymandered equation that sees the vast majority of Canadians living in provinces that receive equalization. It doesn't reflect have or have-not status; it reflects the seriousness—and that's not us. There's a body of work done by a whole range of people that suggest that.

We've laid out a plan to move Ontario forward. We're investing some \$32 billion in infrastructure. I see that Mr. Hudak is opposed to that, and the Conservatives, I presume, are opposed to that. We are reducing personal taxes by \$10.6 billion and corporate taxes by more than \$4 billion, and we're investing in the kinds of human services that make this province, I believe, the best place in Canada to live.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The best we hear is, "We're getting some money back." Minister, this is embarrassing on April Fool's Day. The Toronto Sun, for example, has a full front-page caricature of our Premier, tin cup in hand, Pinocchio nose down to the sidewalk. That's have-not status. This is not the Ontario I grew up in.

Minister, you talk about a plan. The only plan we have seen is seven years of projected red ink, seven years of deficits. Do you have a real plan to get us out of this predicament? Do you really care? Have you and your colleagues—essentially, we get the impression that you've given up. Perhaps you've panicked; you're taking the easy way out. Perhaps you see yourself as spending your way out of have-not status. What is the real plan, Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There is a Sun newspaper I would like to remind the member of. The Vancouver Sun, on March 30—and let me read to the member what was in that editorial: "The case for BC to harmonize its sales tax with the GST has long been strong. Now it's even more compelling."

Ontario is "an aggressive competitor. We can ill afford to leave unchallenged this new major tax advantage it's creating for itself."

This is the best province in Canada, in spite of a gerrymandered equation on something called equalization. This is the province that will lead Canada out of these difficult times. People across Ontario have a plan from this government that invests in our future, both the immediate future and the long-term future, that will make this still the best place to live and do business in the country.

1100

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Ontario is reeling from skyrocketing job losses, with cities like Windsor reaching a heartwrenching unemployment rate of over 12%. These numbers cannot convey the devastation that is being felt by these workers. Mental health providers in the hardest-hit cities are reporting

alarming 22% increases in calls to distress centres and other supports, calls from men who have lost their jobs. Does the Premier have a plan to ensure mental health services are available to these laid-off workers when they need them the most?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, yes. As the member well knows, there are a number of fronts that we're acting upon.

I've set up my own advisory panel to initiate a mental health and addictions strategy for the province of Ontario. I know the member opposite is part of the select committee of this Legislature, of all members who are going to be working together, I hope, to help formulate part of that plan.

In addition to that, I know that in the budgetary policies outlined by my colleague the Minister of Finance, he has outlined some \$80 million to be available to provide funding toward mental health services and mental health providers, not simply in the city of Windsor but right across the province of Ontario. That's in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars which are annually available to mental health providers. Mental health, having seen cuts in previous New Democrat and Conservative governments, is being supported like it never has before by this government—

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, the Auditor General, in his latest report, found that the average wait time for community mental health services is 180 days. Six months is a very long time to wait when you're in distress.

Mental health research shows that massive job losses always lead to the same thing: increased depression, hardship, marriage break-ups and suicides. As predicted, the need for mental health services has dramatically increased since last fall, yet the new money has yet to turn into new services. What does the minister suggest to these laid-off workers who are in crisis right now and can't wait?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Of course I and all members of this House, when one person loses their job, want to be there to be able to support them, and we are, in a number of ways, whether that's through social services or mental health services or it's through retraining through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. I can tell you that since 2003, our government has increased funding by more than \$200 million. That's a 50% increase to mental health services.

But we do acknowledge there is more to be done. I do acknowledge that in the past, New Democrats—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. David Caplan:** I hear my friend from Trinity–Spadina tell us that in 1992-93, New Democrats cut \$23 million from mental health services in the province of Ontario. I recognize that those were the actions of a government at the time that I very much fundamentally disagree with. That's why we're working together with members on all sides of the House, and I would en-

courage the member to bring these ideas that she has forward to the select committee as we come forward and develop a mental health and addictions strategy for the province of Ontario—

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

## WASTE DIVERSION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. There's a riddle in the information technology world that goes like this: How many computer programs does it take to change a light bulb? The answer is, "None, because it's a hardware problem."

Now, that riddle sums up Ontario's hardware problem as computer users upgrade to new equipment. Unwanted electronic equipment should not end up in landfills. These products also contain such toxic elements as cadmium or mercury, which can threaten water sources and land when disposed of improperly. Most parts in computer hardware—steel, glass, copper, aluminum, plastics and precious metals—can be recovered and reused to make new products. Some electronic equipment, such as computers, printers or televisions, can be cascaded, thus further reducing waste.

Minister, you launched a program to keep electronic waste out of our landfills. How will this program make it easier for Ontarians—

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

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Let me first of all congratulate and compliment the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for his ongoing interest in the 3R program, which is extremely important. And he's correct: Yesterday we launched a new program which provides convenient options for people and businesses to reuse and recycle their used electronic equipment. It's all about keeping toxic components out of landfill sites and making sure that we recover the valuable metals and other materials for reuse in new products.

As of today, individuals can go on the [dowhatyoucan.ca](http://dowhatyoucan.ca) website, type in their postal code and find out exactly where they can drop off their old computers, monitors, printers and televisions. There are literally hundreds of locations around the province. They can take them to the Salvation Army. They can take them to municipal recycling depots, as well as selected outlets of Sears, Staples and Best Buy.

This is the right way to do it. We're keeping old computers, old electronic equipment out of the landfills.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Many of us, consumers and businesses alike, find ourselves at a loss when it comes to dealing with obsolete PCs. Old PCs and related equipment get piled up in store rooms and basements because people don't know how to properly dispose of them. Ontarians can now find convenient options to dispose of old PCs, TVs and fax machines and know that the materials will be properly recycled into new products and toxic components will be properly disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

But obsolete PCs and related equipment are not the only products that need to be recycled. Products like digital cameras, cellphones and audio equipment also need to be diverted from our landfills for reuse or recycling. Are there plans to expand this program further to increase waste diversion?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I want the member to clearly understand that the old PCs we're talking about are the personal computers, and not the other PCs.

Waste Diversion Ontario and the Ontario Electronic Stewardship are working on a second phase right now that we hope to unveil in July. At that time, we hope to include in this program cameras, cellphones and other audio equipment. We also want to expand the number of collection sites. Right now we have over 167 drop-off locations. It's going to go up to 250 locations during the summer, and by year five of the program we hope to have at least 650 drop-off depots throughout the province.

We want to make sure that this old electronic equipment, the old PCs—the old personal computers—are kept out of the landfill sites so that they do not cause any damage to the environment.

#### CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Culture. Minister, Ontario is now a have-not province. You are running a huge deficit to pay for all of your programs. So why are you going to give \$5 million to build a new museum in Winnipeg, Manitoba?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** Our budget has reinforced all of the initiatives that this government is taking to reinforce, to reinvigorate an economy that needs the kind of leadership and the kind of courage that this Premier and this finance minister have shown in the budget. I'm very proud of that portion of the budget that falls within the realm of culture. I'm very proud of what this government is doing: understanding the role of culture in this creative, knowledge-based economy. Everything the government is doing is exactly right, exactly what we should be doing in facing these difficult times.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Well, instead of giving \$5 million in the middle of a recession to another province, why don't you give it to projects in Ontario? The Sharon Temple in my riding is looking for \$50,000 for renovations. Shouldn't you be providing money for Ontario's museums and heritage sites like the Sharon Temple, rather than money going outside the province?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I'm really disappointed at my honourable colleague's approach in this regard. This government has an incredible track record in reinforcing heritage sites, museums, art galleries, TV and film production, and a great understanding of exactly what we should be doing as a government who gets it on the culture file.

The Sharon Temple is an excellent and a fabulous location of not just Ontario historical happenings but Can-

adian happenings. It is, indeed, a file that I'm very cognizant of. I've met with the people involved, and I look forward to hearing about future developments in your riding and on that project.

Holistically speaking, one could not ask more from a government on culture and the creative economy than one could ask of this government. Our response has received nothing but kudos from every sector of this economy—

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

1110

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Housing. Toronto residents Angel Robinson and her two children, Tiera and Tyrone—very cute—are here in the gallery today. They are here because, like over 100,000 other Ontario families, they are waiting for an affordable housing unit. Angel and her family have been on the waiting list for affordable housing for 12 years. What would the minister who is responsible for ensuring that Ontarians have access to safe and affordable housing like to say to Angel?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'd like to welcome Angel to the Legislature, and I'd like to remind all members of the House what the honourable member said in this House yesterday when I proudly stood in my place and announced that the provincial and federal governments are going to contribute \$1.2 billion over the next two years to build and fix up affordable housing in the province of Ontario. What was the response from the honourable member? She said, "Crumbs is what this housing minister is giving them and hoping they'll be satisfied." Well, only a socialist would think \$1.2 billion is crumbs.

I'm very proud of the fact that we are working in partnership with the federal government, the municipal government and the not-for-profit sector to put a substantial, record amount of money into building new affordable housing so people like Angel can have a decent, safe place to live in the city of Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The minister well knows that not one dollar of that money is going to Angel Robinson and her family and people like them in the province of Ontario. To quote the Wellesley Institute, it offered virtually nothing to Angel or "the 125,000 households on affordable housing waiting lists and the tens of thousands of people who are homeless" now.

In fact, the budget for the Ministry of Housing was actually cut by 6% and has now fallen to 25% below where it was even three years ago.

When will the minister end the stress and suffering caused by the lack of affordable housing in Ontario, and put an end to Angel's and others' interminable wait for affordable housing? When are you going to help Angel? That's the question, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'm very proud of the fact that this \$1.2-billion investment in housing will see \$704 million to repair and rehabilitate buildings to make them more energy efficient, \$365 million to create new affordable housing opportunities for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities, and an extension of the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program.

I would tell Angel, who perhaps is a constituent of the honourable member, that every single time we have brought forward new money to put into the housing budget, the NDP have voted against those particular measures. It's fine to stand up and talk and rant and rave about support for housing, but every time a vote comes in this place, that honourable member and her party vote against housing and the most vulnerable in this community. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is also for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, the editorial pages of Ontario's newspapers make one thing clear: They want our government to tackle poverty. One way to tackle poverty is to invest in affordable housing, and indeed we've made progress in investments in affordable housing through programs such as the affordable housing program, which has meant over \$180 million for over 5,000 units in Toronto; the rent bank, which has meant the prevention of about 3,600 evictions in Toronto alone.

But Minister, I continue to read editorials stressing the urgency to tackle social housing that is in need of repair and the urgency for additional affordable housing. Last week's budget did make new commitments to affordable housing, but what in fact will these investments do? What is the detail here?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member very much for his question. I was very proud when, prior to the budget, I joined colleagues from the Ottawa area to visit 20 Rochester Street in the city of Ottawa, where we announced that, through the budget, Minister Duncan and Premier McGuinty—the province of Ontario—would in fact match the \$622 million in federal funding. That money is going to go to help some of the most vulnerable in our community by renovating 50,000 social housing units over the course of the next two years and building 4,500 new housing units.

Let me quote Hugh Lawson, president of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. After the budget, he said, "Today's announcement represents a bold move forward during these harsh economic times that will preserve and create more affordable housing, assist low-income people and create jobs. It"—

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

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Over and over again, I keep hearing the concerns about affordable housing's long-term challenges. Housing affordability problems are getting worse. Ontario's low- and moderate-income

households are losing ground. Communities are left to worry year after year about how much money our senior levels of government will commit to the cause.

Minister, as the former chair of the Toronto Community Housing Corp., I know that no social housing provider will ever turn down a one-time funding allocation when it's offered, but I also know that the real issue is, what steps will the province take to establish long-term goals and provide greater long-term stability to the important matter of affordable housing?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'm very proud of our track record when you look at the entire package of housing initiatives. One of the things I'm particularly proud of is the Residential Tenancies Act, where we brought some semblance of order to rent increases. Let me just tell the honourable member and some of the people in the gallery that rent increases under the Liberal government averaged 2.05% per year; under the Conservatives, 2.9%; and under those great pretenders of the vulnerable, the NDP, the average increase was 4.8%. I see the honourable member from Parkdale–High Park blushing, because she should be blushing. That is not a record I'd be particularly proud of.

We committed in the 2007 campaign that we would bring forward a long-term affordable housing strategy. I look forward to going out across the province with my parliamentary assistants, listening to people and learning how we can improve the housing situation in the province of Ontario—

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

#### AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. The farmers of Ontario are concerned about Dalton McGuinty's tax grab, and they're as concerned as the Liberal backbenchers. Farmers fought for years for a point-of-sale exemption, so when they buy their farm equipment and supplies, they show their farm organization card and they don't pay tax. A farmer in my riding wrote me about the exemption and said, "Over the course of a year it amounts to quite a bit of money. I think the system works well the way it is and to change it will cause too many problems." Minister, can you guarantee that under the Dalton McGuinty harmonized tax grab farmers will continue to get point-of-sale exemptions?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I thank the member for the question. I certainly have received the same questions from farmers in my riding and I've heard from many of our rural colleagues in this assembly. We are, as we speak, confirming with the federal government how we will move forward on this very important issue. At the end of the day, what we are able to say is that farmers will pay no more tax in this area than they do now. We are very mindful of the issue that you've brought forward, as have our caucus colleagues. We are working with our federal government to mitigate the impact that moving to the harmonized tax will have on them.

1120

But what I can say as well, and I remind your constituents as well, is that moving to the harmonized tax, by reducing business taxes, is going to be good for farmers. They will be paying less—

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Obviously the minister missed the previous questions when they talked about discussing it with the federal government. It seems the Minister of Finance was signing the agreement while you were thinking about going to talk to the federal government about it.

Minister, you once again demonstrate that you don't understand what is happening on farms across Ontario. Farmers used to have a rebate, and they fought long and hard to get the point-of-sale exemption because it works better for them. Now farmers will have to pay the tax and wait for months or maybe a year for the government to give them their own money back. Many will have to increase their borrowing to cover this money.

Minister, the budget allows for point-of-sale exemptions for some items. Have you asked your Minister of Finance to have agriculture included as a point-of-sale exemption?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** It is the Minister of Finance who is working hard on behalf of farmers and has. I would remind the member that it was this government that actually moved forward on the point-of-sale tax exemption. We have been very, very mindful of the issues of farmers.

