



No. 135

N° 135

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 9 April 2009

Jeudi 9 avril 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 9 April 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 9 avril 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WEARING OF PINS

Hon. Michael Chan: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of this Legislature be permitted to wear pins in remembrance of the brave soldiers who made the greatest sacrifice in the successful battle for Vimy Ridge 92 years ago today.

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

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 7, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 162, An Act respecting the budget measures and other matters / Projet de loi 162, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires et d'autres questions.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today on a day when it seems that the contents of this bill are splashed all over the front pages of Canada's national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*. This is a difficult topic, and perhaps a little arcane to some, but it is a topic that I think is timely, and we need to discuss what is contained within the body of the Budget Measures Act. Just for clarity, for those watching on television, the Budget Measures Act is a companion piece to the budget; every year we are asked to comment on a number of measures, usually following the budget, and occasionally in the fall as well, when additional or companion documents are forthcoming.

In this budget there are really two key elements that I want to address in the time allotted to me. The first one I want to talk about is the pension benefits guarantee fund and the second one is the extraordinary measures that have been given to the Ontario Securities Commission and the ministry to deal with market volatility.

As I started out, I think what was said on the front page of today's *Globe and Mail* is instrumental to all of us to understand the magnitude of what is being suggested in this Budget Measures Act, and for people to understand the extraordinary powers that the government is

trying to give itself for whatever rationale the Minister of Finance thinks important.

I'll just quote a few of the lines from today's *Globe and Mail* about what is happening. I think the very first line ought to cause some problems to members of government; it's under the byline of Karen Howlett and Greg Keenan, and the very first line says it all: "The Ontario government is moving to cut the support net for pensioners just as General Motors Corp. GM-N and Chrysler LLC teeter on the edge."

So what this government is attempting to do, by way of this act, is to secure itself and secure its own finances, possibly to the detriment of those pensioners who work for two of the largest corporations in this country: General Motors and Chrysler. That's what is contained within the body of this bill, and I'm sure that there are many people out there watching who are nervous, upset and unsure about what is going to happen to their pensions, their pension funds—whether or not they're ever going to realize them—who are watching very carefully what this government is attempting to do by reason of Bill 162.

The article goes on in the next sentence to state: "Amid fears of a bankruptcy protection filing by one of the major auto makers, the province is moving to limit the amount of money it would have to pay in a pension bailout."

I think any cursory reading of this bill will show that the government is giving itself the authority to pay, but also the authority not to pay, and also the authority to limit the amount of pay, leaving the whole field wide open. It is going to be completely within the purview of the Minister of Finance. It's even being taken out of the authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Not even the cabinet is going to have a say, should this bill pass. It's being left up to the Minister of Finance to make whatever decision he may choose to make in these times of economic turmoil, and that's what's in the body of the bill.

I think if I were a pensioner out there, I would be wondering whether or not my pension was safe, and I would be wondering a lot whether the bill is right in limiting the authority to simply one member of this Legislature. It's an extraordinary bill, as I said.

It goes on in the body of the *Globe and Mail* today. Skip down a couple of lines, and it quotes the Premier:

"Premier Dalton McGuinty yesterday described the money available as 'very, very modest.'

"That comes nowhere near meeting any liabilities—for example, for the auto sector alone, to say nothing of all the other sectors,' Mr. McGuinty said."

So the government, in setting out its budget and in setting out Bill 162, has not put sufficient monies, but is asking this Legislature to put all the safeguards to save, blame harmless, the government of Ontario.

I go on to what else was said in the *Globe and Mail*:

“But the pension benefits guarantee fund is now in deficit, leaving it ill-equipped to address any pension shortfall in the province.

“We would never have all the money that would be needed to top it up to meet all the demands for all Ontarians who are experiencing troubles with their pension plans,” Mr. McGuinty said.”

I think the government is trying, in effect, to state that, in these extraordinary circumstances, the government of Ontario is not the group that is going to assist those whose pension benefits are at risk. I think that is very—I don’t know. If I were a pensioner, if I was relying on my pension, if I was relying on the government of Ontario to ensure that my pension would continue to be paid after I had worked so hard for 20 or 30 or 40 years, I’d think that there is cold comfort here, contained within the body of this bill that the government is asking members of the Legislature to pass.

0910

The *Globe and Mail* article goes on to state, “The omnibus ... bill contains a provision to amend existing legislation, giving the finance minister new powers to deal unilaterally with such a crisis. Under existing legislation, the minister needs authorization from the Lieutenant Governor to make loans to the fund. But under the proposed changes, the minister could make grants to the fund on his own.”

Now, I really don’t understand why the minister requires this additional authority. Surely, the Lieutenant Governor in Council—that is, the cabinet—who has had the authority to make loans to the funds for the last 20 or 30 or 40 years, seems to be unilaterally giving up that right in favour of one member, and one member alone, of the cabinet. I would have some considerable difficulty with this. I do know that the finance minister is a man who has considerable political acumen, and I do understand that he would understand, on the advice of his officials, what might need to be done, but it would seem to me that the cabinet has a responsibility—not just one individual, but the entire cabinet—to do what is necessary in order to make sure that these funds remain solvent, that the monies are forthcoming, that they’re done in an appropriate way and that the cabinet is answerable to this Legislature, that all of the members of the Lieutenant Governor in Council are answerable to the members of this Legislature on their actions. Instead, it seems that the cabinet is absolving itself of the responsibility and leaving it in the hands of simply the finance minister. I find this rather strange. I don’t know—perhaps one of the members opposite can explain when they stand up to speak—why this action is being taken and why the cabinet, in particular, wants to change the duties incumbent upon it at this point and give it up, alone, to the finance minister.

The *Globe and Mail* article, skipping down a little bit, quotes Mr. Mitch Frazer, a pension lawyer at Torys: “‘I really think it’s the GM issue,’ said Mitch Frazer, a pension lawyer at Torys LLP. ‘This is the last remaining too-big-to-fail plan.’” Later in the article, “‘The government is basically saying ‘If we have a whole series of bankruptcies, we’re not going to be there to backstop the fund, let’s make that very clear,’” Mr. Frazer said. ‘All you need is one large bankruptcy and you wipe out all of the money in the fund.’”

So it appears that the government is attempting, through this omnibus bill that’s got very little play so far, to go out there and make the changes so that it can protect itself, can protect the cabinet, can protect the Legislature and perhaps the government of Ontario. But at what cost to the people who have paid into, their entire lives, the pensions; at what cost to the pension guarantee funds and everything else upon which ordinary Ontarians rely?

Currently, if a loan guarantee is made to one of the pension funds—and we have seen some of those pension funds debated here during my time in office over the last seven years. I remember in particular one co-op that was having difficulty matching its pension funds and the debate that took place in this Legislature. The government was able, if it saw fit, to float a loan, to give money to the pension fund to allow it to continue to operate, to make it possible to restructure, to make it possible to make new investments that might prove more lucrative. That’s what has been done in the past, but the money needed to be repaid. Under the provisions of this particular act, the new law will not require that it be repaid. So on the one hand you have the government trying to protect itself, and on the other hand you have the government saying that not necessarily will the monies have to be paid back. This is all over the map and it’s all being left to one individual, the Minister of Finance.

There is a new section as well, talking about the new maximum liability as limited to the assets in the fund. Heretofore, someone who lost their pension would have been able to, I suppose, go out and attempt court action, would have been able to go to the courts and sue the pension fund for not properly managing the monies, and could have attempted, I guess, to obtain monies over and beyond what was in the pension fund. What this is going to do is limit the liability of any of the funds to the assets that are in the fund. That is going to severely limit the legal rights of pensioners, of people who have paid into the fund over the long term, to protect their assets. There is a provision as well that allows the government to step in and then a provision that allows the government not to step in—again, leaving it all in the hands of one member of this Legislature.

There is one shining hope, though. I don’t want to be always negative, because when you are a critic you have to look at all aspects of the bill. When you sit on this side of the House, you have to look at both the good and the bad. I have suggested some of the problems I find with this bill, but there is one shining, good thing—because I

always try to find something good in everything. I am pleased to see that there is an ongoing actuarial analysis to increase the \$1,000 maximum payment that has been in effect literally now for more than 20 years. In that period of time, inflation has eaten the money. That \$1,000 monthly, which may have been enough upon which to retire 20 years ago, certainly won't cut it today. I know there have been reports and commissions that are suggesting that \$2,500 a month is more in keeping with today's costs of living. There is a provision within the bill and there is some allowability for an actuarial analysis to be taken to see whether or not the fund can be increased and the payments can be increased from the current maximum of \$1,000 a month to \$2,500. That is a good thing, and I commend whoever put this into the bill for looking ahead long-term, at least in this aspect.

Again, to go back, I do find it troubling, and I think today's Globe and Mail found it troubling as well, that at a time of economic downturn, at a time when General Motors, Chrysler, the parts manufacturers and many industries across this province are having problems paying into and supporting the funds necessary for pensions, the government is taking upon itself extraordinary authority both to do good and not do good, to allow ministers to intervene and give them the authority to choose not to intervene. It's all contained here within the body of what one can only describe as a very amorphous bill, an etherial bill, one that really would shift with the winds and could produce good results and, again, could produce very bad results for the pensioners of Ontario.

On this particular aspect—and I'll get into some of the others in the bill—I believe that we need to have very strong public hearings. I believe that the people from the pension funds and the pensioners who may be affected should have an opportunity to come before a committee of this Legislature, likely the finance committee, upon which I sit, and talk about the merits or non-merits of what is being contained here. When people pay into a pension their entire lives, when they rely upon that pension at the time they are 65, they want to know that it's there. Anyone and any action that will take it away or reduce it in any way would have deleterious consequences to the pensions and people who rely on them. So I'm hoping that the government is going to allow for some considerable discussion in committee and would be open to changes that may be suggested by pension fund managers and ordinary pension recipients to make sure that what has been paid in and what is being relied upon remains secure.

The second aspect of the bill that I want to talk about is the Commodity Futures Act and the Securities Act. This is a part of the bill which I suppose we could expect, given the turmoil that is happening in the stock markets not only in Ontario, but elsewhere in Canada and around the world. What is being proposed here within the body of this bill is that very substantial amendments will be made to the Commodity Futures Act and the Securities Act, giving the province and the Ontario Securities Commission the powers to take immediate action in extra-

ordinary circumstances—essentially extreme market volatility—to protect the public interest.

0920

Ordinarily, I would say this is a pretty good thing, because the market has been fluctuating almost daily, going up and down 200 and 300 points on an almost daily basis. The volatility out there is enormous. People who have invested their life's savings in the market, people who play the commodities or the futures markets and people who have ordinary investments in blue-chip stocks have been taken on a roller-coaster ride over the last year or two. It's trite—one need not belabour the point too much—to say that the Toronto Stock Exchange has gone from a high well over 14,000 points to where it is today, which is slightly below 9,000 points, in the last year, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average has fared even worse. People's entire life savings have been all but wiped out.

I think we need to give some kind of support to the Ontario Securities Commission and the government in order to make sure this volatility can be tamed somewhat. I take some comfort in the fact that this has happened in the United States. The SEC has been given this authority and seems to be acting in a similar way in the United States. We seem to follow, not lead, on this issue. But all the same, it is perhaps an idea whose time has come.

The criteria are set out for determining whether extraordinary circumstances exist, and the commission is authorized to make specific orders that expire in 10 days or less. Here we have an authority granted, but not really granted. It's granted for a limited period of time, and then that authority will expire. I'm not sure what kind of comfort that is going to give to those who have invested large sums of money in the stock exchange. But all the same, it is there. I'm not sure why the government, if they believe this is a good measure, has chosen such a limited time frame. Perhaps one of the members opposite can stand up and explain why, if you think it's such a good idea, you are limiting that authority for a 10-day period only.

I know the members opposite, most of whom believe in the system and what happens down at the stock exchange, would be supportive of a very open and free market. But at the same time, they are taking actions here that would close it off in the short term for up to 10 days. I need to understand from the members opposite why, at this juncture, they believe the market cannot be trusted. Because over the years that I've been sitting in here and over the years I have been watching the Legislature, I have heard most often, save and except perhaps during the years 1990 to 1995, that we ought to put our faith and trust in the market and the conditions. It seems to me that that faith is somewhat waning, and the authority granted to the Ontario Securities Commission to make extraordinary specific orders for 10 days is testament to that.

It goes on: "With the approval of the Minister of Finance, the commission is authorized to make regulations that are revoked in 30 days or less, but that can be extended." Again, here is a bill that is not really doing what it's supposed to do. If the government honestly believes you're supposed to rein in the market and give the On-

tario Securities Commission or the ministry the authority to do so, it is only allowing it for very short periods of time but, on the other hand, saying it's okay if they make extensions. I'm not really sure where the government is coming from on the bill. I know they want to grant these extraordinary powers to the Minister of Finance, and again, I'm not necessarily convinced that leaving it in the hands of one person is ideal.

As I said, what has been lifted here is from the securities commission in the United States. And although we follow them in many aspects, their market seems to be in even worse turmoil than our own. We, in general, would support broadening the powers of the OSC, and I should state that for the record. However, we continue to focus on the key conflicts of interest in the Ontario Securities Commission and the self-regulating parts of the securities industry.

I was in committee the other day—it was not the finance committee; I believe it was the government agencies committee—where the Ontario Securities Commission was called, I think, for the second or third or fourth time in as many months, to come and explain what is happening within that body and the efforts they are making.