I would also like to remind the member that with this shift, with this move, farmers will no longer be required to pay provincial sales taxes on their trucks and on the equipment they buy. If they purchase computers for traceability and improving their safety net systems on farms, they won't be paying tax on that. I have to say it's very important that all of the members in this House appreciate that this move is good news for farmers. There will be significant tax savings for farmers as a result of the leadership that has been taken by this government. Yes, you can go back and tell your farmers no taxes on vehicles or equipment or any computer equipment—

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

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. Time and time again we've seen many examples of poor judgment and leadership at the WSIB. Recently, I've drawn attention to the WSIB's flawed experience rating system. It has now come to my attention, Premier, that the WSIB hired from outside of Ontario to fill the position of its chief prevention officer. At a time when Ontarians are struggling to find work, it seems logical that the WSIB should hire from a pool of talented and qualified Ontarians who are undoubtedly available to fill

a position like this one. Why does this government allow poor decisions by the WSIB to continue under its watch?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I must disagree wholeheartedly with my honourable colleague. I guess now as Canadians we can't help each other. We can't invest in a new national institution, a museum committed to human rights. We can't do that as proud Canadians. And now we can't hire anybody who hasn't grown up and lived in our province. That's not the kind of Ontario that I'm trying to build. It's not the kind of Ontario that I envision. I don't believe it's in keeping with the people of Ontario. We are proud Canadians and proud Ontarians at the same time, and we're not going to choose between the two.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** He just happens to be from Ireland.

Other examples of bad WSIB leadership include its failure to ensure that all employees are covered by the WSIB and its inability to insist that the Ministry of Labour enforce compliance with the certification requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The hiring of foreign key executives rather than hiring a qualified Ontarian is just one more example of poor judgment shown by the WSIB chair.

In the light of this newest development, maybe of bad judgment, will the government commit not to renewing the current chair's position in the WSIB for another term?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You just asked the question. I would appreciate it if you'd listen to the response. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just think we have to be careful when it comes to pandering to protectionist tendencies, because economic history has demonstrated that there is no success to be found in pursuing that path.

I think the other thing that we've got to keep in mind is paying some attention to the foundation of this province. We are built on calling upon the best from around the world. Are we now going to say that we're closing our doors to others to come here to make a contribution to Ontario and to Canada? I think not. I just see it differently, and I'm pretty confident in saying that Ontarians see it differently as well.

#### ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, tomorrow the ODSP Action Coalition is holding a two-day interactive forum right down the street from here. This conference is entitled "Leading the Way: Developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy for People with Disabilities."

I know there was a 2% increase in the budget, which was announced last week, for the people on Ontario Works and ODSP. It's important to support the vulnerable people among us. It's important since we are in government and you are the Minister of Community and Social Services. However, there are some, including the

ODSP Action Coalition, who are asking for more. They are suggesting that Ontario needs to see more action for people with disabilities. Minister, what is your response to this call for more action?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's a great question. In fact, as part of the poverty reduction strategy, my ministry is planning to conduct a social assistance review to identify any additional improvements to our program.

But that's only part of the story. We've already started to remove barriers that were keeping people from employment. For example, we simplified the rules around earning exemptions so that more people can work and they can keep more money; we're engaging employers' and employees' organizations to expand job opportunities for people with disabilities; we have extended drug, dental and vision care benefits to people leaving social assistance for employment; and we've launched a number of pilots to test innovative employment support that will help people on social assistance move to sustainable paid employment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Minister, for your response. I know that the coalition, for the next two days, wants to talk on forming a proposal that would be submitted to you. Also, they want to continue the discussion with you and with your ministry in order to improve the lives of people who live on Ontario Works and Ontario disability.

It's important that we keep open channels of communications with these groups. We can work with them to improve the supports available to help the people reach their full potential. Can the minister tell me and tell this House how she is going to plan to work with those coalitions to improve their lives? Also, especially right now, when we have a strategy to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario, can you tell me, please, how we can include those people in your strategy to reduce poverty in this province?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I will refer the question to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member. No one knows better about how the system works or how it doesn't work than people who are directly involved in it. We welcome the participation and advice from people like Community Living self-advocates, members of organizations such as Voices from the Street and the ODSP Action Coalition, as we move forward with our commitment to review social assistance. Indeed, our legislation specifically requires the engagement of low-income people in the development of future poverty reduction strategies.

The conversation has changed tremendously over the past little while around here. People who were, under the previous government, protesting on the front lawns of the Legislature are now at the table working with us, rolling up their sleeves and having a constructive—

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

## ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, last year on Community Living Day you announced your government's plans to amend the developmental disability legislation by introducing Bill 77. The bill received third reading in fall 2008. Today, Minister, one year later, families are still waiting for Bill 77 to be proclaimed.

Minister, as you know, Bill 77 does nothing until proclamation. Will the minister announce today when we can expect Bill 77 to be proclaimed?

1130

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, I'd like to welcome people from Community Living here today. It's a great day.

That's a very good question. We are working with our partners in the community to put forward the act and to put action into the community. We want to get it right, so we are working with our partners. We want to make sure that there is one place that people can apply if they need housing or they need to go into a group home.

We need to formalize Bill 77. We are presently working, and I'm encouraged to see good improvement in the—

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, we'd all like to welcome the members from Community Living Ontario, but I think we'd all like some answers too. What I asked you was: When can we see proclamation of Bill 77?

If your intent is to seek consultation and to reach out, then would the minister today table those prospective regulations so that we all have an opportunity to provide input and assess whether the regulations will actually achieve what we all agree is needed?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, you know, we celebrated yesterday the closure of our three institutions, so that was a great day for the DS sector. I wanted to commend all our partners in the community, including the families and those that we serve. It's a big celebration.

All of this started in our transformation of the DS sector. We are presently working with our partners to make sure that Bill 77 is working not only for the government but is working for those that we try to serve. The consultation is there. We're working with them. Our wonderful officials in the ministry are working on that.

I can guarantee you that that sector will improve and we'll reach our goal, which is full inclusion—

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

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The question is for the Premier. Premier, in May 2006, you promised Ontarians that they would not be forced to pay for cost overruns from a new nuclear plant. You said, in a story that was reported in the

Globe, that if we were to go with nuclear, we would be looking at a turnkey operation. "Don't come to us with cost overruns. Been there. Done that."

Yesterday, an Infrastructure Ontario official was reported in the Ottawa Citizen as saying that cost overruns for a new nuclear reactor would be shared between the builder and Ontario Power Generation—in other words, the Ontario ratepayer.

Premier, that promise in 2006 not to saddle ratepayers with an overrun seems to have been abandoned. Why did you break that promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to say to the honourable member that what we've been working on in the context of the procurement of two new nuclear plants is to offer the greatest certainty and protection to the ratepayers of the province of Ontario.

We're in the process of evaluating bids that have come in from three prospective proponents for projects here in the province of Ontario. As we move forward and seek to come under contract to develop two nuclear plants, first and foremost will remain our desire and the obligation we have to protect the rate base from any implications such as the member has raised.

In the context of Darlington, as an example, people stopped the process of construction; that obviously proved to be a very, very untimely, unfortunate decision. We won't be replicating that in this process either.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The essential question is left unanswered. Premier, Ontarians are still paying debt charges on their hydro bills for nuclear reactors built more than 30 years ago. Renewable energy suppliers are not allowed to pass on their cost overruns to electricity consumers and taxpayers.

Once again, you're offering a special deal to the nuclear industry so that we get stuck with paying off the multi-billion dollar cost overruns that can be expected. Why are they getting a special deal?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I think that the honourable member has this substantially wrong. You can see the process that we've initiated is putting substantial tension on the project proponents to take responsibility for those elements which are theirs in the construction of new nuclear plants. But in the circumstances, as an example, where Ontario Power Generation, as the developer, might make a mistake or an error that leads to the implication of cost, of course this is the responsibility of the proponents, as is the case with renewable energy. For those people who undertake the initiative, who are the proponents of such projects, there's some obligation for the outcome of such processes.

Through the Green Energy Act and the associated feed-in tariffs, we've established a very fair, reasonable price under a 20-year contract that is an incentive for those people to develop the projects, but we don't take responsibility if they make errors in the implementation of their very own project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** News of this government's 13% harmonized sales tax is spreading through Ontario like an April Fool's computer virus, sickening all who come in contact. Reactions have been swift and are intensifying with each passing day. I've received input from constituents who feel that Mr. McGuinty is insulting their intelligence with the harmonized sales tax rebate cheques. Some use very colourful language to describe Mr. McGuinty's spread of this harmonized tax-and-spend virus. Realtors, automakers, laid-off steelworkers, farmers, families, singles, taxpayers across Ontario—pretty much everyone—are calling, e-mailing, or writing to newspapers.

Let's talk about single folks for a moment. Singles drive to work, buy gas, buy groceries and newspapers, have their hair cut, and have home heating bills like everybody else. They pay the tax, yet they will get a mere \$300 rebate, as opposed to the \$1,000 for families. Why is this government penalizing singles? Why penalize some of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens; for example, seniors living on their own?

It's clear that this harmonized tax bait-and-switch is diverting attention from job losses and government paralysis. But the 13% harmonized sales tax has struck a sour note with the people of Ontario—

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

### PARLEMENT JEUNESSE FRANCOPHONE DE L'ONTARIO

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Aujourd'hui nous accueillons des étudiants des 41 écoles secondaires françaises provenant des quatre coins de la province de l'Ontario. Ces élèves, qui représentent l'école secondaire de leur région respective, participent au Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario qui se déroule ici même cette semaine.

Les trois objectifs de ce Parlement jeunesse sont de stimuler l'intérêt et l'engagement des élèves francophones envers la politique et le fonctionnement d'un gouvernement; de permettre aux élèves de débattre des idées, d'exprimer des opinions, et de défendre une position, tout en développant leur capacité de leadership; de favoriser la construction identitaire et ainsi susciter les élèves à s'impliquer dans leur communauté.

Le Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario est un programme unique en son genre car il engage les jeunes

dans les domaines de la politique, du journalisme et des organisations non-gouvernementales.

Je tiens à remercier le ministère de l'Éducation, la FESFO, ainsi que mes employés. Selon moi, ce Parlement jeunesse francophone est une des meilleures façons d'assurer la relève en politique. L'Ontario a besoin de jeunes énergiques qui souhaitent se dévouer pour leur communauté, et rien n'égalise la politique pour ce faire.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The McGuinty government's new tax on just about everything means ordinary Ontarians will pay more for meals under \$4, telephones, Internet connections, cellphones, and even funeral services. And that's just a start.

The Ontario Real Estate Association estimates that the new tax will add approximately \$2,000 to the cost of a real estate transaction. That's \$2,000 out of your pocket. That's the result of the PST being applied to legal fees, moving costs, mandatory home inspections, commissions, mortgage insurance premiums, title insurance—the list goes on. This tax grab will add over \$300 million a year to the cost of resale home transactions in Ontario alone.

Multiply this by dozens of other business sectors, and the real tax impact becomes much clearer. It's even larger than the health tax.

**Interjection:** No.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's surprising.

Multiply this by all the other inconveniences for businesses changing their systems.

I urge the government to rethink this new 13% tax before it does more harm, not just to the economy but to the Liberal government. We're worried that they made a bad decision, and now they have no way of getting out of it. I'm worried for the people of Ontario and, indeed, the economy of Ontario.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I rise in the House today to recognize that Sault College, in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, will be training more apprentices with an additional \$550,000 provincial investment. This investment will expand the apprenticeship programs at Sault College and offer its students new, up-to-date training resources to help ensure that they are ready to meet the demands of local employers. This is just one more example of how our government recognizes that during this time of economic uncertainty, it is important for our workers to have the skills they need to take advantage of every local opportunity.

Hiring an apprentice also increases productivity. Skills are better developed because of the combination of formal education, mentoring and on-the-job experience. These improvements are part of our \$2-billion skills-to-jobs action plan, which gives Ontarians a competitive edge by training for tomorrow's high-skilled jobs in a

greener economy. As a government, we want our students to succeed, and with this approach and programs like these, students will focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests.

Sault College is one of many colleges in the province that provides a creative learning environment for students that better prepares them to pursue future opportunities. That means that apprentice students can stay in Ontario and gain the skills they need to have the future they want right here in Ontario. We are on track. We are putting students first and we will continue to support the training of skilled workers so we can continue to build a strong and vibrant economic future right here in the province of Ontario.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to alert Ontarians to the subtlety of this government's attack on their pocketbook and on their businesses. There is a change in vocabulary that has taken place in this province. Typical of the McGuinty government, what they try to do is hide the facts of what is really happening with what they want people to think is happening. I refer to the term "harmonization," which sounds so very subtle and innocent, but what it really means is a tax increase. I refer to the term "stimulus." There was a time when deficits were something that governments shunned and tried to avoid. Now that we have renamed it a stimulus, it is acceptable.

I say that as the progressive Conservative Party we will stand on the side of consumers and on the side of businesses and expose this government's fiscal policy for what it is: an assault of taxation on families at a time when they can least afford it and an assault on businesses and the increasing costs of businesses to do business at a time when they can least afford it. Be they exposed.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I recently participated in the business mission to Vietnam. Our group also attended the Economist magazine second round table business conference in Hanoi. We met Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Sinh Hung, who delivered the conference's keynote speech about Vietnam's changing role in the global economy and its path to prosperity.

One could clearly see what can be done when weapons of war are turned into ploughshares. We saw tremendous economic growth and development. Living standards are rising, and generally the quality of life is improving. What truly amazed me, however, was the fact that every provincial Premier we met read from the same script: Encourage foreign investors with incentives, expand the market share of your products and educate and train your workforce.

How are we preparing our children to compete with the people willing to work harder, longer hours and just as smartly as we are? After my visit to Vietnam, I am convinced that our government is on the right track, that



our budget is forward-looking and that our Premier has the right vision. That is, keep building and expanding research infrastructure, support budding new companies and invest in post-secondary education and skills training. These steps are critical. This will develop the creative economy and will prepare our young people to compete in the international marketplace. Thank you.

1510

### JACK BOUTHILLIER

**M. Gilles Bisson:** J'ai eu, tristement, l'occasion lundi dernier d'être aux funérailles de Jack Bouthillier, un soldat qui est entré dans les Forces canadiennes récemment, un jeune homme de Hearst qui pendant des années a toujours voulu devenir soldat des Forces canadiennes. Tristement, il est mort en Afghanistan. Il a été l'un des quatre soldats qui sont morts dernièrement.

Jack était une personne extraordinaire, un jeune homme qui a toujours vu comme but de devenir soldat dans les forces armées canadiennes, quelqu'un qui a pris ses responsabilités très, très au sérieux et qui a finalement eu l'occasion d'aller prendre sa place avec les autres soldats canadiens en Afghanistan.