Quite frankly, I am not satisfied that those efforts are taking place quickly enough. I do acknowledge and state for the record that after years of inaction on the part of the Ontario Securities Commission, there seems to be some movement to change their mandate and their body and their appointment process. But in many of the key aspects, including the adjudicative function, there has been no movement at all.

In terms of their constantly stating that they are waiting for the day that we can have one securities regulator in Canada, the question was put to them, “What about Quebec?” and there is no contingency plan if we never get down that road.

I would suggest that there are a lot of things that are still required of that commission. But what is contained in the body of this bill, at least in terms of regulating and smoothing out the huge fluctuations that are taking place, is supportable.

We also strongly believe that shareholders should have more say over executive compensation. I did, in the last Parliament, introduce a private member's bill, which of course didn't go anywhere. It was euphemistically called the Conrad Black bill. At that point, Mr. Black was still before the courts. That case has now been dealt with. But what we were seeking to do was to look at compensation that is paid to executives. I remember some of the hoots and hollers that took place in this very chamber when the suggestion was made that maybe executive compensation was a little bit high and that maybe we should have some kind of a bill or a law in Ontario that looked at the compensation to determine whether or not it was excessive.

I know that many of the private enterprise and private marketers thought that whatever was paid was okay. But I have to say that I think that bill would have gone a long

way in Ontario, and if it was a template for anywhere else in the world, to change some of the excesses that we have seen in the market: in seeing General Motors and Chrysler and Ford hopping into their private jets and leaving Detroit and going to Washington; in seeing the compensation packages that have been paid out to AIG executives after the government bailed out that company in the United States, and then to see them walk away with millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds that were supposed to be used for restructuring the company and instead went into the pockets of executives because they had signed such lucrative deals.

It seems to me that this government should be looking at that, should be looking and including—perhaps, if not in this bill, then in the ones we can expect in the fall—whether there should be something akin to the Conrad Black bill to address and to look at how much executive compensation can take place.

We also believe that it is time for those parts of the capital market that are currently unregulated or insufficiently regulated, such as hedge funds, private equity, to come under appropriate regulation as discussed in the recent G20 meetings. This bill, unfortunately, is silent on all of these matters. We are in a time of economic turmoil. We know what other countries are doing, we know what other regulators are doing, and we need to be a part of that. This government has chosen, through this bill, not to be part of it yet. But it is ongoing, and I would hope that the government, when it comes back in the fall or later on, before the end—not likely before the summer recess, but in the fall when it comes back with additional omnibus bills—tries to mirror what is happening around the world and particularly in the G20.

Canada, of course, is unique. We are the only country of the G20, the only country in the industrialized world that has separate markets in each one of the provinces. We're the only ones who don't have a national regulator. Until we get that, Ontario is, in my view, going to have to play the role of a national regulator. We are the largest stock exchange in Canada. We are the one in Toronto, through which most of the money flows. The others are very much smaller: Montreal, Vancouver—they are all very much smaller. We are going to have to play the role here in Ontario until such time as there is a national regulator. We are therefore, in order to protect not only Ontario but the investors of Canada, most of whom invest through the Toronto Stock Exchange, going to have to do the same things that the G20 is currently looking at—that is, hedge funds, private equity and others—in order to do what is right. I ask the government, if not in this bill then in the next one, please start looking at that. In the absence of a national regulator, the onus falls upon us.

0930

There are several other small items contained within the body of this bill, as there always are in omnibus bills, that are worthy of a couple of minutes' comment. The first is the Government Advertising Act, which will “extend the application of the act to advertisements screened

at a cinema and to public transit advertisements” in addition to the present print and electronic media outlets. I found it a little strange that the government wants to seek to extend its authority on what can be advertised and screened at a cinema. The trailers of films? Somebody’s advertising for candy or to go down to get popcorn? That will now fall under the authority of the government of Ontario.

Public transit advertisements: I do see them, particularly here in the city of Toronto, although I have seen them in other jurisdictions, most notably in Ottawa and Hamilton; the advertisements in bus shelters, in subways, at places where people await transportation. I’m wondering why the government needs that kind of authority. Quite simply, there was a question asked only a couple of weeks ago by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo—it was Ms. Witmer; I hope I have the right riding—about the advertisements in the bus shelters in the riding of Toronto Centre which featured, quite prominently, the Deputy Premier talking about an act which had not yet been proclaimed. I don’t know whether the government has taken this action in view of the question that was asked, because the bill came after that, or what the government intends to do to regulate what can be put in a bus shelter, the property of the TTC. I take it the authority was always vested in the city of Toronto, at least here, and in the authorities in other municipalities. It seems to me—and I have said for a long time now, and I think it bears repeating, that we need to give more authority to the municipalities in order to do what is right, not take that authority away. I don’t know why this government wants to get into the censorship angle of what can be displayed or how it is displayed, when that responsibility should rest with the municipalities. I think, certainly in the cases of the larger ones, Toronto and Mississauga and Hamilton and Ottawa, that they have done so admirably.

The other thing the Government Advertising Act does: “Section 6 of the act sets out the standards that reviewable advertisements, reviewable printed matter and reviewable messages are required to meet.” Again, I don’t know the reason for that. Perhaps there is a good one, but it’s just something I want to flag for the public’s attention, for anyone who might be watching this speech.

There are a couple of other smaller, related items: the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act and the Police Services Act. It’s strange the way it’s written. Again, I ask the government members to explain, or perhaps one of them can stand up and explain later in the debate what is intended here, because it says, “Changes to this act integrate islands”—and that’s the word that is used, islands—“of non-OPP union employees into the main OPP union.” I don’t know whether this is consolidation that’s been asked for by the Ontario Provincial Police union, by the Ontario Provincial Police, by Mr. Fantino. I don’t know why this is necessary, and I’m even not sure who’s involved, but I think that those islands, those people, those unionized or non-unionized employees, need to have an opportunity to come forward. So I’m asking again, just so that we can better understand

it in the absence of anything that has been said in this Legislature to date, that hearings ought to be held to allow this issue to be canvassed, to make sure that we are doing right by the employees and those who belong to islands.

The last is the teachers’ pension fund. This “permits the Minister of Education and the executive of the Ontario Teachers’ Federation to enter into an agreement granting the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan board the power to incorporate one or more corporations and invest assets of the pension fund in such a corporation.” I don’t know that they’ve asked for it. If they’ve asked for it and the government is in agreement, I certainly wouldn’t have any difficulty with it, but I think we need to find out, and again, that is why I’m asking that this matter go to committee.

I will close in a minute or two, Mr. Speaker; I don’t require the entire hour on this bill. But this is a bill with some contention. This is a bill that grants extraordinary powers to one member of the executive council; namely, the finance minister. It is a bill that may or may not assist those people who are losing their pensions and their life’s pension plans. It may or may not assist the pension boards in properly meeting their obligations. It may or may not hold blameless or harmless the government of Ontario, depending on which provisions are being used. At the same time, there are the provisions set out on the Ontario Securities Commission that allow for greater authority but not necessarily greater authority: a 10-day window or not necessarily a 10-day window; a 30-day window that may be extended or not necessarily that window.

Again, we need to hear exactly what the government intends and we need to hear from the experts who will be affected about how this is going to work to the health and the benefit of the Ontario Securities Commission and to the largest regulator in Canada. I haven’t heard that, and I’m hoping that in public hearings people will come forward to talk about the benefits or non-benefits of what is being put forward so that the people of Ontario can understand.

In terms of the other bills, they’re relatively minor. The Government Advertising Act: I don’t understand why the government feels it needs this authority or wants to take it away, in particular, from the municipalities, or why they feel they have to go in to look at movie trailers or what is being advertised in the cinema.

I’m not sure how the changes to the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act and the Police Services Act are going to play out. I don’t understand the use of the word “islands,” and I think that needs to be clarified. I also want to make sure that what is being proposed for the teachers’ pension fund, the largest pension fund in the province, is in fact what the teachers’ pension fund wants to do, and how that will affect the people of Ontario. After all, this bill, as its main thrust, is looking at pension plans, and I want to make sure we are doing what is right by those plans.

In the end, what I’m asking for is an opportunity for all of this to come before the appropriate committee—I

would assume the finance committee—and that there be some considerable dialogue between the people of Ontario, who will be most affected, and the members of this Legislature to make sure that what we are doing is correct. I know that in times of crisis, governments often-times react, and react badly. They react too strongly. I remember the War Measures Act—not to equate this with the War Measures Act—and how strongly the government acted to take away civil liberties. I remember that the same thing happened with the Securities Act in Canada after 9/11, and how strongly government acted against the rights of the people of this country.

I am mindful that in these economic terms, and in terms of what is happening here in the Legislature, we may be reaching too far or not far enough. But I want a full and open debate; I want an opportunity for all those affected to come forward to make sure that what we are doing is correct, is best and in the best economic interests of the people of this province.

I'm suggesting that the government ought to set aside three, four or five days of hearings in Ontario, and that perhaps we should take this outside of Toronto, at least to places like Ottawa or out to Windsor and Oshawa to have a discussion on the pension plans, particularly as they are going to affect the Detroit Three, because it is a matter of some considerable importance. We are looking at \$6 billion or more in bailouts, in terms of pension funds, and how this act is going to impact upon that. I think it behooves us as legislators to listen to what is going to be said, to listen to the experts in the pension plans and how they're going to be affected, and how we are going to, ourselves, end up possibly being responsible for payment of billions of dollars to companies that may go into bankruptcy.

Those would be my comments, and I thank the members for their patience in listening.

0940

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to stand today in support of Bill 162. This budget reflects our government's fiscally responsible, prudent and balanced approach. Our government's highest priority is to help families and businesses that are caught up in the global recession and financial storm so that when prosperity comes back and the economy rebounds, we can have a more competitive and sustainable economy in the long run.

On the day when budget details were announced, I happened to meet with a small business owner, a photographer. Do you know what his first words to me were? "I like the budget, especially the single sales tax, which will save me time and money, all of which I can reinvest in my business in various ways, including hiring more people."

Our government has been building on the progress we have made. We have the best health care system in the world. I would like to share a story with you from a lady who suffered from breast cancer. Meera says, "Many in-

dividuals criticize our health system due to its long waits. Let me tell you that after all necessary lab tests, when doctors confirmed I had cancer, I got operated on within two weeks—just two weeks.... Is that a long wait? No way. This is the best system in the world, and where patients don't need to pay a single penny."

This budget will, I'm sure, provide a true stimulus in the creation of wealth now and in the future, and it will provide job creation. I'm very happy to support this budget.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member talked eloquently about the budget and the direction it goes in. I believe this budget is totally wrong-headed and wrong-directed, as I think the member may agree with me, at least in part. To raise taxes at this point in time when we're entering a world global recession is putting the economy of Canada, as strong as the Canadian economy is—mainly because of the western provinces—in severe jeopardy.

There are so many things at play in the world economy. We saw some of them this week at the G20 meetings in Europe and some of the things that are coming out of that, with the US begging the rest of the world to spend at unprecedented rates, when the US has a budget that they have brought in that is based on a 50% deficit—50% of the expenditures of the United States will be on borrowed money. How sustainable is that, and what effect will that have on the world economy over the next couple of years? And Ontario is placing itself as a high-tax jurisdiction, which in that world that we might enter is totally unsustainable.

This budget should have focused itself on sustainable services, on a sustainable tax flow, on something that we could afford. This budget does not do that, and the future will show that this government has placed Ontario in an untenable position, and we will all be poorer for it.

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to comment on the comments made by my colleague from Beaches–East York. I thank him for his thoughtful comments.

I want to focus very briefly on the green economy aspect of this budget. As you know, the government has put forward Bill 150, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, to revolutionize the future in this province vis-à-vis green energy and creating and harnessing job opportunities in terms of the development of Ontario. This budget of course puts further teeth into that intention which is behind Bill 150 by putting a substantive amount of investment that is necessary to enhance green energy and the green economy in Ontario. For example: \$250 million over five years for a new emerging technologies fund that will include investments in green technology companies; approximately \$390 million to match Ontario's share of the federal green infrastructure fund; \$50 million over five years to enable the research capital and demonstration projects necessary for the development of

a smart grid in Ontario—and there are many more initiatives along those lines.

One aspect I do want to cover, which I think is also important, is changes to the Assessment Act so that in the future, if the budget is passed, if people make their homes more energy-efficient, those enhancements to their home will not count towards an increase in their assessed value. I think that is a good step in the right direction by making that change, because we are aligning, essentially, our public policy in terms of encouraging people to make their homes more energy-efficient, but then on the other hand not penalizing them by increasing their assessed value. This change through this amendment ensures that those two features are totally aligned.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you for giving me a chance to stand up, speak and comment on the speech from the member for Beaches–East York. I know he's passionate about many different subjects, especially about social issues in our society, but I want to assure the member—I know when he spoke about many different things he outlined his positions, and I understand that he outlined the position of the NDP, which is fair. Many times, the opposition stand up in their places and speak about whatever the government does, and they take a certain position. In this regard, I know he doesn't support the budget, he doesn't support many elements of the budget, and supported part of it.

But this budget, I would assure him, came as a result of the circumstances we face in Ontario—the economy collapsing around the globe. I think that's why we took a lot of measurements, in order to support our pillars in our society, from job creation, innovation and research, social issues and infrastructure. In our belief, in our understanding, this element which we introduced in the budget, if this budget passes, would strengthen our economy and give us the way to go to the next phase of our lives, with the strength and ability to maintain our existence in this world.