Ce n'était pas à son tour. Il l'a fait volontairement. Il l'a décidé lui-même. Quand il y a eu un soldat de son régiment qui a fallu retourner au Canada, il a demandé, de sa propre volonté, d'aller en Afghanistan pour deux mois. Tristement, une fois arrivé, il a fait son entraînement de préparation, et la première mission qu'il a prise avec nos forces armées canadiennes, il est mort. Tristement, la première mission qu'il a prise pour les Forces canadiennes en Afghanistan l'a vu mort quand une explosion est arrivée sous son chariot. Il est mort avec trois autres soldats, dans des instances un peu différentes.

Donc, on prend cette occasion pour remercier la famille Bouthillier de nous avoir donné ce jeune homme, pour le sacrifice qu'il a fait qui est totalement inexplicable, et pour la famille et la communauté qui ont donné ce jeune homme à notre pays. Finalement, il a payé le sacrifice à la fin de la journée d'avoir perdu sa vie.

De la part de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, j'aimerais qu'on prenne une minute pour le remercier et pour rappeler le temps que M. Bouthillier a fait dans cette armée. Je demande une minute de silence, s'il vous plaît.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask all members and our guests to pause for a moment of reflection, a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

### PARKINSON'S DISEASE

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** J'ai le plaisir maintenant de parler sur ce sujet en deux capacités : comme médecin et aussi comme député de l'Assemblée provinciale.

Today marks the launch of Parkinson's Awareness Month in Ontario. As you all know, approximately

40,000 Ontarians are living with Parkinson's disease today. It's chronic, progressive and results in increasing disability that, unfortunately, dramatically impacts individuals, families, communities and, of course, the health care system across our province.

The Parkinson's Society of Canada works to educate parliamentarians and policymakers about the needs of Ontarians living with brain conditions like Parkinson's. The organization is committed to positioning the brain as a health priority and a social- and economic-related issue in Ontario to warrant significant increased policy attention.

As we launch Parkinson's Awareness Month, I'd like to encourage every member of the Legislature, and indeed the broader community, to think about their constituents, about their neighbours, friends and family members who may be living with Parkinson's. This insidious disease affects men and women of every age, and they're relying on our leadership and our stewardship of the public interest to help them live the highest-quality and most productive lives that we can offer them. Thank you.

### MURRAY GAUNT

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** It is certainly with great sadness that I stand today to inform the House of a passing away of a truly remarkable man. Murray Gaunt was a man of humble beginnings who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people in Huron-Bruce.

He was born in the middle of the Great Depression to farmers, and Murray started his childhood days by walking two miles to school. At a young age, he became a very keen observer of the technological transformation of agriculture. His enthusiasm for farming grew after the war, when things like the turkey broiler business and new animal husbandry techniques signalled that agriculture was changing.

After attending Guelph university, Murray became a poultry farmer and eventually a very popular CKNX farm editor. He was the voice of agriculture until one day he was courted to run in a provincial by-election for the Liberal Party. Murray spent 18 years as the MPP for Huron-Bruce, and he worked tirelessly to advance the agriculture issues of the riding.

In 2005, Murray Gaunt was inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame and recognized for his many achievements.

But what Murray was best known for was his unwavering grace and his kindness. He was also a proud father and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Pat.

Join me in paying respect to this hard-working and compassionate man, Murray Gaunt.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all members and our guests to please rise as we pay a moment of silence in memory of former member Murray Gaunt.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

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

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 63(c), the supplementary estimates 2008-09 of the Office of the Assembly before the Standing Committee on Estimates are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 62(c), the supplementary estimates of the Office of the Assembly not having been selected for consideration are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS AMENDMENT ACT (DISCLOSURE OF LEMONS), 2009 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE COMMERCE DES VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES (DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT LES VÉHICULES DE PIÈTRE QUALITÉ)

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 164, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 164, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur le commerce des véhicules automobiles.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The intent of the bill is to protect Ontario consumers who may be interested in the purchase of a used vehicle. The bill amends the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002, and it requires that motor vehicle dealers disclose in writing whether a vehicle has been determined to be a lemon under the laws of any other jurisdiction.

1520

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (PROTECTION FOR ARTISTS), 2009 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (PROTECTION DES ARTISTES)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 165, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to artists / Projet de loi 165, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui a trait aux artistes.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This bill extends employment protection to artists in the performing arts from a variety of disciplines and will enhance the lives of artists in this province.

### COMMUNITY LIVING DAY JOURNÉE DE L'INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in celebration of Community Living Day's 10th anniversary.

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

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I rise today in honour of Community Living Day at the Ontario Legislature.

This year, we recognize a historic milestone for Community Living Ontario, for our government and for the people of Ontario. Sixty years ago, a devoted grandmother started Community Living to find an alternative to institutions. Today, the government has closed Ontario's last three institutions for good, and it has kept its promise to end the era of institutional living in Ontario.

Je m'adresse à la législature de la province de l'Ontario en l'honneur de la Journée Community Living, une journée mémorable pour l'histoire de l'Ontario et l'organisme Community Living Ontario, créé il y a plus de 60 ans par une grand-mère qui voulait trouver une alternative aux établissements résidentiels.

Aujourd'hui le gouvernement de l'Ontario ferme pour de bon les trois derniers établissements. Nous avons tenu notre promesse de mettre fin à cette période sombre où étaient institutionnalisées les personnes qui ont une déficience intellectuelle.

As we close the doors of the Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia, the Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls and the Southwestern Regional Centre in Chatham-Kent, we close the doors to the segregation, seclusion and stereotyping of Ontarians with a developmental disability. Thanks in large part to the Community Living Ontario partners we honour today, we have opened the doors to a new era of community living.

For too long, people with developmental disabilities did not have a voice, so the people at Community Living Ontario lent them theirs. Throughout its history, Community Living Ontario has used its voice to build communities that are diverse and supportive of people with a developmental disability. For years, they partnered with us to end institutional living for people with a develop-

mental disability and today we come together to take that final step.

We have much to be proud of. In just five years, Ontario has met its commitment to end institutional living. In just five years, Ontario has passed new legislation and invested nearly half a billion dollars to increase wages, strengthen services and create more supports for people with a developmental disability in communities across the province. Our community partners and families have been working tirelessly to help us develop the regulations for this new legislation, Bill 77. I am very pleased to say that these proposed regulations will be made available online for public review next month.

These accomplishments are important, but what we are most proud of is every Ontarian who helped to make these achievements possible.

En moins de cinq ans, l'Ontario a tenu sa promesse de mettre fin à la vie en institution. En moins de cinq ans, l'Ontario a passé une nouvelle loi et a investi près d'un demi-milliard de dollars afin d'augmenter les salaires, renforcer les services et ainsi créer plus de soutien pour les Ontariennes et les Ontariens qui ont une déficience intellectuelle. Mais ce dont nous sommes tous surtout fiers, c'est le travail de toutes les personnes qui ont aidé à réaliser cet objectif. Certains d'entre eux sont avec nous aujourd'hui.

Many of these remarkable Ontarians grace our gallery today, and I would like to address them now.

To the members of Community Living Ontario: Thank you for having the courage of your convictions. You have become trusted partners, remarkable resources and dear friends.

To the advocates, families and friends, thank you for helping us to see people with a developmental disability through your eyes as a treasured daughter, a trusted neighbour, a respected co-worker or a cherished companion.

To the former staff of the Huronia, Rideau and southwestern regional centres and the ministry staff involved in closing these institutions, thank you for your service. Your work continues in communities across Ontario today.

To the distinguished members across the floor, thank you for your partnership. You have represented the interests of people with a developmental disability in your communities faithfully. It is not every day that we pause to remember the contributions of all members in this Legislature, but I cannot think of an occasion more fitting. How appropriate that Ontarians with a developmental disability should be teaching us to look beyond political differences to our common strengths.

They have taught me much over the years. Craig Demers is here today. He taught me that success is a matter of focusing on your strengths, and he should know; he has more medals in more sports than most elite athletes. Thank you for coming today, Craig.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Phyllis and Scott lived in rural institutions for much of their lives but are now

active members of their Toronto community. They taught me that a community thrives when people of all abilities participate. Thank you for being here, Phyllis and Scott.

Finally, there's Richard, Donovan, David and David. Their enthusiastic entourage of supporters and friends taught me that when we reach out to help one another, we help ourselves most of all. I thank them for welcoming me into their home yesterday.

En terminant, j'aimerais que nous gardions vivant le souvenir de ceux et celles que nous honorons aujourd'hui : ceux qui nous ont quittés comme ceux qui sont avec nous. Vous nous avez beaucoup appris, et nous vous en sommes très reconnaissants.

To all the people of Ontario with a developmental disability, both here and departed, we honour your legacy and celebrate your spirit. Our province is better because you have been in it. On this day, we prove that it is not just great minds that strengthen Ontario; it is great spirits too.

#### COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It is a great pleasure to rise today to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party on the 10th anniversary of Community Living Day at Queen's Park. Community Living does fantastic work, not only in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon but in communities across Ontario.

Since I last spoke on Community Living Day, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with Community Living organizations from across the province and listen to their vision and challenges. It was very rewarding to work with them on Bill 77, the services for persons with developmental disabilities act.

The vision of Community Living organizations across the province is that people with developmental disabilities have the right to live in the community, to enjoy all that their community has to offer and to make a contribution to community life. This is a vision we all want to achieve.

This vision began many governments ago. Past ministers of Community and Social Services from all three political parties have had an important role in laying the groundwork for the closing of the final three institutions in Ontario. I would like to mention in particular the work of fellow Progressive Conservative and former Minister of Community and Social Services, the late Frank Drea. He is credited with improving the lives of those with a disability and working toward eliminating the institutional model. I was proud to see his vision recognized yesterday as the final institution was closed.

We are moving forward. The days of institutions are gone; inclusion is now the vision. No longer are the disabled removed from friends, family and community. Today they are integrated, not segregated; today there are more options. The differently abled are working in our communities, attending public schools and volunteering. We have come a long way from the days of institutions, but I would argue that we have not come far enough.

## 1530

Last year on Community Living Day, the Liberal government used this day as an opportunity to introduce and promote Bill 77, with their intent to create a long-term plan to provide developmental services for the people of Ontario. Almost a year has passed since that legislation was introduced. Even though Bill 77 passed last fall, it has not yet been proclaimed. Without proclamation, this bill cannot provide the long-term plan for the developmentally disabled that this government has said it wants.

We need to continue to build on the progress we have made. Organizations like Community Living have taken the time to provide recommendations for the implementation of Bill 77. I ask today that the minister table the regulations so that all stakeholders will have an opportunity to give their feedback. An open process will ensure that the changes we all want are achieved from the outset.

I would like to personally take this opportunity to thank Community Living organizations for their support of my private member's bill, Bill 94. I'm happy that the importance of Bill 94 was supported by all three parties and that the government has made the necessary changes to allow Ontario residents to set up registered disability savings plans without worrying that their ODSP payments would be clawed back.

During my time as critic for community and social services, I have had the opportunity to learn about the many volunteer organizations that dedicate themselves to serving the disabled here in Ontario. One such organization is Spirit of Life. Their mission is to support, enhance and contribute to the integration of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to the broader community by providing public education, advocacy and coordinated services with partners within the Chinese community in the greater Toronto area. I had the opportunity to attend their celebration event this past weekend. I would like to congratulate the Spirit of Life on all they have been able to achieve in five very short years.

Today is a day to celebrate the many achievements of Community Living organizations across Ontario. Let us not forget, however, the needs of those families who care for their children in their own homes. They cannot be ignored. Many families are caring for their children into adulthood and should be given the same priority as other families. I've heard from many families over the past year who have applied for funding under the Passport program and have either been denied funding or put on lengthy waiting lists. Families are struggling, and we need to help them now. Community Living organizations across Ontario are dedicated to enabling people with disabilities to lead meaningful lives.

It is about building bridges, creating possibilities and independence. For that, I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to highlight their achievements and thank them for their continued support and advocacy.

## COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It is a privilege and an honour to stand here today to speak to you about Community Living Day at Queen's Park. It is a privilege that so many of the people who are here today come from the 117 Community Living organizations across this province and are here to see how the Legislature works. New Democrats sincerely commend them for the important work, often unacknowledged, that they do each and every day, year in and year out.

I also want to take time to speak about the people that Community Living Ontario serves, our family and our friends with intellectual disabilities, so that they can have a meaningful life in the community that is rich and full. The goal of Community Living Ontario is, and I quote it in its entirety:

"That all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community, and have the opportunity to participate effectively.

"Community Living Ontario envisions a society where people who have an intellectual disability belong and feel respected."

This, of course, is highly laudable. It is commendable. It is wonderful. And it is a goal that requires the cooperation, support and partnership of our government.

It was precisely this partnership that we were all hoping would be strengthened in last week's budget. We know that people with an intellectual disability face high rates of poverty for a variety of reasons, which include, but are not limited to, low participation in the workplace and workforce, unequal access to education, and inadequate supports and services. As we were waiting for this year's budget, delivered last Thursday, I was hoping for some real progress when it came to supports for people living with an intellectual disability. But instead, we were given a budget by the government that does virtually nothing for those with an intellectual disability.

Before last Thursday, a person who lives with a developmental disability got \$999 a month from this government. That was what they got to live on, and who in this society, who in this wonderful province of Ontario can live a full and meaningful life on \$999 a month? That is only slightly less than \$12,000 a year, and \$8,000 below the poverty line.

The government then turned around and said they were going to be very generous this year and, for the fifth year out of six, we are going to increase it 2%. That's another \$240 a year; that's \$240 so that they are not \$8,000 below the poverty line, they are only \$7,760 below the poverty line for a whole year. That 2% increase equates to almost nothing; you know, it's almost nothing. So now we have institutionalized what is going to happen to people with an intellectual disability. That's all the government has accomplished for those who were born with a disability or those who acquired that disability: a lifetime of poverty.

On top of these poverty level rates, this government continues to claw back on the benefits of those people

who are able to find employment, to punish those who have sought and found opportunities to participate in the workforce to contribute to the economy the way that is urgently required. I have said in this Legislature before, and I will say it again today, that it is one of the crying shames of this government that they claw back half of the money that people with an intellectual disability make. Because they get \$12,000 a year, when they go out and find a job—stocking store shelves, sweeping floors, working in restaurants, picking up tables, doing whatever they can in order to fully participate in our society—we take half of it back from them. I have asked this minister and this government on countless occasions, including today, why they continue to do that; why they feel it's necessary to do that; why, when they pass budgets and proudly proclaim they're reducing taxes for business by \$4.5 billion, they can't reduce the amount of money they claw back from those who are disabled.