I know it doesn't matter what you do these days—you cannot cover all the things; you cannot be perfect. But I think this budget brought a lot of good elements, and it speaks to the reality which we are facing in the province of Ontario. I'm very confident in our Premier and our finance minister. When this budget passes, they're going to create some kind of stimulus to our economy, create jobs and maintain our advantage in North America and also in the global market.

I'm looking forward to getting more chances to speak on this budget, hopefully, in the future. I will be able to outline my positions and explain to the people of Ontario where we stand in this regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Beaches–East York now has two minutes to reply to those questions and comments.

Mr. Michael Prue: I thank the members from Mississauga–Brampton South, Halton, Ottawa Centre and London–Fanshawe for their comments, but I have to ask

myself—I spoke for almost 40 minutes. I talked particularly about the pension benefits plan and how this particular bill is going to operate, and the extraordinary powers given to the minister. I talked about the Ontario Securities Commission and the extraordinary powers that were going to be given there under this particular bill. And then the responses from my colleagues—I'm not sure whether I perhaps was not the most eloquent speaker today, but the comments from my colleagues were nothing about those at all. They were about their particular views on the budget. I never once mentioned the budget. I never once talked about the budget or whether I was opposed or for the new HST. I never once talked about all the contentious or non-contentious things contained within the body of the budget, because that was a different act. The members here seem to want to talk about that and not about the bill before them.

0950

I am asking for some legitimate debate about what is contained within the bill, and I did not hear any back, with all respect to my colleagues. I heard about the budget, I heard about the green economy, I heard about health care, I heard about all kinds of things that were not even said once. I would ask them to pay attention to the debate. The people of Ontario have a right to know what is going to happen to the Pension Benefits Act; they have a right to know, if they are investors, what is going to happen at the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Ontario Securities Commission and through the ministry. That is what is contained within Bill 162 and that's what should have been responded to.

I take no umbrage because I know that oftentimes members, particularly backbenchers, only get a two-minute hit and that's the only opportunity they get to actually talk about something that they may want to talk about, but it's supposed to be a response to what I had to say, and I'm disappointed it was not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I call for further debate, the member for Beaches–East York is quite right, and I'm glad he raised that point. As a former assistant Speaker, he is quite right that questions and comments are supposed to relate back to the original speech that the member makes. I know that during budget debates and budget bill debates there's greater latitude allowed in terms of what is debated, but the member is quite correct and I would encourage all members to keep that in mind when they are making their questions and comments.

Further debate?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm more than pleased to join the debate this morning, but I will take advantage of my opportunity to comment on the highlights of the budget. I rarely receive that opportunity; I'm delighted to have it this morning.

In reference to a comment made earlier by the honourable member of the opposition that this budget fails to address the need to make our economy more competitive, I would say “au contraire.” I think that what this budget does is recognize exactly the position that we are in in

very turbulent times. Indeed, I would go so far—and I don't think that I in any way am getting into hyperbole when I say that when historians look back at the turbulence of this time and the fact that we had a Liberal government led by the Premier we have, they will note that we had the courage, the wisdom and the wherewithal to look at and address the situation we are in and not resort to old policies and old ways of doing business that simply will no longer work. As the Premier has said, we can't do business as usual because it isn't business as usual. We have to indeed embark on restructuring the economy of Ontario, and that's exactly what this budget has set out to do. I believe, as I've commented, we will be noted for that, that in turbulent times we had the wisdom and the wherewithal to address the economy and not to nibble around the edges.

The reason I'm very proud of this economy is two-fold, if I can just speak on two streams. That is to say that I think we are looking at the need to enhance a private sector, enable them to become more competitive, to continue to compete globally, by taking initiatives in tax reductions, by adding the tax relief that they need, by creating a situation where they are less encumbered by regulations, freer to compete, freer to show the world the kind of talent and resources that exist here in Ontario. While we are busy doing just that within the ambit of this budget, we are likewise remembering always that this is a Liberal budget. And because it is a Liberal budget, our obligation is to those who perhaps are frequently marginalized; our obligation is to make sure that they have the safety net in social programming such as the Ontario child benefit, which is a hugely important tool within the social network. We have combined our obligations, first and foremost, to behave as a Liberal government, to be there and reinforce all of the public policies of the past, and at the same time to enable a private sector to act and grow and be innovative at a time when it is extremely difficult in the current recession.

So I am disappointed when I hear the comments, particularly from the Conservatives, whom I've always understood to be the great champion of the private sector, when they fail to see just exactly what we've done and fail to recognize those initiatives and to put them into perspective, which certainly the economists, the media and generally the citizens and voters in my riding have done.

There is a great acknowledgment that this government has moved in all of the right directions—in our fiscal stimulus, in our initiatives in infrastructure and, if I can just move into my portfolio, in the enhancing of the tax support for Ontario's interactive digital media products. I will kind of wax a bit on that sector.

If we look at the new economy and if we look at where Ontario has to go and to be competitive, it is indeed in exactly that kind of an area—interactive digital. We are, with no problems at all, I think I can say, competing globally in that regard. We have the talent here at home. We have the businesses ready to continue to compete. This government recognizes that. This government

moves forward to do exactly what that industry needs very much, and that is for the creation of, earlier, the tax, for making taxes in the creative sector permanent, for decreasing the ability of other jurisdictions to compete with us. We have, in the creative industry in Ontario, the talent, the wherewithal, the companies and the knowledge to compete with New York, to compete with Los Angeles and to compete with anywhere else in the world where a company might be considering locating.

What are we doing? Through the initiatives in this budget, we are enabling our sector here in Ontario to compete globally, to compete all over North America, but we're also sending a message to businesses around the world: "Do your business here in Ontario." We're creating a tax structure with this budget like no other. There is no other jurisdiction you can consider that can in any way compete with this one as a place of doing business, whether it's in the cultural sector, where I have the privilege to work, or whether it is in a variety of other sectors where you see Ontario moving forward like no other jurisdiction. I think that it's disappointing not to see any approbation from the opposition for the government's initiatives in that regard.

At the same time that we are doing all of what we're doing to compete in that regard, I think it's important to note, as I said earlier, what we're doing for that part of our society where help is most required from a government—by accelerating the Ontario child benefit, bringing it up two years ahead of schedule. The day after the budget I was home in Barrie, and I think that we received more kudos for that than for almost any other initiative. I was joined by members from the business community but also from many of the social agencies. I'll tell you quite honestly that when the media chose not to ask me my views, thinking maybe I'm not as objective as I might be, but instead spoke to members from the social agencies there at city hall that morning after the budget, the comments from the social agencies were hugely positive and supportive of what the government's budget had recognized—

1000

Mr. Jeff Leal: Wise people in Barrie; very wise people in Barrie.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: Very wise people in Barrie.

If I can move from my particular responsibilities and interests in the cultural industries to the fact that I am also the minister responsible for the Seniors' Secretariat, I think much of what the budget contains there is very important. Our strategy to combat elder abuse is vital, and \$1.65 million is being invested to help protect seniors by extending our strategy to combat elder abuse.

We make difficult decisions; we have tough days. We need to sometimes explain a particular piece of the budget, such as the single sales tax, a very important part of our strategy, an initiative we very much needed to undertake and had the courage to undertake. It's not an easy change, it's one that many people will need to shift to accept, but in doing that, we've joined other jurisdictions. Almost every member of the OECD—the Organisation

for Economic Co-operation and Development, which is an organization of 130 countries—has a consolidated or single tax. And when the Maritime provinces went forward with that in the late 1990s—well in advance of us, which is a little bit disconcerting, that at the time Ontario wasn't out ahead there, but we are out ahead in every other way now—there was a 12% increase in their GDP. So this works.

It's not easy, but Ontarians join this government in our courage, and Ontarians understand that these are not normal times, this situation we're in, where our media is churning out daily what's happening in our auto sector, where Washington is moving, where Ottawa is going. Ontarians understand that this government had to respond with courage as well. They know, just like they knew during the time of the Depression, that we need to do things in a different manner; we need to pull in within ourselves and have the self-discipline and courage to face the adversity and come out on the other side, and we will come out on the other side, not only because of this government, but partly, very much, because this government has joined with the citizens in Ontario in rolling up our sleeves and doing everything we can to help us get through this together.

But if I just might come, then, to the fact that within the budget is a recognition of the role and pressures that are on seniors. The demographics show that seniors in Ontario is a sector that's increasing rapidly and disproportionately to other age groups. As such, there are pressures there. We have responded, for instance, on the property tax front. We had, prior to this budget, given relief of \$250 to seniors who required it. When I go door to door in Barrie during an election or I'm out in the grocery store or other places and I meet seniors, they say: "It's not too bad. I'm able to stay in my home. That's where I want to be, but I'm on a fixed income, and the property tax is a real issue." So prior to the budget, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, we responded to that, but in this budget, we doubled that tax relief for seniors from \$250 to \$500.

Further, coming back to elder abuse, this is an increasing phenomena, and one that gives me great pause, and my colleagues here with me. As I was saying, these are the difficult issues that we need to explain well to our constituents at home, to family, to friends, that this is why we did this, this is where we're going, and this is why we're convinced it's right.

At the same time, we have the opportunity to call people, as I did in ONPEA and other wonderful seniors' organizations, to tell them that the government has responded, as we did on the elder abuse. I can tell you that, without naming the person—she said to me, "I can't even talk—what this money enables us to do in our organization, which we didn't think there was any chance of being able to do—I'm breathless." So there are those very wonderful parts of the post-budget period.

Speaking about particular protection for seniors, we've introduced tough consumer protection legislation that helps seniors and other groups who are often the tar-

get of fraud. We've included increasing fines for real estate fraud, to \$50,000 from \$1,000.

There are many, many particular pieces that impact on seniors, whether it's the property tax, whether it's elder abuse, whether it's assisting seniors who receive phone calls that are very clever, very confusing, and assisting them in that regard on the fraud response.

I realize that building a budget is a very complex process. There are many competing interests. I think we've done as good a job as any government could have done to take all of those interests into account, recognize we are on the threshold of having to reconfigure and restructure an economy, and having the courage to go there.

If I can, I'll speak just a little bit more about the creative and entertainment cluster and how we contribute. With the word "culture," people think of lovely things. They think of the way we as a diverse society express ourselves, whether it's how we dance or what we paint in a picture. It's the song that we sing; it's all of what we see our museums and galleries promoting; it's the national ballet, the film festival in Sudbury, what we're doing in all of that regard. Indeed, culture is exactly that: the composite of our creative energies.

But what people don't always realize is that the cultural sector is a cultural industry. We are the fourth-largest contributor to the GDP in Ontario. We contribute in excess of \$20 billion a year to our economy. The numbers of employed in the cultural sector grow at a rate far in excess of the average growth rate in any other sector.

This government recognizes, in the announcement that I had the privilege of making yesterday, just how important the infusion of monies into that sector is, and the impact and multiplier effect that result. In that regard, too, it's a global competition. You can see what they are doing in New York, London and Los Angeles to draw creative people. As Dr. Richard Florida says, where the creative people go, the economy flourishes. We know that, we get that and that's why we do considerable investing in that cultural sector here in Ontario.

A big piece of the cultural sector is film and TV production. The tax credits our finance minister has assigned to that sector—increased and enhanced considerably in the budget—allow us to out-compete other jurisdictions. The response you've had from the film and TV sector indicates their tremendous gratitude to the government for having the wisdom, foresight and the understanding of their competitive edge to go there and reinforce that sector by our response in the budget.

I think that it's important to understand, perhaps, the philosophy of a Liberal government. We are addressing—

Mr. Michael Prue: If you can explain it.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: My pleasure to do so.

Mr. Michael Prue: We'd all like to know.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: The philosophy of a Liberal budget, if I may enlighten the member from the third party, is to have the courage to reinforce the competitive edge that this province has, to enable business—as I said earlier, and I don't want to be redundant—to out-com-

pete, produce jobs, become the best place in which any company would want to do business; to encourage the people who will come to a place—the knowledge-trained people who accompany that kind of growth, who want to work in those businesses to do all of that. And we're doing that. We're doing that with an understanding that it has to be done differently than ever before. We're understanding as well that the people of Ontario join us in their knowledge that this is not business as usual. But it's important to know that maybe we differ somewhat from former Conservative governments here in this hallowed place; that we do that so that we can produce the resources to reinforce the social safety net I talked about earlier, so that we create and maintain a balance.

1010

When this government took over in 2003—and I was not a member at that time but I certainly have great pride in what they did—they had to put a health system back in place. They had to put a public education system back in place, and they did so in an incredible manner. By moving forward in a balanced manner at this time, it enables us to continue to invest. Because we're growing and being competitive in producing tremendous revenue from the private sector, we will have the wherewithal to continue to reinforce all of what's important to a Liberal government, all of what's important to the people of Ontario, by keeping and making sure our health care system is there for us and our public education system is contributing to the knowledge-based economy. It's a virtuous circle, I would assure the member of the other party.

I'm quite comfortable to speak this morning. It's my first, if I may say, maiden speech in these hallowed halls, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do so. Sometimes you just need to speak from the heart, and you can see that I used my heart more than my notes today, and I'm very comfortable to do that. I'm out in my community, home in Barrie, like my colleague from Peterborough and all of our colleagues, telling people what we did in this budget, why we did that. I assure you that although there are difficulties, there's a sense that together we can overcome the situation we're in. Yes, everybody seems to know it's tough, but we're Ontario. This is a part of the country that has succeeded since Confederation and this is a part of the country that's always going to be on top. We will be the engine of this country, as we always have been.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It being Holodomor Day today at Queen's Park, I was going to try to be as kind and as nice as I could with the minister's comments. However, she provoked me when she said that we had failed to see what they had done as a party. Today's unemployment figures are out: Another 11,000 Ontario families are without jobs in Ontario. That brings the total since October of last year to 171,000. Think of a town in Ontario that has 171,000 people in it. That's the size of the loss in jobs since October of last year. That's what this government has done for the province of Ontario.