These people find employment, they make a contribution to our community, and they are punished by this government through a claw back of half of their salary. Does this sound like good policy or supporting our community members with an intellectual disability?

We invested a fair amount of time in this Legislature last year on the topic of Bill 77. Bill 77 was about services for persons with developmental disabilities. As my colleague from the Conservative Party has said, nearly a whole year has gone by and it has not been proclaimed. A whole year has gone by and we've had a budget that did not put a single penny towards this laudable new goal that the government proudly proclaims at every opportunity. But today, this bill has resulted in the kind of inadequate and inaccessible services that were promised but have never been delivered. Even in its final draft, it still has not improved the working conditions of those in this field, nor has it brought wages on par with the rest of the sector—the kinds of supports so that those who do the important work that Community Living relies on can continue in a tenable way. For goodness' sake, this bill has not, even yet, passed royal assent, and I don't understand why this government has not pushed it. It remains stalled and there is no indication from the government about when we may see it pass. That's why this government's sense of commitment rings hollow to me and I'm sure to people in this room.

Today, the minister said it is not enough to belong but that everybody must be a full partner. I thought those words were brilliant; I only wish they were true. It cannot be true when the partner that we are trying to include has half of everything they earn clawed back. It cannot be true when they are deemed to always have to live in poverty, and it cannot be true when this government has seen, over the last six years, on five occasions to give them increases that are below the poverty line.

**1540**

I want this government to make the commitment. This is the last year I want to stand here and make a speech like this. Next year, I want to stand up and say to the minister, "You have done the right thing; you have ended

the clawback; you have allowed people to work and allowed them to keep the money; and you have kept the promises that this province has said." That's what I'm hoping to be able to say next year.

## PETITIONS

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'd like very much to acknowledge the efforts of Eva Adams of Glen Erin Drive in Meadowvale in having played a part in collecting the signatures. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Michele to carry it for me.

### CHILD CARE

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

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision" by

the minister "to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased to sign and support this because I think it is the right thing to do.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by a number of constituents from the riding. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

"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 their grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"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 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.

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition. I want to thank Eugene Oatley from the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are" consistently and "constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

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

"The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

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

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I support this petition and am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Michael.

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of constituents of the riding and especially those who belong to the United Empire Loyalists' society, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

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

"The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this petition and it is my private member's bill, Bill 149, I shall sign this and send it to the clerks' table.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

“Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

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

“To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector.”

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

#### LUPUS

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I’m pleased to introduce this petition, and want to thank the Lupus Foundation of Ontario, located in Ridgeway, which is in my riding, for providing me with this petition. 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 proud to sign my signature in support of this petition

1550

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of a number of people I have met with: Jack Logan, Laura O’Neill, Joanne Ritchie, Jim Park and Scott Mooney, to name a few. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the recently passed Bill 41 with regard to speed limiters on heavy trucks was passed without considering the effect on traffic flow, safety concerns and interstate trucking; and

“Whereas the speed of 105 kilometres per hour creates a dangerous situation on our 400-series highways with consideration to the average speed of traffic flow being 120 kilometres per hour;

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

“That the Legislature suspend enforcement of the speed limiter law until the Legislature can review all studies conducted pertaining to the effect of this law on road safety; and

“That the Ontario speed limiter law be amended from 105 kilometres per hour to 120 kilometres per hour to remove the increased risk of collision on our highways and to prevent infringement on interstate trucking out of province”—and indeed affect the economy of Ontario.

I’m pleased to sign this on behalf of many truckers in the province of Ontario.

#### 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 their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relationships between 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 clerk’s table with Victoria.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present yet another petition about the many concerns in my riding. This petition is in support of the Lakeridge Health Bowmanville site, and reads as follows:

"Whereas the municipality of Clarington passed resolution C-049-09 in support of Lakeridge Health Bowmanville; and

"Whereas area doctors, hospital staff and citizens have raised concerns that Bowmanville's hospital could turn into little more than a site to stabilize and transfer patients for treatment outside their home community; and

"Whereas the municipality of Clarington is a growing community of over 80,000" people; and

"Whereas we support the continuation of the Lakeridge Health Bowmanville site through access to on-site services, including emergency room, internal medicine and general surgery;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take the necessary actions to fund our hospitals equally and fairly. Furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan"—CSP—"of the Central East LHIN"—local health integration network—"address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete range of services appropriate for the growing community of Clarington."

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of many constituents: Betty Pascoe, Elsie Roy and a number of others. I thank them for their support as well.

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of members from the Ontario Historical Society, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

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

"The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

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

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yet again another petition:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance"—how sad; "and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse" this wrong-headed "decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased to sign this and support it in the interest of supporting the grandparents in Ontario—and the children, more importantly.

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

### OPPOSITION DAY

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I move the following opposition day motion:

Whereas, under the McGuinty government's watch, the province's total debt has grown by a whopping \$62 billion to \$173 billion; and

Whereas our total debt load has already escalated to \$13,515 for every man, woman and child in Ontario; and

Whereas the McGuinty government has increased government spending by an unmanageable 40%; and

Whereas, despite difficult economic times, the McGuinty Liberals intend to continue squandering Ontarians' hard-earned tax dollars by spending beyond their means with a deficit of at least \$18 billion over two years;

The Legislative Assembly calls upon the Premier and his government to publicly announce a detailed deficit reduction plan with specific measures and timelines to eliminate, in the very least, the McGuinty deficit of \$18 billion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Runciman has moved:

"Whereas, under the McGuinty government's watch, the province's total debt has grown by a whopping \$62 billion to \$173 billion; and

"Whereas our total debt load has already escalated to \$13,515 for every man, woman and child in Ontario; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has increased government spending by an unmanageable 40%; and

"Whereas, despite difficult economic times, the McGuinty Liberals intend to continue squandering Ontarians' hard-earned tax dollars by spending beyond their means with a deficit of at least \$18 billion over two years;

"The Legislative Assembly calls upon the Premier and his government to publicly announce a detailed deficit reduction plan with specific measures and timelines to



eliminate, in the very least, the McGuinty deficit of \$18 billion.”

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Before I get into the meat of my remarks, I should point out that we filed this motion, as required by the rules of the House, last Wednesday, and the budget was announced the very next day. We tried to see 24 hours into our financial future, but our crystal ball was obviously broken. We didn't see just how badly the McGuinty government had mismanaged people's money in this province. We severely underestimated the level of torment this government has wreaked on current Ontario taxpayers and on taxpayers yet to be born. In fact, because of the recent budget, we can now say that Premier McGuinty is responsible for increasing the province's total debt by an even more disgraceful and frankly alarming \$66 billion, bringing the total debt to \$201 billion.

What exactly does this mean to people talking about their futures around the breakfast table? It means that after the budget, every man, woman and child in this province is now on the hook for \$15,400, not the \$13,515 that I mentioned earlier, to clear. That is going to be required to clear our total debt. It means that the McGuinty Liberals are happy to literally pass the buck to future generations. It means they're happy to say, “Not my problem.”

**1600**

The Liberal members across the way should be ashamed of the legacy they've been building for themselves. They will be remembered for the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history when they brought in the health tax. They will be remembered for the largest deficit in Ontario's history, a \$14.1-billion deficit that makes Bob Rae look like a Boy Scout. They will be remembered for surpassing their health tax grab of 2004 with an even bigger tax hike in this budget.

And now, they will be remembered for putting this once-proud province on the federal dole. Today is not just April Fool's Day; it's also Have-Not Day in Ontario. And it's no joke that today marks the first day that Ontario becomes a have-not province—not something to be put on the highlight reels.

Ontario, for the first time in its history, a past history of prosperity and job creation, will now accept a handout, courtesy of the rest of the country. It's a sad day for this province. What's even sadder is that Dalton McGuinty has agreed to accept these monthly welfare cheques from the federal government when it didn't have to come to this.

This leads me to the question: How did we get here? Well, the simple answer is, by spending without planning, throwing money at every problem without thinking it through—fast and furious spending, because spending, to Liberals, is like an incurable disease.

In fact, this government went from a \$6-billion surplus just last year to a \$14-billion deficit, just like that. But that's what every good Liberal will do: tax and spend, until they're red in face.

They'll tax the living, with a health tax of up to \$900; with new taxes from the recent budget on Tim Hortons

coffee, on audiobooks for the blind, on legal services, on Internet bills, on gas at the pumps, on restaurant meals—the list is endless.

Even the dead can't escape the Liberal taxman. You'll take a final Liberal tax hit on funeral services when you move to the beyond. That's the Liberal government's initiative to get you. As my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Mr. Yakabuski, pointed out to me earlier today, Dalton McGuinty already has his hands in the pockets of the last suit you'll ever wear.

We've got the Liberals' *modus operandi* all figured out. Their plan is to tax people on so many things that one particular item will never stand out. Every day we're learning of more goods and services that will be taxed when the Liberals move us to a single sales tax. Since 2003, the Liberals have terrorized people everywhere in this province with taxes, and there is no light at the end of the tax tunnel.

In the opposition day motion we're debating today, we are simply asking for a specific plan to get out of the deep, red pit the McGuinty Liberals have dug us all into. We're just saying, “Take responsibility for cleaning up your own mess.” That shouldn't be too much to ask. Just telling us that Ontario will be back in the black by 2015, two elections away, is not enough, especially when we know, based on their past history, that the Liberals won't be able to cut their yearly program spending increases from 8% to less than 4% in the years ahead, as they claim they will do.

The McGuinty Liberals have let down the people of Ontario in the past, and they have proven time and again that they can't keep their word. There's an old saying: “My word is gold.” For the Liberal members in this House, that's really: “My word is worthless,” or at least, “My leader's word is worthless”—

**Interjection:** Fool's gold.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** —or, like my colleague said, “It's fool's gold” on the Liberal side of this assembly.

The Progressive Conservative caucus won't accept a plan written on the back of a menu, perhaps at one of the restaurants that will lose business because of the Premier's recent tax extravaganza. We're looking for details, for timelines, for specific action items. The taxpayers of Ontario deserve nothing less. After all, it's their money. They have a right to know exactly what the McGuinty Liberals are doing with it. They have a right to know if the Liberal government is worth betting on with the futures of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I say to the Liberals in this House: If you vote yes to this motion later this afternoon, we'll expect you to come forward with some specifics that are well beyond the deficit reduction fantasy that's in the budget right now. If you vote no to the motion, we'll also expect you to get cracking on a detailed plan that is realistic; that's doable. That's our job as Her Majesty's loyal opposition in this province: to hold the Premier and his ministers to account, to look over their shoulders, to make sure tax-

payers' dollars aren't being thrown into the wind. We will gladly continue to keep watch over this government and expose them for their tax-and-spend ways until election day, October 6, 2011, when the people of Ontario will speak for themselves. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Newmarket–Aurora.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Newmarket–Aurora. I apologize, because I continue to have trouble with that.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** We'll keep working on that, Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in support of the motion brought forward by the leader of the official opposition, which simply asks that this assembly call on the Premier and the government to announce publicly a detailed deficit reduction program that will eliminate the McGuinty deficit of \$18 billion, which we've been promised in the McGuinty budget.

There was a time, not only in this province but also in the federal government, when "deficit" was a bad word, when every government sought to eliminate and avoid a deficit. It seems that somehow we now have come to accept that deficits are inevitable. In fact, we've introduced a vocabulary now that allows us to talk about a deficit as a stimulus, and justify it as that, and somehow that's a positive thing. When we talk about increased taxes, this government has now come up with a way to redefine taxation, and is referring to it as "tax harmonization." But the truth of the matter is that this government is imposing the single largest tax hike on the people of Ontario in the province's history, through what they want to now refer to and implant into the minds of the electorate, the taxpayers, as "harmonization." They would have us believe that this, in fact, is good for the economy. The truth of the matter is that even the businesses, who are represented by the chambers of commerce, whose leadership has advocated for tax harmonization—the businesses that those chambers are representing are rising up and they're saying, "Upon consideration of the impact on our businesses, we want nothing to do with it, especially in these tough economic times when we're having difficulty keeping our doors open as businesses." Yet this government listens to none of that.

So it falls to us as the official opposition to raise awareness of what this government is doing, to raise awareness of the fact that it's an \$18-billion deficit—which is not the debt. What it means is that for every man, woman and child in this province, there is some \$15,000 of additional debt attached to them because of the mismanagement of this government, and we're expected to simply accept that, and accept that as a necessity.

What we're saying today by way of this motion is that having crafted a budget that hands us an \$18-billion deficit—which means, very simply, that this government feels compelled to spend \$18 billion more than it's taking in in revenue—at the very least what this government

does is present to this Legislature, to the people of Ontario, a plan that is transparent so that we and the people of Ontario can hold the government accountable for restoring this province to a balanced budget, so that we can stop the rush into red ink and we can stop the mortgaging of our future. That is a simple request. The people of this province will be watching how members of the government vote on this important issue, and if they vote against it they'll be voting against transparency, they'll be voting against accountability and they'll be supporting continuous mismanagement by their government. We rest our case.

1610

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have had an opportunity over the last number of days to look at this much-unanticipated budget, this much-unanticipated set of programs put forward by Liberals in Ontario and Conservatives in Ottawa, that unholy alliance that has come up with things that I think have made taxpayers extremely angry.

It took a few days, but we've done our research and we've tried to come up with all of those things that heretofore were not taxed and are going to be taxed now. I just want the taxpayers of the province of Ontario to hear what I think is only a partial list, those that I've been able to uncover, of those things that used to be tax-free in Ontario and are now going to be taxed, so that every time after July 1 of next year when they go in and avail themselves of any of these goods or services or make these purchases, they're going to find that there's a further 8%. Just for the edification of those, this is what I've been able to find out.

**Energy:** Everything from gasoline and heating fuels, which used to be free, is now going to cost 8% more. So when you go out and fill up your gas tank it's going to cost you 8% more. When you fill up your home heating oil—if you still have oil—it's 8% more. If you heat by electricity, it's going to cost 8% more. If you heat by natural gas: 8% more.

If you go to a conference or seminar as part of your daily work, whether you work for the government or private enterprise, and you are required to go to a conference or seminar, those costs will go up 8%.

If you buy footwear that used to be exempt if the footwear was under \$30—mostly running shoes, I'm sure, but also some cheaper brands of shoes that cost \$30 or less—they are now going to cost 8% more.

**Prepared foods:** If you go to any of the many places in Ontario and buy a hamburger or buy a hot dog at the corner or get a slice of pizza, do whatever you do: 8% more.

**New homes:** You buy a new home—and of course there is a rebate and I'll acknowledge the rebate, but if you buy a new home it's 8% more. If that home costs up to \$500,000 there will be no rebate on that, but I have to say, for the people who live in the Toronto area, a \$500,000 home is not a mega home; it is pretty much average. The average home in Toronto today is selling

for slightly under \$400,000, so this is not some exorbitant home; it may be in some parts of the province, but certainly not where I come from.

If you smoke, tobacco will now cost 8% more. If you go and get a haircut, it will now cost 8% more. If you have professional services, if you have to go to a lawyer, an accountant or anyone else who provides professional services in the province of Ontario, it will cost 8% more. If you rent a commercial property, it will cost 8% more. I have to say that I despair for all those people who have set up their own private little companies, who have a storefront, who now see an additional 8% cost for the commercial property that they are renting.

Real estate commissions, if you buy or sell anything, any kind of property, will cost 8% more. A membership fee at the gym will cost 8% more.

A newspaper—and I have one delivered every day to my door at home. I pay for it myself, by the way. I know that's kind of a revolutionary thing, but I do so. That will cost me 8% more, as will the magazines. Even magazines like Maclean's that I buy on a weekly subscription so that I can see what's going on in an in-depth fashion around this country will cost me 8% more.

When I take a taxi, it will cost 8% more, or a limousine to the airport, if I am required to travel, will cost me 8% more. Admission to a live theatre will cost me 8% more, so even a night on the town will cost me more. Admissions under \$4 to any events, which used to be exempt, will cost 8% more. My Internet access fees will cost me 8% more. The landscaping around my house, if I didn't do it myself, would cost me 8% more. If I were a golfer, it would cost me 8% more for the green and golf fees in the province of Ontario. If I'm going to mail a letter, it would cost me 8% more for the stamps. If I am rich enough to send it by courier, if it has to get there a little faster, that too will cost me 8% more. Probably the kicker here, the one that bothered me the most, is, if you're trying to look after your health and you want to eat some vitamins, whether it be vitamin C, vitamin D or any of the whole plethora of vitamins and minerals that oftentimes doctors tell you you need to eat in order to be in the best of health, that too will cost 8% more. That's 8% more for everyday purchases. That's what the people of Ontario are going to see next July.

Last night, I had the opportunity of going on The Agenda with Steve Paikin. I was accompanied by a number of economists and futurists and people who were talking about this, but also I had my colleagues the Minister of Natural Resources and Mr. Tim Hudak, the member from—it used to be Erie—Lincoln; I can never remember now what it is. The three of us were on there along with three others. I was asked the question whether or not this was a good thing for the economy, and that's a difficult question. I know the Liberals stand up and talk all the time about it, saying it's good for the economy because it's good for business. I think the jury is out on that; I happen to think that it's not, but I know that there are some in this House that do. But I did state—and I think there's probably not a soul in this entire room who

would disagree with me—that it may or may not be good for the economy, depending on which side of the fence you're on on this, but it was terrible, absolutely abysmal politics. I know, and the Liberals opposite me know and people around this entire chamber know, that this has been and will be abysmal politics. That's why there has been a bit of a revolution and a bit of a revolt within the Liberal caucus. I read about it in today's Star, yesterday's Star. Other newspapers are starting to report that there are leaks coming out, that many of the backbenchers—in fact, even some of the cabinet ministers—are very unsure about whether this has been the correct political approach to take, because where this has been taken in the past in Canada, where it happened in Nova Scotia and in other provinces, inevitably what has happened is that the government has fallen in the next election. So if it's good economy, the jury is out. I happen to think it's not going to be good economy, but it's really bad politics.

I do know, from letters to the editor that are starting to come in across the province and from phone calls and e-mails that are coming to my office—and I know to all of your offices—the jury is already coming in. The jury is already telling you this was not the right thing to do, because ordinary people see that they are being charged more, and they see, beyond the one-year \$300 that the government is going to give to a single individual or the \$1,000 that they're going to give to a family, that this is not going to pay for this increase, this overall and continued increase on the things on which they expend money most regularly. They see that.

If someone were to buy, and this is not outside the realm of possibility—I certainly know, as a person who lives in the largest city in this province, that to buy 2,000 litres of gasoline a year is not untoward. It's probably what I buy. That is to take me around here; to take me on trips outside within the performance of my job; to visit my mother, who lives in Kingston, and my brother, who lives in Kingston; to visit family and friends; to go on vacation. It's not unusual for me to buy 2,000 litres of gasoline a year. That's really kind of small. That will take me—in my car, my 2001, Canadian-built GM product car—about 17,000 or 18,000 kilometres. That's pretty much the average of what people drive, and I know that if I buy 2,000 litres, so do most people—some more, some less—but 2,000 litres is not untoward. That 2,000 litres is going to cost them about \$150 in extra taxes. If you are a single person, half of everything you are going to expend and pay in extra taxes is going to be taken up by gasoline alone. What about the heating oil for your house? What about the electricity to put the lights on? What about your gym membership? What about restaurant bills? What about all the things that weren't taxed before?

#### 1620

When this government says they're going to send out \$300 to a single person, and that's supposed to cover it, I have my doubts whether in fact that's going to be true. Yes, they may get a \$100 cheque three times. Sure, they might. Sure, they will. I don't doubt the government is

going to send them out. They're going to send them out at Christmas. They're going to send them out just before the next election. That's what they're going to do.

But the reality is that more money is going to be spent than that. The reality is that those three cheques that come in for \$100 might be a little bit of a bonus, but those expenditures that happen every single day, day in, day out—that 8% that's added to your hamburger, that 8% that's added to your newspaper, that 8% that's added to the lawyer fee or anything else you happen to do every day; that 8% that's added to your gasoline when you fill up two or three times a week—are going to be very bad politics. I don't understand why this government is doing it. I understand why this opposition is trying to stand up and rail against it.

I would agree with this opposition and I would agree with this opposition day motion, except what they are also saying at the same time is not only is this bad politics—which it is, and I agree with them—but they are also saying that this government should not be investing in the future. This is where I have a little bit of a problem in the reverse, because we know that countries across the world—we know the G20 is meeting this week. We know that finance ministers, prime ministers, premiers and presidents from across the world from some of the largest nations—Canada is sort of in the middle—and from some of the smaller ones as well—, are standing there and saying what has to be done in terms of the world economy. Almost all of them are talking about some form of stimulation.

This used to be a bad word. It used to be that somebody would say it is a bad thing to stimulate the economy, but I am telling you I don't believe that there is any option in the world today save and except to stimulate the economy. When I see what the government is trying to do to stimulate the economy, I cannot stand here and tell the government straight-faced that they ought not to do it, because I think they have to do it. When I see what they are trying to do with the Detroit Three to protect one in six jobs in Ontario, I am saying we have no option save and except to try to do that.

I have to say that we need to play hardball, and I hope the government is prepared to play hardball. I am not willing to hand over money, as most Ontarians are not willing to hand over money, unless there are certain guarantees. The guarantees that I would seek are shares in the company, because I believe we have to have equity for the money that we are expending, but I also believe we need a seat on the board of directors. I know that might be heresy to some of the right wing. I also think that we need to protect the workers and the pension and everything else that goes there because, after all, we are going to be equity partners in that process.

But, having said that, we need to expend that money. Do we need to build railways and roads and sewers and all those other things in Ontario? Yes, we do; we've needed to build them for years and years. Is this an opportunity to build them? Yes, it is. It's an opportunity because Ontario is not alone. Ontario is one of 10

provinces, all of which are taking a similar tack. Ontario is not alone because the Canadian government is taking the same tack.

I never thought I would live to see the day when a Conservative government led by Mr. Harper and a finance minister like Mr. Flaherty would be out there pounding the drum for deficit spending, pounding the drum for spending money. This is really quite amazing.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I know some of the people here are starting to hoot and holler, because it's true. It has amazed me. I didn't think I would ever see it, and it was really passing strange to me when I heard the finance minister the other day stand up and say he's fully on board with Mr. Flaherty and he hopes the Conservatives are too.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yeah, but only on that issue.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, no—okay, only on that issue. But he stood up and he said that.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I know.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I think it bothers the Minister of the Environment. I don't know. It doesn't bother me. Maybe it does, but only to the extent that I never thought I would hear it.

But they are both starting to sing from the same handbook, and therefore—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** No, you know better than that.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Hear me out. Therefore I find it a little passing strange that the opposition would now stand up and make a motion that says we ought not to be spending the money.

When the Prime Minister of Canada is over there in London before the G20 talking about the necessity of those expenditures, when he is talking about the whole world needing to do in part what Canada is doing, when he is talking about free trade—when he is talking about all the things I hear so often in this Legislature—I find it very passing strange that the members of the official opposition, who purport to be Conservatives in their own right, are trying to undercut that.

I have a difficulty with this motion, because what I think the Liberals are doing in terms of this budget is extremely bad politics. I think it is going to come back and hurt the Liberals in no uncertain terms, come the next election.

I think people are going to be as angry at this budget as they were with the Conservatives when Brian Mulroney introduced the GST. When Brian Mulroney did it, he said all the same things: This is good for the economy; it's good for business. These are the exact, same words I heard from his mouth, and I saw the once-mighty Progressive Conservative Party of Brian Mulroney reduced to two seats. I saw it never resurrected again. I watched it swallowed whole by the Alliance and become what the party is today. It's not the Progressive Conservative Party. It's a new one; it's a different one. What they once were is gone, and the GST killed them. I watched the same thing happen in Nova Scotia. Harmonization killed them.

I wonder why the Liberals are doing this. I have to look you in the eye. You wonder why you're doing this. All of you wonder why you are doing this. But you are and you're not going to back down, and I don't understand why.

I also have no understanding why the Conservatives are doing what they are. They are attacking the fundamental basis of what they have stood for all these many, many years, in terms of harmonization. They're talking about running a deficit. They're talking about expenditures on things that are going to help the people of this province and the people of this country and, hopefully, the people of the world, in terms of righting the economy.

I have a difficult time. I have to stand to speak to this. I will not be supporting the government's budget; I can't. I can't support this harmonization.

I know that people will stand up—the Premier will stand up; the Minister of Finance will stand up and say, “You voted against some little, tiny aspect of this budget.” He will do it interminably. He will do it at every single opportunity when there's a tiny, niggling little thing in there that he thinks will cause me grief.

I cannot vote for the major purport of this budget, which is harmonization. In the same way, I cannot vote for the major proposition that's being put here today.

I believe with all my heart that we in this room, in this chamber, have an obligation to do what is necessary to set the economy straight, to set it right. If that involves spending billions of dollars on infrastructure, then I am prepared to do it.

I know from my experience as a mayor, from my experience in municipal government, that the opportunity to build roads and sewers, libraries, daycare centres and community centres, and to put the community right was a good thing. It is still paying dividends 15 years after I left that office. It was the right thing to do.

I am suggesting that the government is right, in terms of the deficit spending. I cannot agree with the Conservatives. I think that the deficit spending—

**Interjection:** You're going to vote against the motion.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'm going to have to vote against the motion. I don't support their budget, but when you frame a motion in two parts, attacking what is obviously wrong and then attacking what is obviously right, you don't leave me and the New Democratic Party any choice.

I'm not going to vote for it, but I want my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party to know that they are partly right: The whole GST combination, the harmonization, is a bad political move. It is not going to do what it is supposed to. But I would ask you to reconsider what you are saying about infrastructure, about the expenditure of money for libraries, roads, sewers, municipalities and all the things that are necessary to put people back to work. It is not just Ontario that is doing it. It is every province in Canada; it is Canada; it is all of the G20. Most of the leaders of the world are convinced that this is what is going to get us out of these doldrums, and I think you should get on board.

1630

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** It's always interesting to rise when we have our debates. It reminds me of that old political axiom: “Some of my friends are for and some of my friends are against it, and I stand with my friends.”

I am pleased to be able to enter into today's debate on the opposition day motion by Her Majesty's loyal opposition, as is appropriate. Let me say that the motion is interesting, and once we get by some of the hyperbole about “whopping” and “squandering,” you can get to the gist of the motion.

Let me just start by saying something that's not a surprise in here; we've heard it and we're going to hear it over an extended period of time, I expect, on a whole variety of fronts. This is a new economic order that the world is finding itself in. The old framing of economics, the old framing of tax structures, the old framing of jobs has changed worldwide, no less here than in other places in the world and in other places in this country.

It wasn't so many months ago that it was our government and our party under the leadership of the Premier with the fall economic statement that was the first one out of the gate, as it turns out, to let folks know that our government was faced with a situation that we were heading into a deficit year. At that point in time, his colleagues across the country, federally and provincially, as well as the finance minister's colleagues across the country, were all saying, “Oh, my goodness; not us. Not us in British Columbia, not us in the eastern part of the country, not us in central Canada, not us in western Canada and certainly not us federally. We're all having a balanced budget. We're not going to have a deficit. We're on track. Don't worry.” Lo and behold, not very many months after that, one after another they would begin to topple in the context of their projections of balanced budgets. Each of them saw their revenue streams decline to the point where they had no choice but to come forward and say to their public as well, “We're facing the same situation that Ontario is facing.”

The Premier was asked at the time of our fall economic statement by his colleague, and I was at the meeting where that occurred, “What are you going to say to your constituents? How are they going to take this?” His comments were, “They're way ahead of us. They understand the economic situation we're in. They already get it.” I think that was quite readily borne out. I would suggest that our constituents here in the province of Ontario already understand the need for fundamental change, both in our tax structures and in our spending, to ensure that we can retain what we have and grow a new economy.

Back those few months ago our federal friends, if I can call them that, our buddy—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Best buddies now.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Our colleagues in the context of elected office came into government with a large surplus. We came into government with a hidden deficit. Now

they are faced with a deficit financing situation and see the clear need for stimulus economic activity through infrastructure, principally. We clawed our way back to a balanced budget, and now we're faced with a similar situation: a need for some deficit financing for stimulus in the province of Ontario, as well as the restructuring of our tax structure here in the province of Ontario.

The proposals for change in the overall tax structure in the province of Ontario are going to result in about 93% of Ontarians having a reduction in their personal income tax. That's at the most basic level. We're going to take advantage of our negotiations with the federal government as part of our move to bring in a single sales tax—which ultimately will be better for the economy and better for Ontarians—to provide Ontario families and individuals with direct money as we implement the single sales tax so there's a very direct offset.