In this past report on unemployment numbers, there are 24,000 manufacturing jobs gone in Canada. Most of those have disappeared in Ontario. The unemployment numbers that have occurred throughout the reign of this government have been increase on top of increase on top of increase. The government's projections are to praise themselves for the increases they have done in social programs and protecting people who are without jobs, and they have done precious little to help companies survive through these unprecedentedly difficult economic times—the worst time that you could ever imagine that someone would actually raise taxes on businesses, forcing another round of problems onto the small businesses here in Ontario. Those kinds of things are going to be remembered as through the Peterson years, when income taxes actually doubled.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the Minister of Culture because I had not heard her speak before in the House, and at the end I understood why: Because after a year and a half she has finally told us what she thinks. I'm so proud of her: I'm so proud of what she had to say, because I often wonder what Liberals stand for. I tell jokes about it on occasion in political speeches. But she wanted to tell us today what differentiated—what Liberal philosophy was. She told us that it's Conservative philosophy in order to accomplish social goals. I think that's what she said in a nutshell, the same kind of economic argument—and to reinforce that, she even chided the members of the Conservative Party for not moving in the correct direction of business that the Liberals are. I think that was refreshing to me, to understand, finally, that she sees her role as a Liberal as being a Conservative who can then do social good with the monies that are made.

Part of the reason I'm saying that is because she waxed eloquent about how some of that money is being spent. She talked about the Ontario child benefit as if that is somehow going to alleviate poverty for the majority of people who live in poverty in this province. Quite frankly, although we on this side of the House and we in the NDP acknowledge that \$42 a month is going to help a child, and some children in this province, what has been done for the overwhelming majority of people who live in poverty is nothing but a shame and nothing of which this government should be proud. You are giving 2% to people who are disabled but you're not giving it until November, so it means for another six months there is no increase whatsoever to them. And in November when they get 2%, they are still abysmally going to live in poverty. Even someone on ODSP, even someone who is disabled, will go from the huge sum of \$999 a month to \$1,019 a month—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Questions and comments?

The minister has two minutes to respond.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I will respond. My apologies; how long do I have to respond?

Interjection: Two minutes.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: Two minutes. I just can't get over the opportunity of speaking in the Legislature, so I'm just going to keep—

Interjection: You've got 15 seconds.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: All right, 15 seconds? All I need to tell you is that what I told you and what you chose to pick from my speech are very much what I believe. I am very proud of this budget and it is exactly for the reasons I gave. It understands business in Ontario. We understand business in Ontario.

You know, the Conservative Party would have you believe that they have a monopoly on understanding business, yet federally, from a former life I once was in, they have done nothing but tax and spend to the point that we didn't have any buffer to handle this recession when it landed on the lap federally. But this government inherited a \$5.2-billion deficit from these wonderful Conservatives that I watch every day. What we did, unlike your federal cousins who walked in and blew their surplus, is we walked into your deficit, we fixed it and we paid it off. I watched from afar while this government had the courage to do that. Because they did that, they got to reinvest. They got this government to reinvest in everything that matters to the people of this province, so that when we age we have a health care system. I have children, and now grandchildren, and I know there's one of the best public education systems in the world in this province.

You know, we're the Liberals, and somehow we seem to do things that Conservatives talk about. So, yes, that's what we are; yes, we understand business; yes, we understand social policy, and this budget—

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

It being 10:17, the debate on Bill 162 is deemed adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

WEARING OF PINS

Mr. Dave Levac: I seek unanimous consent from all the members in the Legislature, with the pins provided in the lobby, to wear the "five ears of grain" pin to remind us that the Ukraine remembers and the world acknowledges remembrance of Holodomor Memorial Day.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Dave Levac: Today I hope we will be setting history in Ontario, let alone Canada—for the first time a tri-sponsored bill from the members for Parkdale–High Park, Newmarket–Aurora and myself, the member from Brant. In the gallery to witness history are—and please bear with me—Olexander Danyleiko, the Consul General of Ukraine; Volodymyr Paslavskyi, the executive director of the League of Ukrainian Canadians; Borys Mykhaylets, the executive of the League of Ukrainian Canadians;

Orest Steciw, the Holdomor projects coordinator; Chrystyna Bidiak, president of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women; Halyna Vynnyk, executive of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women; Andrew Gregorovich, from the Ukrainian National Federation; Oksana Prociuk Ciz, Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada; Paul Grod, the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Marc Shwec, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Toronto; Valentyna Kuryliw, member of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Toronto, famine-genocide committee; Eugene Yakovitch, member of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Toronto, famine-genocide committee; Irene Mycak, chair of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Holodomor commemoration committee; Andrij Wodoslawsky, member of the Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union; Mary Szkambara, president of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations; Bishop Stefan Chmilar; Archbishop Yuriy Kalistchuk; Walter Okipniuk, former president of the Ukrainian Echo newspaper; Harry Nesmasznyj, executive director of the Ukrainian Youth Association; Luba Kaipainen, member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians of London; Mykola Latyshko, Holodomor survivor; Irene Wrzesnewskyj, mother of MP Boris Wrzesnewskyj, the first person to introduce legislation of this kind in the country; Myhajlo Hucman, member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians; Grant Hopcroft, member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians of London; Peter Kryworuk, member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians and chair of the London Holodomor committee; Michael Szepetyk, president of the Ukrainian Echo newspaper; Wsevolod Isajiw, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre; and of course our friend Allan Rewak of Pathway Group.

These are our visitors for today's historic moment.

1020

Mr. Frank Klees: As a co-sponsor of the Holodomor bill, I want to extend greetings to our Ukrainian friends this morning as well. Welcome to this place, and I want to say to them, dyakuju.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like to also add my voice to the other voices. Today, we really right an historic wrong. Today, we commemorate those whose spirit fills this place. I know that a cloud of silent witnesses watch as we enact this historic moment and also commemorate those who were lost. Again, I add my voice to the others. Thank you for being here.

REFERRAL OF BILL 147

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the order of the House dated March 5, 2009, referring Bill 147, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged and the bill ordered for third reading.

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

Motion agreed to.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL
DAY ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009 SUR
LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF
DE L'HOLODOMOR

Mr. Levac moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day / Projet de loi 147, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1025 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm not sure if they're here yet or not, but I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature, on behalf of the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the family of page Noel Smith: Dena Smith, mother of Noel Smith; Laylah Smith, sister of Noel Smith; and Patrice Ralph, godmother of Noel Smith. Welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to introduce three great volunteers from the city of North Bay here with us today. Helena and Marty Brown are visiting me today, and we're going to go on a lovely tour of the park. Keith Pacey is here today as well from North Bay. All three of them are great volunteers and community supporters and I want to welcome them to the Leg today.

Hon. Michael Chan: I don't know whether she's here or not, but I want to welcome Tammy Tam, the mother of page Carmen Chen from the lovely riding of Markham–Unionville.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce visitors in the west members' gallery. The first one is Bill Jeffery, who's from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, Mrs. Kathleen White-Williams from the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and Mrs. Connie Harrison, who's a low-income Ontarian. They are here today to support my private member's bill.

Hon. Jim Watson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Yesterday, Ottawa city council bestowed an honour on our colleague the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur by naming a street after our colleague from Ottawa–Vanier. We wanted to congratulate her. It is rue Madeleine Meilleur Way. Congratulations.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter et remercier le page Daphnée Dubouchet-Olsheski, qui est de la circonscription d'Ottawa–Vanier, pour le beau travail qu'elle a fait. Ses parents étaient ici il y a quelques jours. Je sais que c'est sa dernière journée, alors je voudrais la remercier pour son travail.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to introduce to the Ontario Legislative Assembly my colleague Charlie Angus, the

federal member of Timmins–James Bay, who's here with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Sault Ste. Marie and page Sarah Nadon, I'd like to welcome her mother, Barbara, her father, Maurice, her sister Jayme, her sister Kayla and her grandmother Ida LeClaire, sitting in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the Minister of International Trade and page Michele D'Agnillo, I'd like to welcome his mother, Tina, his father, John and his brother Christian, sitting in the members' gallery today. Welcome.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today two parliamentarians from the Legislative Assembly of Goias, Brazil: Mr. Jose Nelto Lagares das Mercez and Ms. Vanuza Valadares. They are accompanied by their spouses, Ms. Monica Costa Lagares and Mr. Eronildo Lopes Valadares. The group is also accompanied by the Deputy Consul General of Brazil at Toronto, Mr. Aldemo Garcia, and Ms. Maria Julia Adshead, consular staff. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, you should do an exchange program.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member just asked about an exchange program. I received a very warm invitation for members to visit Brazil—

Interjection: Peter.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): —and I know the member from Welland would love to participate.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to ask all members to take an opportunity to say thank you to this group of pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think we need to acknowledge that they set a new record in the delivery of the budget at 20.35 seconds. On behalf of the members of the Ontario Legislature and all staff here at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, we want to say thank you very much to all of you. We wish each of you all the best in your future endeavours and we trust that one day we will see you here as members. Thank you to each and every one of you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, I'd like to read a quote from something that Premier McGuinty said while in opposition: "I think the government ought to be putting before us a clear plan which shows that we are proceeding surely, inexorably towards the elimination of the

deficit.” Minister, in the past two weeks, in opposition day debates our caucus has provided you with ample opportunity to do just exactly as your leader suggested: provide Ontarians with a plan of what you’re doing toward the elimination of your long-term deficit, and on-going detailed monitoring of the budget’s implementation. There are no accountability measures in your budget, so why has your caucus voted against measures you previously supported? Do they not feel their constituents deserve to know what you’re doing, or are they simply bankrupt of courage and conviction?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I thank the member for his question. I’d refer him to page 89 of the budget, which details a number of the measures we are taking with respect to that. I’d also remind the member of the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, which this party passed subsequent to taking office in early 2004 and which provided, for the first time, meaningful accountability. We were the first government to submit our budget figures to the auditor for approval, prior to the last election, so that there would be no hidden deficit that was unreported. We’ve taken a number of other steps over the years which I will detail in greater depth.

I would remind the member that governments at all levels around the world are experiencing enormous challenges as a result of falling revenues. But we have laid out a very clear plan and we’ve provided a number of accountability measures that are among the leading in the world in terms of deficit and debt.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: We know about the fine words of this government and their representatives. They will say one thing to get elected and then arrogantly do the opposite in government and treat taxpayers like yokels: “Let them eat cake.” We have proposed reasonable accountability measures similar to those supported by your federal Liberal colleagues in Ottawa and to what Mr. McGuinty demanded from the former government when he was sitting in this chair.

Minister, less than two years ago, the Auditor General described your government spending controls as among the worst he’d ever seen. We all remember Slushgate, don’t we? Minister, once again, why are you and your do-as-they’re-told backbenchers rejecting clear and transparent measures that will ensure that taxpayers’ money is well spent?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that there is a section in the budget entitled “The Plan to Eliminate the Deficit.” I would further remind the member opposite that this is the second time we have had to eliminate a deficit. When we came to office we found a \$5.6-billion hidden deficit that the former Provincial Auditor indicated was there. We then brought in the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act to give the public greater assurance that in fact the budget that the government lays out is entirely transparent and clear. We took our budget, before the election, to the auditor and had that sign-off.

I would remind the member that we balanced the last three budgets in Ontario and have paid down more than

\$6 billion in debt. The plan we’ve laid out is the appropriate plan, over the right amount of time, to ensure we get Ontario back to a balanced situation.

1040

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: When they formed government, they inherited a potential deficit and then spent like Duncan sailors to make sure it happened.

Ontario taxpayers have every right to be cynical about this government’s promises and their spending practices. They plan to spend billions of tax dollars and keep the details behind the curtains. We’ve just heard recently how they threw scarce tax dollars to the wind with their failed eHealth strategy, inflated salaries, opulent office renovations, entertainment and travel expenses and other slaps in the face to taxpayers.

Minister, prove that you and your colleagues are not bankrupt of integrity and conviction, that your Premier’s words were truthful and sincere. Bring in accountability measures proposed by us and supported by your federal Liberal colleagues.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think that the people of Ontario recognize the enormous challenge before every jurisdiction in the world in terms of deficit and debt. I think they understand why Alberta has a \$4-billion deficit for the coming year. I think they understand why the federal government has a \$62-billion deficit over the next two years, and it’s still rising. And I think they understand why Ontario has taken the steps they have.

What they don’t understand is an opposition party that added \$48 billion to the provincial debt during times of strong economic growth. That’s what they don’t understand. They don’t understand how a government that presents a budget at the Magna plant in north Toronto could have a hidden deficit, as identified by the previous auditor, of \$5.6 billion. They don’t understand why it took until our government came to power that we had true fiscal transparency and accountability and enshrined it in legislation.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I have a question for the Minister of Health Promotion, also known as the minister who refers or doesn’t answer questions. Yesterday, my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk pointed out the increased costs your government has added to gym memberships and related products through the latest McGuinty tax grab. Minister, do you not agree that Ontarians should be able to afford the cost of being active, staying in shape and being healthy? Do you not agree?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I thank the member opposite for the question. Certainly this government has a priority of investment in the health and the activities related to the health of the people of Ontario. In this regard, we have continued to move forward with our \$20-million annual investment in the healthy eating and active living strategy for the after-school program.