We're doing this for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is to protect the quality public service that we have spent years now rebuilding from what was left. We're doing it so that we can invest in Ontario, invest in the infrastructure in Ontario, invest in innovation in Ontario, invest in post-secondary education in Ontario, so that we'll be in a better place at the end of this recessionary period than we were going into it. We're going to transform the tax system in the province of Ontario to meet this new political order, this new structure we find ourselves in, not just locally but globally.

I have to question whether the official opposition, by virtue of their motions, want to us invest in Ontario. It would appear that they don't see the value of the investments in the infrastructure in this province, by virtue of the motion. It would appear that some of the key infrastructure investments that are being proposed are not something they support. Don't they have an interest in the \$700 million being proposed to rehabilitate some 50,000 social housing units in the province? Don't they have an interest in those individuals and families who occupy the social housing network we have to ensure that we enhance the quality of that housing for their quality of life? I guess they don't support the \$360 million to be invested over the next two years together with the federal government to create 4,500 new affordable housing units for those very same people, low-income earners, seniors and persons with disabilities. We have to make these investments if we're going to achieve these goals. If we don't make the investments, the goals can't be achieved.

I'm not sure that they support the \$175 million proposed over the next two years along with the federal government to extend the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program. Certainly housing is important in this province, and this is an excellent time for us to be able to make many of these investments.

We've been working with our municipal partners now since we came to office and during that time frame have made very substantial investments by transfers of funds to them, particularly when we were in a position do that by virtue of a surplus situation. Even now we plan to continue to do that, with some \$780 million proposed in

new funds in this budget for municipal projects, things like local transportation projects in our municipalities. Should we forgo the enhancement of our local transportation networks or should we take this necessary opportunity to invest in those, to create jobs in the province as well as enhance our local infrastructure?

We're going to be investing in new medical school spaces as well. I would think that all parties would be supportive of new medical school spaces here in the province of Ontario. We're all crying for doctors, but it's part of our overall budget strategy, and we need to have the resources to do that.

In this budget, the province is proposing substantive expenditures. We're doing what jurisdictions around the world are finding it necessary to do. We're doing what other provinces are going to be doing or what the federal government is doing. We're investing in infrastructure, we're investing in roads and sewer and water, we're investing in affordable housing and we're investing in transportation. We're doing that in this particular time through deficit financing.

At the same time, we're restructuring the tax system in the province to ensure that we are in a better place, as we move through this process, when we come out of it. We're doing that not so that the corporations can make bigger profits, not so that they can pay bigger dividends to their shareholders; we're doing it because that's our commitment to them. Our commitment to business is to make business more efficient, more effective and more competitive. But in return we expect them to create more jobs for our families, for our children, for Ontarians. That's the quid pro quo. To achieve that, we need to transform the tax structure, and our expectation is that they will return to us jobs for Ontarians. It will be our job to hold their feet to the fire as we make these changes, this transformational change in structure, as companies benefit by virtue of doing business through these changes, and that we work to ensure that there are new jobs for Ontarians in the short and in the long term.

I won't be supporting the opposition day motion. This is an absolutely necessary time for us to undertake the initiatives that are proposed in this budget, and I certainly look forward to the continuing debate on the budget itself.

**1640**

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'm here to speak in regard to our motion today. I'd like to start off by putting into context some of the factors why this motion is on the floor. I'd like to remind everybody that there is an old adage that hard-working people throughout Ontario know and understand, and it goes something like this: A penny saved is a penny earned. Clearly, the Premier doesn't know this adage, probably because he's never earned penny. But he certainly knows how to spend. Give him the public's credit card, and six years later we all need to go to credit counselling services.

Today we are here to debate a motion to stem long-term deficits and growing debt, crafted by the most

spendthrift government this province has ever seen. Today we have in front of us a \$14-billion deficit, the largest in the history of this province. But what are we getting for all these dollars? More government, more bureaucracy and more dollars out of the pockets and purses of everyday people.

The Premier certainly had some high-priced help to craft this budget, according to the sunshine list. So let's take a little look at this list. Ten staff in the Premier's office are on it; the Premier's own chief of staff, nearly a quarter of a million dollars—165% growth on this list since the Liberals took office—165%—and a 32% increase this year over last year. The sun now shines on more than 53,000 government employees. It's clear the Premier doesn't like the darkness. Soon enough, every public employee will be in the Premier's sunshine book.

Now let's shine a little light on the budget: the largest deficit in Ontario's history, a provincial debt that has doubled in just seven years, the single largest tax hike in Ontario's history, and spending that has skyrocketed past \$100 billion. But that's not all. During this time we have lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs, and expect to lose another 135,000 this year—the highest unemployment rate in 12 years. And the capper: We are now a have-not province.

This may be April Fool's Day, but the Premier isn't fooling anyone. Every time he turns around, we see his hand in another person's pocket. The only thing Dalton delivers on time and on record are higher taxes and broken promises. The Premier is singing a new tax song with this budget, a song of harmony. But it's not in tune with anybody I know. The Premier appears to be learning it's easier to speak out of both sides than sing out of both sides. With this new harmonized sales tax, we see yet another despicable tax grab and broken promise. In every other jurisdiction that has harmonization, the provincial tax rate fell. If this was an honest budget, the Premier would have done the same. Plus, no other province in Canada had to beg Ottawa for bribe money to sell their harmonization package. A \$1,000 bribe goes along with the Premier's new tune—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat. There's a word there that you're using, and I think we would all prefer—it would be better in a parliamentary way—and you should be careful.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I will.

Instead of dropping the harmonized rate to 10%, making it revenue-neutral, he's opted to take \$2.5 billion more out of the pockets of Ontario's residents. While the tax bureaucracy grows and grows, today we're a have-not province, our economy has gone from first place to last place in Confederation, and we have a government that spends more, taxes more and regulates more. The Premier doesn't realize that when you're deep in a hole, you ought to stop digging. We can only return to prosperity when the Liberals stop digging this economic hole.

We're watching unemployment rise, taxes rise, the bureaucracy rise and salaries rise, but there is a silver lining in every cloudy Liberal budget. Unfortunately, it's

in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Those provinces are knocking on our doors. Today they're here in Toronto to lure our best and brightest at a job fair, bringing opportunity for the people of Ontario that this government has not. The McGuinty government has offered them all a one-way ticket with his \$1,000—I'll use a different word—incentive in this year's budget.

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got to tell you, it's a pleasure to speak to this particular motion before us—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Is that a new shirt? It's very white.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You like the shirt? I'm glad you like the shirt.

I just want to tell my colleagues to the right of me that normally what I like to do is attack the government. I really do. As the former minister across from me, Minister Bradley, would often say when he sat here, "The enemy is there," and he's right. Generally speaking, that's what we should be doing, and I'm going to do a fair bit of that too, because it would be unfair if I didn't clobber them in the best way that I can and I lost an opportunity. I would never lose an opportunity to do that. So I'm going to help to do that.

But the Tories, they just drag me back in, right? They drag me back and force me to remember Mike Harris, and I really want to forget him; I really do. Most people want to forget him, and yet they bring his image back day in and day out. This motion does it for me, and it hurts me. It hurts me when I remember him, because what I remember about Mike Harris is that he took away \$14 billion from our provincial coffers by cutting income tax and by cutting corporate tax. That \$14 billion is gone, gone for good. We can't bring it back anymore, and the Liberals don't want to bring it back because they don't want to tax income anymore.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'll get back to you in a moment. But the problem—

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Rosie, go after Harris.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I know. You see my hands, how they move, right? With one hand attacking the right and the other attacking the middle, and that's the way it is.

And so the Tories depleted our provincial coffers by \$14 billion over an eight-year period. Do you know what it means not to have \$14 billion in provincial coffers and what it could do to help Ontarians, especially in a time of need such as this one? Do you know what it could do? Because the Liberals will list all the things they're doing with less money. Oh, they've increased services and education and health for seniors, long-term care, all that, see? And they do it just like magic. There is no money. They're saying they are increasing by the billions, but there is no money. They took it all away. But they have to appear as if they're spending billions and billions and billions, and they're not. You're not doing that very well. You're not doing that.

You remember the Tories when they said, “We’re going to cut red tape”? They cut so much red tape that there is no more red tape left to be seen or to be had. What happened to all that red tape? Yet they leave government and they keep talking about red tape. They had eight and a half long years to cut that red tape, and they’re still talking about red tape.

1650

**Interjection:** They ran out of scissors.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They ran out. They did the worst with red tape. There is none left. Yet to hear them, to hear the leadership candidates and others, you would think there’s still more to be had. I don’t get it.

They fired civil servants in any way possible, and they were proud. They did it with pride. They said, “Government offices are fat. We need to cut that fat.” And they did it with glee, with pleasure. They set about saying, “Goodbye, sayonara,” and they loved it. You could see the drool coming out of their mouths as they did it; they enjoyed it so much.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** If the drool doesn’t please you, they were vampiric in their desire to get their jaws into those civil servants and eat their way through that civil service. They did their best, and they loved it.

But now they’re in opposition, and it’s as if they have never been in government—eight and a half long years. So they bring me back and say, “Oh, our total debt has gone up.” They left a \$5-billion deficit. How do you do that? How do fiscal conservatives, great managers that they are in a great economy leave you a \$5-billion deficit? How do Tories do that?

You have to be skilled to do it. You really have to have managerial skills to do it. You’ve got a whole lot of citizens and taxpayers watching this program who actually believe that these people are good managers of your money. They actually believe it. They actually believe that Harper is doing a better job and he’s one great fiscal manager.

Yet at the federal level what have they done? There’s a serious debt there, a serious deficit there. The deficit is going to be on the order of, what, \$57 billion in a year or so? Nobody talks about Harper and his deficit and/or his debt, because Tories are great fiscal managers. Oh, the argument might be that if the Liberals were there the debt would be \$100 billion, but with the Tories it’s only going to be \$57 billion. That’s great. That’s great management. We don’t attack Tories at that level.

You see, it upsets me when I have to deal with motions of this kind. I want to be friendly with the Tories every now and then, because we’ve got a common enemy over there, right? That’s generally the way it works, and I am like that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I’ll tell you one thing: You’re straining the relationship.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Of course I am, but I have to do that. You’ll recall just a short while ago that—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Boys, I’ve got 10 more minutes. Relax. I’ve got a quote here by Bob Runciman. What’s the date here? March 25, 2009. He said, in respect to harmonizing the GST and the retail sales tax, “In theory, we’re supportive of harmonization.” I see. A short while ago, on November 26, 2008, John Tory, whom I respect, by the way—I know that most Conservative members are happy to see him go. I wasn’t; I liked him very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** David, I only have 10 minutes.

John Tory said that “government should consider moves like cutting corporate tax or harmonizing sales taxes to stimulate the economy.” Now, Tories might say, “Bob didn’t really mean it. It’s in theory, really, but he doesn’t really know what he’s talking about, possibly, and other Tories do. And, you know, that’s why we got rid of John Tory. He said foolish things like that, so we got rid of him.” They might say that—I don’t know—but it was their former leader who said we should be harmonizing, and Bob says that in theory—I don’t know what it means in practice—he supports it. Usually, if you support it in theory, you support it in practice, really, in my mind. But I could be wrong. I could really be wrong, and I await some of the Tory speakers who might correct me in this regard. But, you see, you and the Libs are like this—so tight are your arms locked in, arm-in-arm, that it’s hard to separate them—which is why I quoted Bob Runciman and which is why I quoted John Tory, because you are of like mind.

Let me tell you about what some Liberals said but just a short while ago on the issue of harmonization. The Honourable Dwight Duncan, in response to Tory questions, said: “If you think corporate tax cuts are going to solve the problem, you’re sadly mistaken”; emphatically he said that. I know you—because you said at that time, “I agree with him.” Now, some of your Liberal backbenchers have to say, “Now I’ve got to agree with him when he changes his mind. This is really tough.” I understand what you’re up against. And Duncan said, “We have very competitive tax rates, number one, in spite of what others ... say,” meaning what the Tories say. “Number two: We are cutting the capital tax, to the tune already of \$1.5 billion.” That was November 4, 2008—but a short while ago. It wasn’t that long ago, and you would think the memory would be fresh enough to be able to say, “Gee, I did say that. Now what do I do?” Could memory be that bleak and blackened that you can’t remember it? I don’t know.

What does the Premier say about this? Let me tell you: “Here’s the real issue,” he says, “and we need to expose this to the light of day: They want”—meaning them, the Tories—“to cut taxes in the province of Ontario by \$5 billion. This is not going to help businesses that are struggling today.” That’s Monsieur McGuinty. Maybe that was then—I don’t know—but that’s what he said. And I go on: “They are not paying corporate taxes today



because they are struggling—certain parts of the sector. Furthermore, they're not prepared to acknowledge that cutting \$5 billion out of our revenues means cuts to our schools, cuts to our hospitals, cuts to the programs that protect the most vulnerable, and cuts to protections for our environment. They're not prepared to acknowledge that. I am ... I won't go there," said mon ami Monsieur McGuinty, the Premier of this province. I say this because he said that on June 4, 2008—not long ago.

You notice how the Liberal members are no longer as attentive as they used to be when I was attacking the Tories, because when I was attacking the Tories, they were cheerful—"Go get them, Rosie"—and as soon as I attack them, they're busy talking to each other. Have you noticed? It's something that I noticed.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Looking glum.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Looking glum? They're silent.

I quote the Minister of Finance so that you would feel the pinch, so you would feel, "Jesus, what is he doing to me?" Right? What I remind a whole lot of Liberal members is that you probably had it out with him in your caucus meetings, because I'm sure about 25 of you had your hands around his neck, and that's not to say, "We love you" but to strangle him—just a guess. I think 25 of your members had your loving hands around his neck more than once. I could be wrong. If you think I'm wrong, correct me.

But I tell you, the corporate tax cuts of \$2.4 billion are in line with what Tories have done in the past and what Tories want in the present. It surprises me that they don't acknowledge it. It surprises me that they don't attack Jim Flaherty, our former friend from this chamber, that they do not attack Monsieur Harper—the federal Conservative leaders—and they cheerfully and happily say, "Oh, but they are the federal Conservatives, and we are the provincial Progressive Conservatives."

1700

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You're back on us. Hey, Rosie, get back on them.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I like to go back and forth. It feels so good. It's like a seesaw, right? I just can't help it. I just can't help myself.