We continue to invest in a number of different initiatives to support Ontarians to live and to continue to live healthy—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Minister, on your ministry website, it states, “The ministry encourages involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity for the health, social, and economic benefit of Ontarians and the communities in which they live.” I want to illustrate what painful effects Dalton’s new sales tax is having on Ontarians who want their kids to be active: Windsor co-ed hockey registration, an extra \$31; a yearly public swimming pass for a family in Oakville, \$76 in Dalton tax added; Dalton’s tax will cost recreational rowers in Guelph an added \$52 for every boy and girl; North Bay girls’ hockey association—the fees will jump a whopping \$55 a player.

Minister, can you confirm these increased costs for families who want their kids to be active, or will you tell us today that you will make sure Dalton’s newest tax doesn’t cost them an extra penny? Will do you that?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Our government has come up with a very comprehensive tax plan to address the many issues that face the province of Ontario. These issues are not unique to Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Our issues are not unique to the province of Ontario, nor are they unique to Canada. We are facing a global economic crisis, and as a result our government has implemented a comprehensive tax plan. Our government continues to be committed to the issues relating to sports and recreation and to keeping people physically active. That’s why we continue to invest in our physical activities strategy. It’s important, as part of our commitment to keep Ontarians physically active—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Some of my colleagues said that this minister’s response to the economic crisis is “Make the kids pay.” That should be embarrassing to her and her colleagues.

The role of the Minister of Health Promotion is to provide the tools for people to get healthy and stay active. Dalton’s new sales tax is a massive attack on her main ministry directive. Today, in one of the major papers, there is an article that indicates that Dalton’s new sales tax will cost the Greater Toronto Hockey League an extra \$500,000—a half-million-dollar Dalton tax grab to just one sports association, that they have to absorb.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just ask the honourable member—we’ve had the issue of dealing with names. I certainly have allowed you to use the Premier’s name when you’ve described the government, because previous government did that. But we haven’t got to using first names.

Stop the clock, please.

I would just ask that you not use the first name of an individual member, please.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I respect that, Speaker.

It’s a half-million-dollar McGuinty tax grab to just one sports association.

Minister, where have you been on this issue? Why have you remained silent? Do you not understand that this newest sales tax is discouraging families from being able to afford to sign their kids up for baseball, ringette, hockey and soccer? Do you not understand—

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

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I would advise member opposite that families in the Amherstburg area will soon be able to skate, run and cheer at a new multi-use sports complex. The construction of this complex will create up to 240 jobs.

This government continues to invest in new sport complexes. This complex will feature two hockey rinks, two recreational fields and two baseball diamonds.

We continue our additional investments in other sports and physical activities. We continue to invest in different initiatives aimed at keeping people active and healthy in the province of Ontario.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The McGuinty government has no idea how to respond to the economic crisis facing communities across Ontario. At precisely the time that the Ontario auto workers are most in need of protection, this government is turning its back on them by making it illegal for Ontario’s pension backup fund to run a deficit. Why is this government moving to cut the support net for pensioners when they need it the most?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The government is not cutting the pension benefits guarantee fund. I think we need to be honest—

Interjections.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think that all of us in this Legislature need to be honest with the people of Ontario that for 30 years, the pension benefits guarantee fund has not been funded.

I think we need to remind those people whose pensions are threatened—and they are threatened—that General Motors was given an exemption from even contributing to the pension benefits guarantee fund.

Mr. Peter Kormos: By whom? By Bob Rae.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I don’t think we should be hurling partisan insults. We should look at the facts. Our government is committed to working with the CAW, General Motors and the federal government to ensure that pensions are protected. There has to be an adequate

commitment from all sides to this. The issue is serious. The issue is how we fund it—

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

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For five years now, myself and other New Democrats have been on their feet urging this government to make fundamental reforms to the pension benefits guarantee fund and the pension system in this province. What we are talking about now are the retirement monies owed to loyal workers in this province, workers who have given a lifetime to their employer. Just when they need a helping hand from their government the most, this government pulls the rug out from underneath them by tightening the rules designed to protect Ontario's pensions. Why is this government turning its back on Ontario families just at the time when they need it the most?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier reiterated the government's commitment to funding pension shortfalls. What we need, however, is an honest look at how we're going to fund it. The pension deficit associated with GM alone is in the billions of dollars. Then you have to look at other defined benefit plans, and then you have to consider those people who don't have a pension, those seniors and others who have seen their retirement income diminished, in some cases by 30% or 40%.

We want to work with the CAW. Mr. Lewenza said today—and he's absolutely right—and we've been saying this for a number of weeks: The best way to protect those plans is to keep the companies working. Our money is at the table. We continue to be at the table with the union, with the company and with the federal government. We will work through this, but we need to have a completely candid discussion about how much it costs and where the money is—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What Mr. Lewenza said, and perhaps the minister should know this—this is a quote from a letter he sent to the government today: "It is quite disturbing to see a budget announcement which appears to signal a retreat from the purpose and spirit in which the PBGF has operated for almost 30 years in this province."

This government has had five years—more than five years—to fix a pension backup fund that has been broken for a very, very long time. We would agree on that part. I was personally on my feet in this Legislature many, many times, urging the government to take action. Almost five years ago, the first time I got up in this House to talk about pension plans—some few weeks after I was first elected—I was talking about these issues, and now we see the first significant change that this government is prepared to make is to cut the support net, just as GM and Chrysler are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy.

I repeat: Why is this government turning its back on hundreds of thousands of workers when they need them the most?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: If the leader of the third party would take enough time to stop patting herself on the back, we might be able to have a serious discussion about this matter.

I would remind the member opposite that further in that letter and further into the press release, Mr. Lewenza has signalled that the CAW wants to work with governments, and we are committed to working with them. My officials will be meeting with CAW officials early next week.

This is a challenging time. This government remains there with money; we remain there with commitment to keeping these industries viable; and we remain there, committed to helping ensure that these pensions continue to be in place for the workers at General Motors and, indeed, workers all over the province.

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

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Deputy Premier: The Premier himself seems all too content to talk as if the bankruptcy of GM is imminent. Today, of course, we all heard Ken Lewenza and CAW workers speaking very loudly and very clearly, and they told this government the best way to protect pensions is to keep the auto jobs alive in this province. Instead of accepting the bankruptcy option as if it is a done deal, why isn't the government ensuring that its multi-billion-dollar restructuring package addresses the company's pension solvency problems?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier reiterated yesterday this government's commitment to keeping those companies viable. I would remind the member opposite that we are the only sub-national jurisdiction at the table with money for the auto sector. The government of Ontario has committed more money to this than the government of Germany, for instance. I'll remind the member opposite that a number of national governments around the world—that many Ontarians aren't even aware of—are at the table with money as well. What we have to do is look at who pays and how much, and we have to try to assure the right balance between the federal and provincial governments, the companies and the unions; everybody working together.

The Premier said yesterday and I reiterate: We want to continue to work. We will continue to be there with substantial investments to keep these companies viable, and we will continue to be there to keep the pension plans viable as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In today's National Post, Robin Somerville of the Centre for Spatial Economics said: "There is no reason to expect a happy ending from a bankruptcy procedure. It could well degenerate into the complete collapse of all three companies."

Deputy Premier, we're talking about tens of thousands of jobs that sustain dozens of communities across the

province, yet this government seems to be embracing the likelihood of GM's bankruptcy. Auto workers across the province are justifiably outraged. Instead of focusing on bankruptcies, why doesn't the McGuinty government use its auto assistance package to address GM's pension solvency problem?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd just remind the member that the auto assistance package wouldn't even cover a fraction of it. That's the reality, and there's no easy way out of this. In fact, one of the challenges we have is that this is largely being driven in Washington. We don't know where the top is going to be. We know now that we have committed—the governments of Canada—

Mr. John Yakubski: Blame Flaherty, blame Washington—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing—Pembroke.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: They want to make a joke about it, but I tell you this is as serious a matter as we are going to deal with in this House.

We are at the table. We are the only sub-national government at the table with money. We are prepared to invest still more, but we need to make clear and continue to work with the CAW, with our federal counterparts and with the government of Barack Obama and the United States to ensure that we protect the footprint of the industry. These are difficult times, but this government will keep the interests of our retirees—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today, GM cut 50 more engineering jobs at its research and development centre in Oshawa—another blow to Oshawa families. Letting GM go into bankruptcy could spell even more pain for auto communities and would prevent Ontario from securing the auto jobs of the future, and everybody is aware of that.

But what we need from our government, what we need from the government of Ontario is a proactive solution, not a wait-and-see approach. Why won't the McGuinty government work with the federal government, with GM and with the CAW to design an auto assistance package that addresses the pension solvency problem?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have been very proactive with the industry. If the member thinks for one moment that the decision around bankruptcy is going to be up to her or me, she really doesn't understand the depth or the gravity of the situation.

I cannot overemphasize the challenge before us, and if we attempt to trivialize it, if we attempt to suggest—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Welland.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: If we attempt to trivialize the challenge, we're not helping anyone. We have been proactive. We're the only sub-national government with money on the table.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Toyota.

Interjection: He's out of control.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The minister drives a Toyota.

Interjection: Well, I've got a Ford with less—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the honourable member, if we are going to get into this little game of who is driving what, then I would encourage everybody to do the survey around the room of who is driving what.

Mr. Peter Kormos: My Chevy S10 is parked outside.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Fine. And my Equinox that's built in Ingersoll is parked outside too.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: It is a serious matter; it is a complex matter that involves governments around the world. This government will continue to work with the CAW, and this government will continue to put the interests of our auto workers and our retirees at the front of the line. There's no easy answer, but we will be there with money and with patience to see our industry through this—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for Minister of Tourism, and perhaps I could give her a moment to get to her place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is simple. I would ask the minister, in the lead-up to the budget, when she learned of the plans to bring in a harmonized 13% sales tax—what people are calling McGuinty's new sales tax—what did she do to stand up for the tourism and hospitality industry in the province of Ontario?

1100

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I want to thank the member for the question. We are, in the tourism industry, very delighted with the budget and the benefits that we see for tourism across the province. We are seeing substantial investments in many of our attractions across the province through the budget.

Last Friday, I had the opportunity to be in Morrisburg, where we announced \$13 million to revitalize Upper Canada Village and Chrysler's Farm, leading up to the 1812 commemoration; then, \$10 million going into Fort Henry in Kingston.

We're also seeing substantial investments in some of our other attractions, and I'm sure that in the supplementary I will have more of an opportunity to talk about what we're doing to promote marketing of all of our attractions and resorts across the province as a result of the changes in the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm told that 33 employees of Upper Canada Village have been laid off; I'm sure they'll be encouraged by that answer.

This year's budget sent a clear signal to the industry that this government isn't listening and doesn't care about tourism. The Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association says the provincial budget has "ignored economic reality." Bruce Gravel, president of the Ontario Accommodation Association says, "We deplore the fact that the harmonized sales tax was a deal struck between governments behind closed doors, without the benefit of extensive public consultations first." Yakov Stevens of Tripsetter Inc. asks, "How is a harmonized sales tax that raises the price of travel in Ontario going to boost an industry that is already economically challenged?" Of course, it won't.

My question to the minister is this: Does she really believe that hiking sales taxes in the middle of the extreme economic challenge that we are in now will encourage travel and tourism—

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I actually had a chance to meet with Mr. Gravel last weekend. That wasn't what he told me. I have met with a number of representatives from the hotel and motel association. We are working through what the impacts of the harmonized sales tax will be for that sector, but as a benefit of the harmonized sales tax, we are seeing a \$40-million influx in marketing for our regions across the province. This is new money. This is a huge influx of cash and it's going to see marketing increase across the province. It's a huge benefit to the sector.

We're also seeing corporate tax cuts across the province for small businesses. As you know, my opposition critic, small businesses are the backbone of tourism across this province, and they are going to benefit substantially from the corporate tax cuts that we have implemented or we are implementing through this budget.

I'm very proud of this budget and I know that tourism will continue to thrive and grow—

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

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today, Statistics Canada reports that 40,000 more Ontarians, women and men, lost their full-time jobs in March; 170,000 men and women in Ontario have lost their jobs since October. It's not good enough for the McGuinty government to say this is a global crisis. Ontarians need help now.

Why is the McGuinty government raising taxes on families and handing out \$2 billion in corporate income tax cuts, instead of protecting good jobs in our province?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There's no doubt that the challenge we heard about today with additional job loss is of great concern, and that is precisely why we are investing \$32.5 billion in infrastructure over the next two

years. That's why we invested \$9 billion last year. That's why we gave a retroactive tax rebate to our manufacturers last summer. That's why we gave \$1 billion last November to every municipality in this province to get infrastructure going.

These are difficult and challenging times, and that is why we have made working families, the people who are worried about their jobs, the people who lost their jobs our top priority, and we will continue to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Men and women in Ontario are losing their jobs at an alarming rate. The manufacturing sector has been gutted. Almost 24,000 jobs were lost in March alone. Unemployment rates are up across the province. Ontario workers want leadership and a jobs plan from this government, not tax cuts to the companies that are already holding their own.

When will this government finally develop an effective plan to protect the jobs and pensions of struggling Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The fact remains that we are in the midst of a world recession. We saw unemployment go up more in Ontario than in British Columbia and Alberta. We even saw unemployment go up in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

There are no easy answers, as the member would like us to say. We have laid out \$34 billion in stimulus, \$32.5 billion in infrastructure. We have laid out more money for skills training and retraining and literacy. We will continue to make those investments.

I hope the member opposite won't continue to vote against those important initiatives which will in fact benefit working families—men, women and children right across Ontario.

CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Mike Colle: A question to the Minister of Culture: Minister, Ontario's cultural attraction agencies like the Royal Ontario Museum attract more than three million tourists and generate \$4.5 billion annually to Ontario's economy, making cultural tourism an important economic driver. However, funding for Ontario's world-renowned cultural agencies like the ROM has been frozen for years. Recently, the Ontario tourism competitiveness study recommended that the government invest in cultural attraction agencies so they can compete on the international stage and create jobs.

Would the minister tell us what steps the government is taking to ensure that Ontario cultural agencies receive sustainable funding so they can attract even more tourists to Ontario and create more jobs?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: Yesterday at the Royal Ontario Museum, I was delighted to announce that our government is boosting Ontario's economy by investing \$43 million in new funding to six of Ontario's world-class cultural agencies. These agencies include the Art Gallery of Ontario, the ROM, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Ontario Heritage Trust, the Ontario Science Centre and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

This milestone investment provides new and permanent increases to their annual operating grants, the first in over a decade. These world-class facilities, collections and programs of Ontario's cultural agencies raise the global profile of the province by showcasing the best of our cultural diversity and creativity. These are important investments in our cultural industry and they help deliver—

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Ontarians will be pleased to hear that this government is making smart investments to boost Ontario's economy by investing in its cultural attractions and agencies.

Constituents in my riding of Oakville will be especially pleased to learn that the Royal Botanical Gardens is going to receive new and permanent increases to its annual operating budget. As one of the world's largest botanical gardens, it's a major cultural tourist attraction in the region.

As a former board member myself and as all of my fellow south-central colleagues on all sides of this House will attest, the RBG's beauty attracts visitors from all over the world, and that contributes to the local economy and to jobs.

Would the minister tell the constituents of my riding and all the people of south-central Ontario just how much funding the Royal Botanical Gardens will receive this year?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: As I mentioned, our government recognizes that Ontario cultural agencies play a key role in stimulating our economy and local economies like south-central Ontario's. Our government invested \$4 million this year to help enhance the Royal Botanical Gardens and to continue to develop world-class programs that attract visitors from Canada and abroad.

We know that cultural attractions like the RBG are vital to the growth of our knowledge economy. We know that cultural attractions make our province a magnet for knowledge workers and businesses that are looking for dynamic, vibrant communities, so we moved as a government to reinforce the RBG and the cultural industry within the framework of a budget that gets it right.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, yesterday you spent half your allotted time at the hearings for Bill 150 trying to discredit the report recently released from London Economics International concerning the astronomical increases in electricity prices we can expect under your legislation. Given your verbose protest but lack of any real evidence to contradict the report, we can surmise that they must have it right.

The Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association was also there yesterday, concerned for the future of Ontario jobs and, in fact, its entire economy under your act. When you were drafting this bill, you didn't even

consult with a \$24-billion industry, employing 80,000 people in this province, for their views on how you and your act could decimate business in Ontario. Minister, why would you proceed without even talking to the people in this integral industry?

1110

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, I believe there was also acknowledgment from that very same group that the honourable member quotes that they were pleased that one of the strong signals we sent was our government's intention to invest alongside industry and commercial operations to lower their overall energy use with direct investment. The honourable member leaves that out.

To the point about the contracted study by executive summary that's been released so far by that group of consultants, the concerns that I raised remain exactly the same. They apportion costs in a way that costs are not apportioned in the energy sector: they didn't amortize them over the life of the asset, as is the normal case; they counted the costs for conservation programs but gave no benefit for reduced consumption on the bills of individuals; they assumed that increases in green energy will not replace other costs; and their very own study fluctuated wildly. I think for all of those reasons, it raises serious—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, they did talk about energy efficiency and how you have not been doing enough to promote that in their industry. They also use 10% of the electricity produced in this province—10%. They believe that this province could benefit a whole lot more if as much money was invested in making their businesses and other energy-intensive businesses more efficient as what you plan to spend on building new generation—unreliable, undispachable generation at twice the cost. Why wouldn't you, under your green disguise, do more to promote helping an industry be more efficient and more competitive and in fact create jobs in this province? Why wouldn't you consult with them? Why would you proceed? It's a \$24-billion industry with 80,000 jobs and 10% of the electricity in the province, and you couldn't even talk to them. Is this more about politics against policy in McGuinty's Ontario?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's always good when the honourable member is so excited that he gets tongue-tied.

I think that at the heart of it—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. There have been a few comments that have been indirectly made to members.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, we do need to ensure that we treat one another with respect. Sly little comments like that don't help. There are others that have been made. I just ask everyone to be conscious of it.

Hon. George Smitherman: I think that what we have is a comment from the honourable member on two points

that I would like to focus on. First off, he talks about new generation, but yesterday in the House he was proposing that we just sign a contract for new generation on the nuclear front without regard for cost, without regard for reliability. But I think what's very—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member just asked the question. I trust you want to listen to the response—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please have some respect for the Chair.

Hon. George Smitherman: Part of the cost associated with the \$5-billion incremental investment in the first three years of the Green Energy Act is \$900 million of investment in conservation programs, with large companies exactly like those that were represented yesterday.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. In the last month, St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton has faced three superbug outbreaks, causing dozens of people to fall ill and some, tragically, to pass away.

St. Joseph's hospital faced a deficit of \$12 million, and because of inadequate resources, St. Joseph's has outsourced and cut back on its cleaning staff. Without mandatory provincial cleaning standards and resources to meet those standards, hospital patients are at risk in the very places where they go to get better. Will the minister commit to introducing mandatory cleaning standards in this province?

Hon. George Smitherman: On behalf of the Minister of Health, I think there are a few messages that would be very, very important to convey. First and foremost is the recognition that we are, in institutional settings, increasingly battling pervasive bugs. Associated with that is the solemn obligation on the part of all of us who are in those environments to be very, very vigilant on the issue of handwashing. It seems trite, but it's the strongest effort that is available to help to counteract these challenges.

On the issue of hospital budgets, St. Joe's has this year, as they have every other year that we have been in office, received more resources for their budget. That was a pattern that the Ontario Hospital Association accepted.

On matters of superbugs and the like, we're depending upon the leadership of Dr. Michael Baker from the University Health Network, who's guiding efforts to enhance the security and circumstances in Ontario's hospitals, where we recognize vulnerable patients need all the help that can be offered to protect them against these bugs—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government's plan for infection control in hospitals simply doesn't make any sense. While the government is pouring money,

on the one hand, into a mandatory infectious disease reporting system, they're failing to protect patients from infections in the first place. I'm not talking about handwashing here, I'm talking about cleaning staff. I'm talking about in-house cleaning staff and services. The research is very, very clear and this particular minister, I'm sure, knows it. In-house, adequate cleaning staff and mandatory standards are the building blocks of a healthy hospital. Will this government take action today before another death needlessly occurs?

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, I think it's important to note that in the time period of 1990-95, the government of the day did allow outsourcing, similarly, of a wide variety of services in the hospital environment. I think that it's very important to note that several of the individuals who are over there must have been quite quiet on that point if they were concerned about it.

There is a new public reporting of infections that does enhance the transparency associated with these circumstances in hospitals. While I acknowledge that the quality of the cleaning that's going on in those environments is of course important, we have increased the operating budgets for all those places.

Although the honourable member chooses to say that it's not an important focus, we do think that, for anyone who is in a hospital environment, being very vigilant on the issue of handwashing is known to be the single biggest thing that can be done to protect against the spread of superbugs and other infections.

PROVINCIAL PURCHASING POLICY

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the Minister of Government Services. Many of my constituents run businesses, both big and small, and like any good business they're constantly looking for new customers and contracts. The government of Ontario is a buyer of literally thousands of goods and services, ranging from construction materials to dinnerware and anything in between. I understand that a buy-Ontario policy for all of our goods would not be feasible; the last thing our businesses need right now are walls around our province, potentially preventing many of them from exporting to other places. However, we can't lose sight of the fact that Ontario businesses are some of the best in the world, so we should be encouraging them to do business with Ontario. My question to the minister is this: What support is this government now providing to our businesses that are interested—

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

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thank you for the question. I just want to say that our government certainly recognizes the importance of doing business with strong Ontario companies. We support businesses. In fact, just on Monday, we held a Supply Ontario reverse trade show, where we had over 900 vendors come and speak to government representatives from ministries, agencies and the broader public sector to learn just how they go about doing busi-

ness with the Ontario government. It gave these businesses an excellent opportunity to pick up some tips, to learn of some of the emerging needs and get some tips on how to market their solutions. I spoke to a number of the vendors, who expressed absolute delight that the government was taking this proactive action. Our vendors were pleased and it was so successful that we had a waiting list of 400. We intend to do it again in the fall.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Dickson: Sounds like the event would have been very beneficial for the both the potential vendors and the government representatives.

I agree with the minister: It's key for both our businesses and government that they're on the same page when it comes to the purchasing needs of the government of Ontario. But some businesses would not have been able to come to Toronto for this event to meet with your government representatives. To the minister: Can he tell this House if the government is taking any other steps to reach out to Ontario businesses that are interested in doing business with Ontario, perhaps for those who couldn't make it to Monday's event?

1120

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm delighted to answer that question. In fact, Monday's event wasn't the first outreach initiative on the part of this government. In the last year alone, we've held over 40 vendor events with various chambers and boards of trade, working closely with the Ministry of Small Business as well and our enterprise centres—some 1,400 vendors from all across the province. I've done sessions myself in Ottawa and Thunder Bay. They're very well-attended sessions. So clearly we're reaching out to businesses.

It's nothing new for us to do that. We've been doing it for some time, and frankly, the proof's in the pudding. Of the 45,000 vendors who do business with the province of Ontario, over 95% of them are strong Ontario companies.

GREEN POWER GENERATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Of course, right now we have committee hearings and there's a lot of concern about Bill 150. People are particularly shocked to hear that Bill 150 does not address health concerns, because the health of Ontarians should surely be considered in important government policy decisions where the potential impact is widely reported by independent professionals with expertise.

Dr. Nina Pierpoint's research, which has worldwide support, states, "Wind turbines of the size you are contemplating do ... cause harm to human health when placed within two kilometres of people's homes."

I ask you, Minister, why are you and your Premier not addressing the health concerns of the bill?

Hon. George Smitherman: First of all, I think that the party which is demonstrating through this debate that they are back in favour of coal and that coal is back in favour with them, and is really asking a serious question

to a former health minister when the Ontario Medical Association has said that 2,000 to 3,000 people in the province of Ontario die prematurely because of coal—why has the honourable member's party reversed course and is now back in favour of coal as part of our generation mix in the province of Ontario?

In the supplementary, I'll look forward to the opportunity to explain to the honourable member how the process will involve the Ministry of the Environment in helping to establish the most appropriate and standardized setbacks associated with wind turbines in the province of Ontario.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to let the minister know that it was our party—in fact, I was Minister of the Environment at the time when we made the decision to close Lakeview, which we did ahead of time, and also had a plan to eliminate the coal plants.

But I would say to you, your refusal to acknowledge the health concerns and risks in this bill flies in the face of worldwide evidence to the contrary. As you know, the health and safety of people is impacted by wind turbines. They can induce sleep disturbance, depression, migraines, nausea and memory loss. Dr. Robert McMurtry, the former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, has asked, why will the government not proceed with an epidemiological study of the health risks and impacts before moving forward? Why won't you do the right thing?

Hon. George Smitherman: I take it that the honourable member's silence on the matter of the debate which has occurred—which has seen at least six or seven members of that caucus stand up and say, "We support coal on an ongoing basis in the province of Ontario." Why did she refuse to speak to that in her question?

On the matter with respect to the health concerns on wind turbines, firstly, I say that I had the chance to meet with Dr. McMurtry, someone whom I know well, and I've indicated that I'll look forward to continuing to work with him. The Ministry of the Environment, as part of this process, will establish, based on worldwide science, the very best recommendations, on a standardized basis, around setbacks from wind turbines to replace the patchwork quilt which has emerged in the province of Ontario, where some municipalities have established setbacks at 300 metres and others at higher amounts. We think that we should use the best available science to establish standardized setbacks, and that's what the Ministry of the Environment will have the responsibility to do if the Legislature passes Bill 150.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Housing. On Sunday, a Toronto Star editorial called on the housing minister to implement a comprehensive provincial housing strategy now. It called for immediate action to help the 600,000 renters in Ontario who pay too much of their income on rent to make ends meet. This morning, I introduced a motion calling for the govern-

ment to freeze rents for one year to help those struggling men and women and children to put food on their tables and keep their homes. Will the minister support this motion and freeze rents for one year in Ontario?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the honourable member for the question. I'm very proud of the track record of this government. I mentioned, the last time I had a question from the honourable member, what the rent increase regime looked like under their government, under the Conservative government and under the McGuinty government.

The fact of the matter is that of all three political parties, the McGuinty government, on average, has made the lowest rent increase under the guideline, and we're very proud of that.