I've been thinking all along that every time the Tories ask a question in this Legislature about a harmonization issue that they supported with John Tory and Bob Runciman in principle, every time they attack this harmonization and I hear the Premier and the Minister of Finance respond, they never once—except once—hardly ever do they say, "We've done this in cahoots with Jim Flaherty. We've done this in collusion with Monsieur Harper, in agreement with the two of them, and we did this a long time ago." Do you notice, they never mention their names? Do you know why? Let me tell you. There has been a tacit agreement that they would not criticize each other. I dare say that there was a stipulation that if Flaherty gave you the \$4 billion, you would just shut your mouth and not criticize him ever—not now, not ever, not once, not twice, not ever. That was the agree-

ment that Duncan and Jim had: "We give you \$4 billion and we silence everyone, including the ministers and the Liberal MPPs," who will never dare mention their names because to do so would be to breach a contract.

Two-point-four billion bucks to corporations, and a harmonization tax that's going to whack a whole lot of middle-class people in perpetuity—we're talking about eternal whacking of the middle class when it comes to issues of energy, gasoline, heating fuels, conferences and seminars, footwear costing \$30 or less, prepared foods sold for \$4 or less, new homes over \$500,000, which is the case in Toronto, where every home is over \$500,000. You're going to get whacked with another 8% tax on \$500,000—whacked.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** On new houses.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** On homes over \$500,000.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** On new homes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** On new homes, and on the other ones, 2%. It's a whole lot of whacking that you're going to give them. Professional services, rentals of commercial property, real estate commissions—this is a consumption tax. It's built in.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Yeah?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mike says, "Yeah?" as if he's waiting for the answer.

It's a consumption tax. There is built-in inequity. You're whacking people, and it's not based on ability to pay. A whole lot of people in the middle are going to be whacked forever. The people who should be paying more are people like us and those folks who earn over \$100,000. These are the people who should be paying. These are the people they should be taxing, not the whole middle class with a consumption tax in perpetuity, and that's what you're doing. You're doing that because you're afraid to tax income.

You think you're going to get away with taxing the middle class on consumption? It's going to be a beautiful battle in the next little while, because a whole lot of people are going to come after this government, and that, I take a whole lot of pleasure in because you're doing it unfairly and unjustly. People like me and the New Democrats are going to be with them against the Liberal government. We'll be reminding them that the Conservatives provincially had a position and that Jim Flaherty and Monsieur Harper are with the Liberals like this. We're going to do that in the next couple of months for sure, if not a year or two.

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you for permitting me to stand up in my place and speak against the motion being tabled or proposed by the leader of the opposition. I listened to him carefully when he was talking about his motion. I listened to many different speakers from the opposition party and the third party speaking in different modes and different ways.

I congratulate my colleague the PA for the Minister of Finance for outlining why he was speaking against this

motion. I definitely support his concerns and his position in this matter.

This is important for all of us in the province of Ontario. We don't have any enemy except one: how to fight poverty, how to create jobs, how to advance the people of this province of Ontario. That's why this budget came to speak to all these elements and this issue which we are facing at the present time in Ontario.

I know the opposition members support part of the budget, but they don't support the other part. They support tax cuts for the businesses, but they don't support investment in our communities, in our hospitals, in our education system, in innovation and research in Ontario. It's important for all of us to continue the support for the most important elements of our society. If this budget passes, it will create a massive investment in our infrastructure, which we need badly in this province. If we decided not to run a deficit, we could, to the member opposite, but we choose to continue—

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** We'd just have to slash everything.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Yes, we'd have to slash infrastructure, education, health care, everything in the province of Ontario. So we decided to invest in our infrastructure because infrastructure is important for all of us in Ontario. Yesterday we were talking about Metrolinx, creating a transportation authority to make sure the congestion inside and outside Toronto would be eliminated or reduced. It's important for our economy also to widen our highways, fix our bridges, rebuild the sewer system and repave most of the highways and roads in Ontario. It's important for us, for a prosperous future in this province.

We could choose not to invest in health care. But many people cannot visit hospitals, cannot be treated, cannot find a doctor, cannot find a nurse, so we choose otherwise; we choose to continue to invest in the health care system.

We could choose not to invest in research and innovation, but all the researchers and all the economists told us that Ontario cannot be prosperous, cannot move to the next century, without investing in future jobs, and the jobs can be created by the researchers and innovators in Ontario. That's why we made a massive investment in this area.

We could choose not to invest in our education system, but many thousands and thousands of our students would not be able to pursue post-secondary education, so we decided to continue our investment. This year, if this budget passes, more than 50,000 extra students will have a chance to continue their post-secondary education.

We talk about harmonization of taxes in this province, and I know it's part of the package. It's important to continue to create an environment for business to be welcome in this community, to harmonize the taxes. It's important to our community to create some kind of tax cut for the businesses. It's important for our businesses to be prosperous in this province, especially in this challenging economic time.

Also, for middle-income families, there will be more than \$260 in savings on a yearly basis when they file their taxes, due to our lowering the tax bracket for those people, increasing it from \$24,000 to \$36,000.

This budget is important to all people; it's important to all communities. This province faces some difficult times. It's in difficult times that the leadership emerges and takes very tough and difficult decisions. That's why this budget came: to explain our circumstances in the province, to tell us about the importance of the future. That's why we came to invest in education, in health care, in child care and in infrastructure, and also, at the same time, to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

I was honoured and thrilled when I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announce, in conjunction with the federal government, a \$1.2-billion investment in affordable homes across the province. I think that's a great investment: to maintain the stock we have and to build more houses for middle-income people, the working poor and the people who are not able to rent a house at full price, at the market price.

I know that whatever you do, some people are going to find it difficult, but when you explain our strategy, our plan for the future, to the people of Ontario, I think the people will believe it.

**1710**

Since the Minister of Transportation is with us today, I want to congratulate him on behalf of all of us, and on behalf of the people of my riding of London—Fanshawe, because yesterday he introduced an important element of his ministry: the new authority for transportation that allows people to come into and out of Toronto in a fast and professional way.

It doesn't matter what you do in life: Some people are going to stand with you, and some people are going to go against it. I was puzzled by the Conservatives when they stood up and spoke against it. Most of the time they say, "We are with tax cuts, we are with this and this and all this stuff," and now, when we are trying to invest in our businesses, they stand against it.

Also, my colleagues from the third party—from Trinity—Spadina and Beaches—East York—stood in their places and spoke, and I listened to them carefully. He listed many different items, and I don't know if they exist or not. I'm not sure if they're correct and accurate or not, but I want to tell you something very important: Most of the food when you go to a restaurant was taxable to start with, so we didn't add anything to it except for \$3.99 and below. Most of the time, burgers are almost \$7, not \$3.99, so it was taxable to start with. Almost everything he mentioned was taxable before. When we talk about a single tax, it means we're talking about the same taxes that were implemented before and will be applied in the future, with exemptions for the most important elements and products that would affect kids and the vulnerable people among us in the province of Ontario.

I outlined why I am against this motion. This motion will put obstacles against many different businesses in Ontario. It will prevent them from progressing and from

being welcome in the province of Ontario. This motion speaks about, "Don't run up deficits, but also don't invest in anything. Let people worry about themselves." That's not our approach. Our approach is to continue our investment regardless, and especially in a tough time like we are facing in the province of Ontario. Our duty and obligation is to continue to invest to stimulate the economy because it's important to all of us. It's important for us.

The hospital in your place, member from Oxford—I think that building a hospital is good for your people, for your constituents. Also, the school and the road you have—all of these elements are important. If you don't invest in them at the present time, do you know what's going to happen? The economy is going to go backwards; it's not going to progress. That's why you have to create all this infrastructure to welcome Toyota, which opened in your riding. Not a long time ago, I think, they requested wider roads and many bridges.

I think what we do at the present time is important to stimulate the economy, build confidence in the people of Ontario and also welcome businesses from around the globe to come and invest in this prosperous province. That's why I'm not supporting this motion. Hopefully, my colleagues and others will follow me in not supporting it.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to join the debate on our party's opposition day motion. The Leader of the Opposition has outlined the massive increases in spending and debt under this government. Generations of Ontarians will have to pay taxes to pay off this government's wasteful spending.

One of the worst facts about this government's overspending and overtaxing is that it did not start as a result of the current recession; it started as soon as the Liberal government took power. Since 2003, the government has increased its spending by about 40%, and the debt will go up to more than \$200 billion. You instituted new taxes in your first budget, and in the budget last week, you have put in even more new taxes. So far, your new taxes have never been enough to pay for your spending increases.

Some of the government's increases pay for needed and necessary programs, but a lot of the money has gone to slush funds and year-end spending sprees. The Auditor General, in his reports, has repeatedly listed examples of this government's year-end spending sprees. He reported that in March 2005 the government entered into a number of transfer payment arrangements that raised the year's deficit by almost \$1 billion. In March 2006, the government's year-end spending spree totalled \$1.6 billion. And 2007, of course, was the year of the slush fund. The former Minister of Citizenship was caught handing out money without any application process or controls. The auditor investigated and said he found, "The grant decision-making processes used were not open, transparent or accountable." The decision as to who got what was often based on conversations rather than appli-

cations. The overall year-end spending spree in 2007: \$1.6 billion.

All of these examples I have given from the auditor's report illustrate the incompetence of this government's financial planning. It's not just a question of deficits or surpluses. This government is not spending money to meet actual needs. It is spending money at the end of the year to match early budget numbers. Billions and billions of dollars go out the door at the end of the year. How do we know that the money is spent on projects that are necessary? The whole point of financial planning is to spend money wisely, to spend money on priority projects. The poor financial planning of this government at the end of the year calls into question all of their spending choices. If this government was a government of principles and ideas, they would have a guide to making decisions. That's what our party and our PC government offered the people of Ontario when we were in power.

Members opposite often point out that we ran deficits when we took office in 1995. That is true. We had to clean up the mess left behind by the Bob Rae government. We cut taxes, which may have delayed eliminating the deficit, yet our tax cuts caused economic growth which actually increased our revenues. This is because we had a plan in 1995. The voters put us in office because of this plan.

In eight years, we achieved massive economic growth. We took 725,000 people off the tax rolls and hundreds of thousands off the welfare rolls. The achievement which I am most proud of: Between 1995 and 2000, as reported independently by Statistics Canada, the PC government took more than a quarter of a million people out of poverty.

Members opposite should ask themselves if they can say the same of their policies. Have your taxing and spending and huge deficits taken a quarter of a million people out of poverty? If you have and you can prove it, I think you should tell us. You know you have not. Billions of dollars in your spending have gone for waste.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I would ask the members between me and the member to—thank you.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to take a few minutes and join in the debate today and talk to the Legislature about what's important to my constituents in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I can tell you that it is of critical importance to my constituents in Etobicoke–Lakeshore that our government is taking steps to preserve and create jobs, and that is, for me, the highlight of all of the steps undertaken in this year's budget. Through \$34 billion in infrastructure and other stimulus, jobs will be created in Ontario: \$32.5 billion in infrastructure investments over two years, supporting more than 300,000 jobs.

I had the opportunity to join the Premier and Minister Smitherman at St. Joseph's hospital just outside my community, a health care institution that serves our community very well, amongst others that we have, and to

learn from those individuals and see directly, speak to the construction workers, speak to those who will directly benefit from that infrastructure dollar funding and how much it means to them to know that after this project there will be another project and that the government is accelerating investment dollars out in our communities to ensure that jobs will be there for them and their families.

In addition, there's \$750 million over two years for job creation and skills training, including apprenticeship training, tax credits, the most generous in Canada—again, jobs and training available for people to make a future for themselves and their families.

**1720**

We recognize and understand that summer jobs are of critical importance. If university and college students don't have the opportunity to earn money over the summer, they won't be able to continue to go to school. The summer job opportunities for youth will be expanded by 57% this summer, helping more than 100,000 young Ontarians get a job so that they can have a way to get themselves through the summer and through school in the upcoming year.

There is additional support in the budget for the manufacturing, forest products, mining, agricultural and small business sectors. Those initiatives are of critical importance to my constituents in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I also had an opportunity, immediately following the budget, to join with my colleagues Donna Cansfield and Shafiq Qadri and have a town hall meeting in Etobicoke, an Etobicoke-wide meeting to answer questions with regard to the budget. In that meeting, I talked about the comprehensive tax reform package and why it was part of ensuring a stronger economy for tomorrow, a critical element to job creation and preservation.

I want to turn to a well-known expert in our city, Roger Martin, who recently wrote an opinion piece in the *Toronto Star*. Roger Martin, who is from the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, talked about the fact that this budget was about jobs. This is what he said:

“The recent Ontario budget represents an exceedingly important step forward with its bold tax measures that will benefit all Ontarians. Businesses, consumers and families should be delighted with the leadership this government has shown.

“For us, the most positive feature is the impact it will have on new business investment and, therefore, jobs and wages.

“We need more investment by Ontario businesses to improve prosperity for the average Ontarian”—like those who live in my community.

He went on to say, “If we want higher wages and more secure jobs, we need more investment by our businesses.”

He asked rhetorically, “Do taxes affect investments? There's plenty of research by tax experts and other economists to show that new business investments are increased when taxes on them are reduced....

“By changing our provincial sales tax to a value-added tax, Ontario will eliminate those taxes on business invest-

ments and other inputs. When Quebec and the three Atlantic provinces made this conversion, they saw their business investment jump 11%....

“What about the charge that the conversion to a harmonized sales tax and the reduction in corporate income taxes are just part of a business agenda? This doesn't stand up to scrutiny because the research indicates that most corporate taxes are borne by workers.

“This occurs in two ways. First, firms are able to pass on a significant portion of the additional costs of corporate taxation to their employees in the form of lower wages. Second, as we have said, workers suffer from high corporate taxes as the lower investment in productivity- and wage-enhancing investments in machinery, equipment, and software hurts job creation and wages.

“Lowering taxes on business investment isn't ‘business friendly,’ it's Ontario friendly. The government took very bold action when the easier but less productive political strategy would have been to wait until conditions are better. Many argue that governments can't be bold; can't do the right thing because it isn't politically saleable. This government, with this budget, shows that to be the view of defeatists. Congratulations.”

Those are the words of Roger Martin of the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity.

I think that the constituents in Etobicoke–Lakeshore also understood, when we had an opportunity to go through the actual models of how the new tax reforms would positively affect them, that they had really been done a disservice by those in the opposition and otherwise who had sought to simplify this issue. This is comprehensive tax reform. It is the alteration of a retail sales tax system that has been in place since the early 1960s—and I would suggest to you that the world has changed a great deal since 1961.