I'm also very pleased that we're working co-operatively with the federal government, our municipal partners and the not-for-profit sector to develop a comprehensive long-term affordable housing strategy. Part of that strategy is the fact that the federal government is now back in the housing business. Minister Duncan, in his last budget, announced that we will match by \$622 million a plan to create affordable housing in this province. We're proud of that plan. We look forward to working and getting the shovels—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I would remind the Minister of Housing that we in the New Democratic Party are no fans of the Liberal Bob Rae, either.

This is an extraordinary time of need in Ontario. There is an urgency on this issue that the minister doesn't seem to appreciate. Men and women in Ontario are losing their jobs now. Ontarians can't keep waiting for the government to develop a housing strategy sometime in the future. Freezing rents in Ontario for one year would cost the government nothing, but it would offer some hope and protection to families who are living in hunger and fear of eviction.

Why won't the minister show a sense of urgency, and commit to support a rent freeze immediately?

Hon. Jim Watson: I always find it amusing when the membership of the NDP try to distance themselves from the leader who brought them to power for the first and only time. In fact, there are three members of the current caucus of the NDP—

Mr. Paul Miller: That's because you screwed up again.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member will withdraw the comment, please. Withdraw the comment. Withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: Okay, I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): A straight withdrawal would be appreciated.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Jim Watson: Members of the current NDP caucus were very happy to receive a car and driver under the

Bob Rae government, and they served in cabinet with him.

We're proud of the fact that we're going to be investing \$1.2 billion in affordable housing over the course of the next two years: \$704 million for repairing social housing and making them more energy-efficient, \$365 million to create more affordable housing units for low-income seniors and the disabled, and \$175 million for the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program.

I challenge the honourable members to vote for the budget—

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

RURAL ONTARIO

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Agriculture is a major economic driver in our province. Crop and livestock sales total close to \$9 billion per year. The agri-food sector generates more than \$33 billion annually and employs approximately 700,000 people.

Rural Ontario needs our support to invest in infrastructure which will create jobs in the short term and enhance Ontario's productivity in the long term. Investments are needed in research and innovation to move our agriculture sector forward and allow it to remain competitive by taking advantage of new technologies.

The health of the economy in rural Ontario is essential to bringing back growth throughout the province. Farmers and small-town Ontarians need to know that the government is on their side.

How does the 2009 budget help farmers?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I very much appreciate the question from the honourable member from Guelph.

I would say to all of the members of this Legislature that the budget demonstrates a very clear commitment on the part of the McGuinty government to support the agriculture sector and farmers particularly.

Many farmers will benefit significantly from the single sales tax structure. Farmers would no longer pay sales tax on things like trucks, light vans and parts, furniture, lawnmowers, computers, computer services, freezers, and other equipment that they would purchase for their farm operations. They will now be on a level playing field with farmers from other provinces who have the HST already in place.

I think it's also important to remember that farmers will benefit from our tax relief for small businesses, including small business corporate income tax—

1130

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Our budget is delivering for Ontario families to help them get through this challenging economic climate. I know that our government has made significant progress for the people of rural Ontario since taking office in 2003. We have provided support for farmers and funding for rural infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and supported rural economic development. Now more than ever, Ontarians need to know that their

government will continue to work for them and that the budget will provide the support needed to help get our economy moving again.

Could the minister tell this House about some of the other programs that are already working for rural Ontario, and how our investments are achieving results?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: We invest significantly to support farmers particularly, but some of our other investments benefit the entire agri-food sector. This year we plan to invest \$8 million to encourage increased consumption of Ontario-grown and -processed foods in the broader public sector. The budget includes an additional \$1.5 million to develop a new agri-food research centre focused on livestock and crop production, renewable energy, nutrition and health. We will also add \$1 million to our summer jobs program. Investing in rural Ontario has been a priority, and we will continue to invest in rural infrastructure.

In February of this year, Canada and Ontario announced the first 289 projects of the Build Canada fund. This is a program that will deliver \$1 billion in infrastructure investment in rural—

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

VIOLENT CRIME

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The question is for the Deputy Premier. Last week Ontarians were rightly shocked and disgusted to read that once again a person with a violent criminal history repeatedly breached court orders but was somehow granted bail, which the crown never appealed, and while on bail brutally murdered the woman who was his previous victim and who our justice system was supposed to protect. Arsei Hindessa was convicted of the second-degree murder of Natalie Novak and awaits sentencing on May 25.

The law compels a life sentence for such a crime, and the only issue to be resolved is how long he must serve before being eligible for parole. For second-degree murder, the law permits the court to order anywhere from 10 to 25 years of parole ineligibility.

I know the minister does not direct the actions of prosecutors on specific cases, but I ask him to confirm that there are no hidden policies or secret departmental directives that would in any way prevent the crown from seeking the maximum period of 25 years. Will he confirm that to this House?

Hon. George Smitherman: I sense from the question, obviously, that the member has got some background on it that I don't have. As it is a matter that has ongoing engagement with the criminal justice system, it is an area where typically we wouldn't want to offer too much comment.

The key comment of course is the sympathy that we have for circumstances where people have experienced a loss of life, and the family implications are obviously quite extraordinary.

The member did ask, by way of the question, for me to assert that there is nothing that I would know of that

would be hidden direction that would work against what he is asking for. Obviously, I wouldn't want to fall into the trap of pretending to be able to comment on ministerial activities that are the responsibility of others, but I will make sure to take this up with the relevant ministers in our government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: In December of last year, we wrote to the Attorney General and asked him to personally review the conduct of the crown in four cases where persons with long criminal histories were released on bail or were at large and who went on to murder innocent Ontarians. The minister responded with a form letter.

Arsei Hindessa was convicted of brutally and repeatedly assaulting Natalie Novak, and he ended up on probation, with an order to stay away from her. He repeatedly violated that no-contact order and was charged but somehow made bail, and the crown didn't bother to appeal. This isn't just about whether prosecutors are properly prepared for bail hearings or don't appeal bail orders. It's about the Attorney General and his supervisory responsibility to the people of this province. He ducked that responsibility.

Will you now commit to this House that you will direct the Attorney General to personally examine the circumstances of the crown conduct in this case and have him report back to this House?

Hon. George Smitherman: While I am happy to take the question under advisement and to pass that along to the responsible minister, I can't really support the assertion that the honourable member has made. I think that he knows very well that the crown policy manual clearly states that prosecutors should oppose bail in all cases involving serious physical violence and that crown attorneys and police are always motivated to put public safety first and foremost.

These circumstances are very tragic, and our sympathies are there with those who have experienced a loss. I know that the Attorney General will take the question very seriously and will look for an opportunity to be able to respond more directly to the honourable member.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Peter Kormos: A question to the Minister of Transportation, please: The communities of Niagara have been devastated by the loss of manufacturing jobs. The economic development offices in those communities have been struggling to bring replacement industries and manufacturers to Niagara region. Does the minister understand how critical the four-laning of the balance of Highway 406 is to those efforts in those communities? When can we expect to see shovels in the ground?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's a good question. The member has raised this with me, both in the House and privately, as an economic tool to assist in attracting business to his constituency and the whole Niagara region. I'm pleased to inform him that in the last budget, a specific reference was made by the Minister of Finance, I believe, in his speech and certainly in the budget docu-

ments: a commitment for funding to four-lane Highway 406 from its present terminus, which is Port Robinson Road, right through to East Main Street in Welland. That will be done on a staged basis. I expect that we will see some activity in this regard taking place this year and that that will continue on for some period of time.

The mayor of Welland, the regional chair and the member, I know, will be delighted by that news that was contained in the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and page Victoria Carney, to welcome her mother Sylvia Carney, her nana Doris Brown and her papa Homer Brown, seated in the Speaker's gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PASSOVER

Mr. Peter Shurman: Today is the second day of Pesach, known more commonly as Passover. It begins every year on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and lasts for eight days.

This is a time for celebration and reflection on the exodus from Egypt and the liberation of the children of Israel from slavery. It is a time for family and friends to join in the reading of the Haggadah, that story, and to partake in the Seder meals. The Passover Seder with its symbols and rituals instructs each generation to remember their past while appreciating the beauty of freedom and the responsibility that goes with it.

The Haggadah is the fulfillment of the biblical obligation to recount to our children the story of the exodus on the nights of Passover. We eat matzo to represent the unleavened bread that the Israelites baked to bring with them, leaving in such a hurry that it did not have time to rise.

I, along with many of my constituents and all members of the Jewish community, celebrated the holiday with a Seder last night, and we will be doing so again this evening.

It is my privilege to rise in this House and to wish everyone a joyful and peaceful Pesach. Chag Sameach—happy holiday.

BARBARA LaFLESHE

Mr. Paul Miller: Over the past year and a half, I've had the honour of working with several amazing Hamil-

ton grandmothers who fought hard against the loss of temporary care assistance. Barbara LaFleshe, Erlene Weaver and Diane Chiarelli, all from Hamilton's ROCK group, Raising Our Children's Kids, have given endless hours in the pursuit of having their grandchildren's temporary care assistance reinstated.

Because of Barbara's hours of volunteer labour, the lives of some of Hamilton's most vulnerable families have improved, as they now receive much-needed monthly financial support for their at-risk grandchildren.

I'm very happy today to say that the YMCA in Hamilton recognized this hard work when it announced the nominees for the 2009 Women of Distinction Awards.

In the community development and social activism category, one of ROCK's own, Barbara LaFleshe, has been nominated for her fight for financial rights for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The winners will be announced at a gala dinner on May 5 at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

I know that Barbara will have all of our caucus rooting for her, and I'm sure we'll be joined in our support by the Minister of Community and Social Services and the rest of the members of this Legislature.

Good luck, Barbara LaFleshe. You are certainly a woman of distinction.

MOHAWK COLLEGE

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: On February 1, 2009, Rob MacIsaac became Mohawk College's seventh and newest president.

Mohawk has been very fortunate to have a history of strong and passionate leaders who have consistently built on Mohawk's reputation for excellence.

Succeeding Mohawk's former president, the very successful MaryLynn West-Moynes, and interim president Rosemary Knechtel, Mr. MacIsaac has taken the lead of one of Hamilton's prized academic communities and one of Ontario's great colleges.

Mr. MacIsaac's career as mayor of Burlington and chair of Metrolinx has positioned him very well to lead Mohawk. In fact, as president, Mr. MacIsaac will lead a very important part of Hamilton's cultural, social and economic foundation.

Provincially, there is no question that Mohawk is a very important part of Ontario's commitment to building on our world-class post-secondary education system.

It is clear that Mr. MacIsaac shares his vision. As he says, Mohawk "is so important to our community's success" and "building successful communities is my passion."

We are very fortunate to have Mr. MacIsaac as Mohawk's new president, and I look forward to working with him as he builds on Mohawk's legacy of success.

EARTHQUAKE IN ITALY

Mr. Ted Arnott: In the early hours of Monday of this week, a 6.3-magnitude earthquake hit the city of

L'Aquila and several towns in the Abruzzo region of Italy covering 230 square miles, killing over 270 people and seriously injuring another 100. The earthquake has left over 30,000 people homeless. Aftershocks persist throughout the region even as rescue efforts to find survivors continue.

It's the worst quake to hit Italy in over 30 years. Over 15,000 buildings were either damaged or destroyed in the 26 cities, towns and villages around L'Aquila, a city with a population of 70,000 which is twinned with the former city of York in Ontario. In the words of the city's mayor, Massimo Cialente, "For now, the needs are basic. The people in the camps don't even have toothbrushes."

One 98-year-old survivor impressed rescue workers with her tremendous fortitude and courage. Trapped beneath rubble for over 30 hours on her bed, she spent the time crocheting. As the firefighters lifted her up, she told them, "At least let me comb my hair."

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, we extend our sincerest condolences to the people of Abruzzo over their tragic loss of family and friends. Theirs is truly a Passion Week of suffering and pain. We join with the international community in our support of relief efforts to assist the survivors and the families of the victims.

I'm glad to say that my wife, Lisa, traces her family history to Italy, and, as such, our sons share the immense pride that comes with an Italian heritage. We also remember the 75,000 Torontonians who trace their roots to the Abruzzo region and are concerned about their family and friends. We applaud their fundraising campaign to aid those affected by the earthquake.

ROUGE PARK

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I rise today to speak about the Rouge Park, which is to a significant measure located in the riding of Pickering-Scarborough East, which I am so very proud to represent.

The Rouge Park is remarkable for its variety of natural landscapes, from the rolling hills of the glacial Oak Ridges moraine, where the Rouge headwaters start, to the vast wetlands and sandy beach where the Rouge flows into Lake Ontario. All the more remarkable is that the Rouge Park is located in part in the cities of Toronto and Pickering and the town of Markham.

The Rouge, as it is affectionately known, is the only remaining wilderness area within this region, and is the largest nature park within an urban area in North America. It is the only large valley land system in the greater Toronto area where people can still enjoy a wilderness experience, since other rivers in the city are now encumbered by urban development.

The Rouge Park was established in 1995 by the province of Ontario. It covers over 12,000 acres and provides protection for the Rouge River watershed. The Rouge Park is an active park that is free for visitors to enjoy, and has numerous visitor and communications programs to experience.

There's been recent talk of making the Rouge Park a national park of Canada. I welcome this discussion, as it

highlights the significance of the Rouge to the people of Toronto, Durham, York region, and, I would suggest, even all of Ontario.

The Rouge Park, as set up by the province of Ontario, is now fully protected and plays a leading role in the ecological preservation and restoration of the Rouge Valley so that it will be enjoyed by all future generations.