The combined impacts of the proposed sales tax changes and the tax relief for Ontarians are significant, and in the minutes that I have remaining, I'll just give one or two examples. For a couple who earns \$70,000 and has two children, the impact of the single sales tax, without any of the other comprehensive reform, would cost them \$420. When you combine the credits and the personal income tax cuts that are available to them in the first year, they will benefit by \$1,360, with a net impact of \$940 to the positive. Three years later, as we move out of our transition period, the impact of the single sales tax would have been a loss to that family unit of \$130. When you combine the credits and the personal income tax cuts, they are to the good by \$695, with a net benefit—a positive impact—of \$565. That family represents the constituents that I am pleased in many ways to represent.

We look at another family: a single parent with one child earning \$25,000 a year, for example. That parent would benefit, net impact, in the first year by \$1,105, and by the third year by \$570 in a positive mechanism.

It is important that Ontarians understand the comprehensive nature of this. It will benefit our province and it will benefit 93% of Ontario families, families that I am

pleased to represent in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. In the long run, it's an important, bold and positive step forward. I'm very pleased to stand today in support of the budget and in opposition to the opposition motion being brought forward.

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

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to begin by restating some remarks taken from the Hansard of December 1990, more than 18 years ago:

“We in Wellington understand the economic value of hard work and the social value of personal responsibility. From this understanding stems a serious concern when our government refuses to live within its means, when our government grows until it begins to inhibit overall economic growth, when even excessive taxation does not prevent the expansion of government debt.”

This passage from Hansard is taken from my maiden speech in the Legislature. I wanted that speech to be a thoughtful presentation which touched on the most fundamental values of people I've felt so privileged to represent. I believe that those words ring as true today as they did in 1990, but I regret to say that our government, the present McGuinty government in particular, has abjectly failed to live within its means.

As my colleague the member from Leeds–Grenville has demonstrated with this motion and with his comments, this Liberal government has failed to reduce debt even in good times. My constituents in Wellington–Halton Hills know that reducing debt in good times is the best way to prepare for tough times. It's a common-sense philosophy for most households, farms and small businesses, but it's one that this government has all but ignored.

One of my points of reference is the year 1987. That year, I began working full-time for my predecessor, Jack Johnson, then the MPP for Wellington—as fine a man as I've ever known. At that time, the province's accumulated deficit, the terminology used at the time to measure the provincial debt, stood at just over \$34 billion. In other words, it took from 1867 to 1987—that's 120 years—to ring up a debt of \$34 billion.

Incredibly, the McGuinty government's latest budget papers, on page 146, show that when the McGuinty government comes to a merciful end in 2011, the total debt is projected to be \$236 billion. In the time that I've been here at Queen's Park, the total debt of the province has exploded by a factor of seven. I say again: It will have gone up from \$34 billion to \$236 billion—an increase of almost seven times. I wonder what future generations will say about this government's leadership on money matters and its selfish inability to live within our means. I think I can guess.

In this debate, does the McGuinty government deny that they have grown our debt by \$66 billion in six years? Would anyone believe them if they did? By any measure, the McGuinty government's fiscal record is atrocious. It suggests to me that this government is without a sense of responsibility to our future and our children's future—a future that this government has mortgaged to the hilt.

Some members may recall that in 1997 I introduced a motion in this House calling on the government to commit itself to pay off the provincial debt over a 25-year period, which would have included interim targets. It passed with the support of the House and, during our term of government, provincial debt was actually paid down.

When this government was elected in 2003, I questioned their commitment to fiscal responsibility, so I brought forward a debt retirement motion again, but it was defeated when every single Liberal member voted against it, as I believe they were instructed to do.

This is the challenge of our time. When the McGuinty government took office, it couldn't wait to open the vault and spend: spend with abandon, spend with impunity, spend like there was no tomorrow. Well, tomorrow is now here, and if the government had any sense of contrition it would acknowledge its poor financial management, it would renounce its record of fiscal profligacy, it would apologize to Ontarians and it would vote to support this motion.

1730

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It is a pleasure for me to get a few minutes on the record today on this motion. It's interesting; I know one of the things that we talked about when we had the opportunity to be at OGRA/ROMA at the end of February this year to consult with many of our rural municipal politicians—one of the things that was particularly clear at that time was the need to make additional infrastructure investments in the province of Ontario.

We all know that there has been a considerable inventory of projects across the province—water, waste water treatment plants, sewers, roads and bridges—and one of the things that is certainly a unifier for those individuals from elected councils from smaller parts of Ontario is the need to put additional money into infrastructure.

Over the next two years, indeed, we'll put some \$32.5 billion into that area in the province of Ontario to effectively renew many of our communities across Ontario. There has been some criticism about the fact that we are and will be running a deficit over the next number of years, but those key investments that we'll be making over the next little while will pay enormous dividends down the road for future generations to come. Many people who have the foresight to see the wisdom in these investments are certainly coming to the forefront. They have been reported in various media outlets—that indeed this is the right decision for our government at this particular time.

It's interesting to note also that we're making additional investments in community colleges, universities and skill training in the province of Ontario. Effectively, what we're doing is establishing a positive foundation for the future.

We are also giving municipalities new opportunities. On October 31, 2008, the Minister of Municipal Affairs

and Housing signed a landmark protocol agreement which will continue the upload of services off the backs of property taxpayers of the province of Ontario and back to the province, where those services really belong and payment should be made.

So, when you look at our budget and some of the very positive initiatives in the budget, you can see that we are indeed setting the course, I think, for a positive future direction, to create an economic climate that's very positive for Ontario to emerge even stronger and better as we get through these economic challenges.

I had a couple of moments there and I'm pleased to get my thoughts on the record this afternoon.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, you will know that my colleagues and I have stood on numerous occasions in this Legislature over the past year warning the McGuinty government to save for a rainy day. All of those present across the way seemed so comfortable in their little world; they seemed to have no idea of what was occurring as they taxed and spent their way across this great province of Ontario.

I've told members opposite about the southwestern Ontario tobacco farmers and, of course, Ontario's hog producers, our cattlemen, our hort producers who have been going under. We've talked about the fact that Skil saws and hammers have been silenced in Haldimand county because of an illegal native occupation, an occupation that this government continues to neglect. I've talked about car dealerships in Delhi. We've lost all three new-car dealerships in the town of Delhi.

The e-mails that we receive in our constituency offices—people worried about their jobs and worried about their family's future; they were right. On this side of the House, I feel we were right over the past year or two. The question is, how could people across Ontario see this coming and the government could not see this coming? You allowed Ontario to sail into this recession with very high tax rates, a ballooning public sector and a staggering rate of private sector job loss. You put yourselves in such a bad position to deal with this recession because of your ignorance and your neglect, and now Ontarians are facing a McGuinty plan of seven years of red ink, a \$56.8-billion deficit during that time.

This government needs to admit that it failed to plan; it basically appears to have given up. There's no real discussion about any real plan. In the 2009 budget very recently, we heard news of an \$18-billion deficit over two years and a \$200-billion-plus debt. It really does look like the finance minister and the Premier have panicked.

You can't spend your way out of have-not status. You can't spend your way out of a recession. The debt load now for every man, woman and child in the province of Ontario is sitting at \$15,400. That's unbelievable. What if we in Ontario ran our households that way? There's that expression, "You dig your own hole," and we've certainly seen it in the past year.

This fiscal chaos was avoidable. Had you stuck to your spending targets, there would be no deficit. Spending by more than twice the rate of inflation and spending by more than twice the rate of population growth is obviously unsustainable.

While Mr. McGuinty attempts to tax, spend, borrow and regulate his way out of this crisis, this recession, this have-not status, he is penalizing every single working family across the province of Ontario. All of us are being nickeled and dimed to death.

Have the members opposite ever heard of the word "restraint"? I suggest that you learn what that word means, because those of us who live in the province Ontario cannot afford another two years of taxing and spending and borrowing. Again, today is April Fool's Day. The only joke in this House is this government's lack of planning. The only joke here is the government of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I just wanted to intervene very briefly in this debate to say that this budget deserves serious consideration. I turned on my television last night, as I have on many nights, and sometimes you'll see some news out of Buffalo or sometimes you'll see some news out of Detroit. Sometimes you'll see some news out of Sacramento. These are serious times, and they demand serious measures.

The province of Ontario is in those difficult times, and we are taking a responsible position to get out of it. That's what this budget is about. It's about families in Ontario; it's about jobs in Ontario; it's about prosperity in Ontario.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to speak to this opposition day motion here at Queen's Park this afternoon.

As our leader said earlier today, this motion is about the failure of this government to deal with a debt reduction plan and what we're going to be dealing with as a deficit in this province as a result of the McGuinty government's mismanagement of our finances.

Had they adopted Progressive Conservative policies or policies that we as Progressive Conservatives were recommending over the last few years, we wouldn't be in the mess that we're in today; we would be in a far better position to weather the kind of economic storm that has beset us at this time. But as our leader said the other day, they had the revenue, they had the money and they spent it like drunken sailors. Any way they could get it out the door, they got it out the door. In fact, if you recall—and I know my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills has said this before, how they went on spending sprees at the end of the year just to get money out the door so that they wouldn't show surpluses.

**1740**

Now the hard times have hit. Now you have to show leadership. And what are they doing? They're showing

confusion. They really don't know what they want to do. The Premier has put us on a path where the debt in this province is going to amount to \$15,400 for every man, woman and child in this province—\$15,400. Tell that to a family, a husband and wife and four children. Well, that's six people, that's \$90,000-plus, the debt for a relatively average Ontario family.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Four children is average?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's what we have, four, so we make up for those who have less.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The average is about two—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Beaches—East York is chiding me about the size of the average family. I came from a family of 14; four is small. But for a family of four children and two parents, it's a \$90,000 debt as a result of the McGuinty government's policies.

When I talk about confusion, just think about what the confusion was like in the Liberal caucus room last week when the Premier had to explain to his caucus how on March 10 he told them, "No, no; nothing has been decided. We're just thinking about a few kinds of things we might do. One might be the harmonization of the sales tax, but no, no, we won't do anything about that without talking to you," and then they find out that the Minister of Finance signed an agreement with the federal Minister of Finance the very same day. If you want to talk about confusion, there must have been some confusion in that Liberal caucus room. The question they must have been asking was, "Does this guy care about how we feel, or does he know what he's doing, or is the Minister of Finance running the province and the Premier's just along for the ride?" Well, quite frankly, when speaking of rides, it's the people of Ontario who are being taken for one under this government.

Let's talk about that HST, taxes on a myriad of goods and services that were not subject to provincial sales tax before: gasoline—and now they're talking about transit programs and big spending on transit, massive spending on transit. Where's the money for rural Ontario? You know what rural Ontario's going to get? More taxes, because the transportation infrastructure of rural Ontario is highways—roads, bridges, highways. What is rural Ontario going to get? Not only are they not getting their share of the gas tax—and I will be presenting a bill again in this House in the very near future so that rural Ontario can get a fair share of that gas tax. But not only are they not getting a fair share of that; they are now going to be subject to an 8% further tax on top of the taxes that are on gasoline already. That's what rural Ontario and rural people are going to be getting in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Your hydro bills—is a hydro bill a luxury? No. Cable TV for most people today is not even a luxury. But you know what? If you have to, if you want, you can shut off the cable. You can call up Rogers or Cogeco or whoever supplies you and say, "Disconnect the cable. We can't afford it." Nobody can disconnect the hydro in this province, but your hydro bills, in addition to the massive increases that are going to be a result of the Green

Energy Act in this province, are also going to be subject to an 8% tax on top of the tax, on top of the tax and the debt retirement, which is taxed, and all of the GST, on which we're taxed again under Dalton McGuinty's plan for tax harmonization.

Tax "harmonization"? You got the first part right for small-town, rural and working families in this province. You got the first part of the word right: "Harm," yes, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

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

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak against this motion.

I want to share with you and with this House my vision for Ontario. My vision for Ontario is a strong Ontario within Canada. My vision for Ontario is a prosperous Ontario. My vision for Ontario is a caring and compassionate Ontario, an Ontario which can compete in this global world, both in terms of the businesses which are here to create prosperity and provide jobs, and also in terms of the calibre, the quality of people who live in this province.

The whole global economic order has changed. We have often talked in this House about how things are changing around us. What we are seeing today in terms of global recession is not something that is only happening here in Ontario. This is larger than this province. This is larger than this country. This is a global phenomenon.

That is why it is imperative that we look for solutions that provide a reprieve for Ontarians, for workers, for our families, in the short term, and that we put fundamental principles in place that will benefit and grow this province in the long term. This is our opportunity to ensure that this province grows so that all these children who are part of the page program in this Legislature can benefit from this strong, prosperous, caring and compassionate Ontario.

That is why, in this budget, this government has provided for a rigorous stimulation package to renew our infrastructure across this province, from rural towns and small towns to large urban centres, from providing public transit in cities like Toronto and my city of Ottawa to ensuring that there are good roads, there is good community infrastructure for our communities to use.

That is why we are proposing to invest \$32.5 billion in necessary public and community infrastructure upgrades which will benefit us all, not in the short term but in the long term, for future generations to enjoy.

In terms of the long-term well-being of this province, we are proposing very comprehensive tax reforms in this province, tax reforms that are going to ensure that Ontario is a competitive place to do business.

I, in a past life, as many know, was a lawyer, and I practised particularly in international trade law. I had the opportunity to work with multinational corporations and, for other countries, to advise how they can do business in Canada. We are in an extremely globally competitive world today, and we need to make sure that Ontario has

the right tools, has the right conditions to attract new investment.

I firmly believe that this particular budget, these tax reform measures which have been introduced, will allow Ontario to grow in the long term, to ensure that there are strong, long-term jobs available for Ontarians, that the prosperity will grow, that these companies who will create these jobs will pay taxes. And what will we do with those taxes, Mr. Speaker? We will invest back in our public programs like health care and education, programs which are essential to the well-being of this province and the people who live in this province. It's as simple as that. We want to make sure that the economy is strong, that the economy is creating jobs, and those companies are paying taxes, because those taxes pay for our public programs, for our health care and our education.

If we start cutting, as the opposition suggests, then where are we cutting? Are we firing nurses? Are we firing doctors? Are we firing teachers? Absolutely not. That is not the caring and compassionate province I hope for and I am working towards.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Runciman has moved opposition day number one. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Bailey, Robert	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Barrett, Toby	O'Toole, John	
Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Gélinas, France	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brotten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
DiNovo, Cheri	Milloy, John	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 10; the nays are 52.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** This House is adjourned until Thursday, April 2, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



**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	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
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	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	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
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	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
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi  
John O'Toole  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

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

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

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

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Michael A. Brown, France Gélinas  
Lisa MacLeod, Gerry Martiniuk  
Julia Munro, David Ramsay  
Lou Rinaldi, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Rick Johnson, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Yasir Naqvi, 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, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial





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