LAKE SIMCOE

Mrs. Julia Munro: I have repeatedly told this House that if the government wants to help clean up Lake Simcoe, it needs to start to provide funds to do the job. Now even the government's strongest supporters are calling on you to provide funding. The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition said in a newspaper ad last weekend that you should provide funds.

Lake Simcoe represents a \$200-million economic benefit to the surrounding communities. It is worth supporting.

Our party has told you repeatedly that funding is needed. We told you during debate on the Lake Simcoe Act. During the debate, I said to this House, "Why do you continue to refuse to fund a cleanup for the lake? Your last budget did not provide any funding, this bill will not provide any, and we have no guarantee you will provide any funding in the future." I could make the exact same statement today.

One day, even the environmental community is going to realize that your Lake Simcoe bill was hollow. It was gesture politics, just like the Poverty Reduction Act, the status-of-the-artist act, and so much of your legislation.

Cleaning up Lake Simcoe never needed a new law. It needed a commitment of will and money from this government, neither of which it has received.

1310

VAISAKHI

Mr. Bob Delaney: Vaisakhi is the annual Sikh celebration commemorating the establishment of the Khalsa in 1699. Vaisakhi was created by Guru Gobind Singh-ji in 1699, giving Sikhs a clear and distinguished identity.

Vaisakhi is celebrated each year during the month of April, as it also welcomes the arrival of the spring season, when the yellow mustard fields are in full bloom in the northern Indian province of Punjab.

In Canada, the Sikh community has played a vital role in the building of our province. Sikhs have contributed to Ontario's social, cultural and economic development. Four of my proud legislative colleagues celebrate their Sikh heritage and upbringing, and some 300,000 Sikh Ontarians, in all walks of life, join them during Vaisakhi.

The annual event is celebrated with the Sikh fervour Ontarians have come to know and respect. The Vaisakhi celebrations continue throughout April. Each year, Ontario's proud Sikh community hosts a Vaisakhi parade. This year, it's on April 26, 2009, and I look forward to attending.

“Vaisakhi diyan lakh lakh vidhayaan” to all our Sikh friends and colleagues in the Legislative Assembly and throughout Ontario.

PASSOVER

Mr. Mike Colle: It's certainly wonderful in the Legislature today, reflecting this incredible province that we have, that we are seeing statements today on the Vaisakhi, Passover and Easter. These are wonderful reflections of the diversity of this incredible province and the incredible people we have here.

Today marks the second day of Passover, a time when families gather together at the Seder to tell stories of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, an incredible story of heroism and an incredible story of a people who have overcome so much.

The great lesson of Passover is that change is possible, that how things are now is not how they have to be or will always be. The Seder night is about the idea that things can change and that each small step we take contributes to the slow-working redemption of the world. On this very special day and time in the Jewish calendar, we sit here in solidarity with all the incredible contributions the people of the Jewish faith have made to Canada and the world, and we celebrate Passover with them in our hearts. We mark this important day whether we are in Toronto, Tel Aviv or Torino, Italy. This is a time of reflection, and we reflect in unison with our Jewish brothers and sisters.

EASTER

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise today in the House to bring Easter greetings not only to my constituents in Mississauga South but also to the people of Ontario. Easter is a time for families to gather together and spend time with loved ones. In a place as diverse as Ontario, this holiday is celebrated in many different ways.

In Toronto, for example, there is an annual Easter parade, which has become a landmark in many communities in the GTA. The parade travels down College Street and makes its way through Little Italy and Little Portugal. I have fond memories of the parade. Not so long ago, my wife, at the age of six, was an angel on one of those floats, and many young people today look forward to this celebration.

Easter is one of the most important days in the Christian calendar. It is celebrated throughout the world and is a time when Christians reflect on the life and teachings of Christ. It's celebrated through church services, family dinners and annual Easter egg hunts.

Many families gathering for Easter this year are concerned about the global economic situation and are struggling with its effects in their own home. I encourage all members of this House to keep those families in their hearts and to contribute their time or make a donation to their local food bank to help all Ontario families have a happy Easter.

I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all members of this House, their families and all the families across Ontario who will be coming together to celebrate Easter.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding membership for a standing committee.

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

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I move the following change in membership: on the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, that Mrs. Van Bommel be replaced by Mr. Johnson.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding standing committees membership.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I move that the following change be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: that Ms. Horwath, Hamilton Centre, be replaced by Mme. Gélinas, Nickel Belt; and that the following change be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies: that Mme. Gélinas, Nickel Belt, be replaced by Mr. Hampton, Kenora–Rainy River.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Paul Miller: I rise today with a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the possibility of staggering losses in the equity, bond and derivative markets threatens the integrity of workers' pensions; and

“Whereas workers agreed to lower wage increases in favour of pensions and contributions to these pensions by employers, in effect deferring wages to ensure an income at a later date; and

“Whereas funds invested in these pension plans are, in fact, money that belongs to the workers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact laws to give workers' and

retirees' pension funds preferred creditor protection in case of bankruptcy or court-mandated corporate restructuring."

I agree with this petition; it's long overdue. I'll be giving it to page Megan.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for respirable particulate matter (PM2.5); and

"Whereas the average annual PM2.5 concentrations measured in the Clarkson airshed were among the highest found when compared to data obtained from the ministry's air quality index monitoring stations; and

"Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and

"Whereas the MOE stated that industrial emissions may contribute as much as 25% of the PM2.5 concentrations in the Clarkson airshed study area; and

"Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

"That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact the Clarkson airshed study area."

I affix my signature and provide it to Mark.

PENSION PLANS

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

"Whereas Ontarians are currently denied full discretionary access to their locked-in retirement accounts (LIRAs, LIRFs, LIFs); and

"Whereas the monies within these locked-in accounts have already been earned as deferred salary, i.e., they are not government handouts or bailouts; and

"Whereas Ontario pensioners have already demonstrated throughout life that they are quite capable of prudent financial management, given that they have raised families, bought and sold homes and automobiles, managed investments, paid their taxes and operated businesses, among other successes; and

"Whereas similar legislation passed in Saskatchewan in 2002 has been" very "successful and has demonstrated the wisdom and prudence of retirees; and

"Whereas a quick and immediate unlocking of pension funds would act as a significant and timely stimulus to the economy during the current recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support into law the private member's bill recently tabled by Mr. Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton, allowing all Ontario pensioners, at age 55, full discretionary access to all monies accrued within their locked-in retirement accounts."

I'm pleased to support this petition and sign it and pass it to page Sarah on her last day in the Legislature.

LUPUS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to present this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on behalf of my hard-working seatmate and colleague from Niagara Falls. It contains the signatures of a number of people who come from the Niagara Falls, Kitchener and Cambridge areas. It reads as follows:

1320

"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."

On behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, I'm pleased to sign this petition, to ask page Renée to carry it for us and to thank the pages for their service to the House.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I have a petition on behalf of my colleague Kim Craiton from Niagara Falls. It reads like this:

"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."

I agree with the petitioners so I put my signature on the petition as well.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I always have a good petition here. I've got one in favour of protecting caregivers.

"Whereas a number of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

"Whereas foreign workers are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

"Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign workers from these abuses; and

"Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for foreign workers; and

"Whereas a great number of foreign workers and caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

"We, the undersigned, support MPP Mike Colle's bill, the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law."

I affix my name to this petition.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians are currently denied full discretionary access to their locked-in retirement accounts (LIRAs, LIRFs, LIFs); and

"Whereas the monies within these locked-in accounts have already been earned as deferred salary, i.e., they are not government handouts or bailouts; and

"Whereas Ontario pensioners have already demonstrated throughout life that they are quite capable of prudent financial management, given that they have raised families, bought and sold homes and automobiles, managed investments, paid their taxes operated businesses, among other successes; and

"Whereas similar legislation passed in Saskatchewan in 2002 has been successful and has demonstrated the wisdom and prudence of retirees; and

"Whereas a quick and immediate unlocking of pension funds would act as a significant and timely stimulus to the economy during the current recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support into law the private member's bill recently tabled by Mr. Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton"—with second reading debate on May 7—"allowing all Ontario pensioners, at age 55, full discretionary access to all monies accrued within their locked-in retirement accounts."

I'm pleased to sign this petition and to pass it to my page, Sean, on his last day.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have petitions from good people from Brampton and Burlington in support of our caregivers and nannies.

"Whereas a number of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

"Whereas foreign workers are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

"Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign workers from these abuses; and

"Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection" in 2001 "for foreign workers; and

"Whereas a great number of foreign workers and caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

"We, the undersigned, support" Bill 160, " ... the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law."

I affix my name to this petition that I support.

BEER RETAILING AND DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition here which has literally thousands of names on it, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the current system, practice and arrangement of retailing and distributing beer in the province of Ontario—and more specifically, the 'near monopoly' of The Beer Store—severely restricts the accessibility, convenience and choice for retail consumers of beer in Ontario; and

"Whereas The Beer Store 'near monopoly' is controlled by 'for-profit, foreign-owned companies' and these companies are not accountable to the people of Ontario, and these companies do not act in the best interests of the people of Ontario;

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

"That legislation be introduced that will permit the retailing and distribution of beer through alternative and additional grocery and supermarket retail channels that will fairly compete with The Beer Store, thereby allowing an accessible, convenient, safe, well-regulated and environmentally responsible retailing environment for beer to become established in the province of Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign my name to at least one of these petitions, and pass it to my page, Teresa, on her last day in the Legislature.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

CORPORATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'll read the resolution:

Be it resolved that, in the opinion of this House, the province of Ontario should undertake a review of

Ontario's current corporate disclosure reporting requirements, standards and compliance therewith, with a particular emphasis on additional financial and non-financial information to ensure that Ontario investors have access to all information material to them in making investment decisions.

That, in undertaking such a review, the Ontario Securities Commission ("OSC") should undertake a broad consultation with its own advisory bodies including the Continuous Disclosure Committee, concerned stakeholders, appropriate interest groups and individuals and other securities regulators, to establish best practice corporate social responsibility ("CSR") and environmental, social and governance ("ESG") reporting standards.

That the OSC seek to develop and adopt an enhanced standardized reporting framework for both quantitative and qualitative social and environmental information to ensure corporate disclosures are understandable, comparable and outcome-focused.

That the OSC shall report back to the Minister of Finance no later than January 1, 2010, with regard to its findings, together with recommendations for next steps to enhance disclosure.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Broten moves private member's notice of motion number 81. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: Let me start by thanking all of the people and organizations that have helped me arrive at today's resolution, including many who are here today: Eugene Ellmen, executive director of Social Investment Organization; Alan Willis and Julie Desjardins, experts in the field of integrated financial disclosure; Bob Willard, an expert in corporate sustainability; Ed Waitzer, the Jarislowsky Dimma Mooney chair in corporate governance at York University and former chair of the Ontario Securities Commission; Lorraine Smith, a corporate social responsibility adviser; Toby Heaps, editor and chief of Corporate Knights; and I'm also pleased to welcome a number of representatives of the Ontario Securities Commission, all of whom are here to watch today's important debate. Please join me in welcoming them.

I would also like to thank Peter Chapman, the executive director of SHARE; Adine Mees, the president and CEO of Canadian Business for Social Responsibility; Jane Ambachtsheer, the principal of Mercer Investment Consulting; Matthew Kiernan, co-executive of Innovest Strategic Value Advisors; and many others who could not be here today but who offered much valuable information and support.

I think that we can all agree that we are living in tumultuous times. Newspaper headlines around the world and nightly newscasts at home and abroad remind us that we are in the midst of a global economic crisis. Stock markets have crashed; life and retirement savings have been decimated; house prices have fallen; pensions are at risk; jobs have been lost; and businesses that we once

believed would be around forever have collapsed or are on the verge of collapse.

1330

As is often the case, times of difficulty can also present opportunity. The current situation calls for a reassessment of the ways we do business: Do our business and investment decisions reflect our values? Are there ways we can better inform and protect Ontarians? How can we ensure that Ontario will succeed and prosper as we emerge from the current economic downturn? I believe that there are lessons from the past that can guide us today.

The Great Depression of the 1930s forced transparency into the financial marketplace, with securities legislation first being introduced at that time both here and in the United States. The goal of increased regulation and forced transparency was to facilitate and foster better protection for investors by providing them with more information in making decisions.

My grandmother lived through the Great Depression, and she used to talk about the need to save money and be frugal because you never knew what the future would hold. When she passed away a few years ago at 101 years old, I suspect she had never owned a stock or a mutual fund. She might have had a Canada savings bond or a GIC, but mostly she held her savings at the local credit union, where she knew and liked the people and felt that her money was safe. But today, owning stocks and shares directly or indirectly, through mutual funds or pension plans, is as commonplace as having a savings or chequing account, and one of the most disheartening realities of the current economic crisis is that individuals and families who did the right thing by following the lessons of the now-famous Wealthy Barber, who paid themselves first and saved for the future by investing in RRSPs, pension plans or mutual funds, have seen a great deal of their hard-earned savings disappear practically overnight, and they have had little or no control to do anything about it.

We can never make investing a failsafe proposition, but we can ensure that investors have all the information that they need and that that information is set out in a way that is easily understandable, readily comparable and sufficiently complete to allow investors and consumers to make the best decisions possible about what companies they want to invest in or purchase goods from. That is, in my view, what corporate social responsibility reporting and environmental and social governance disclosure is all about: It's a way for companies to be transparent about their business and a way for investors, analysts and advisers to gain answers to a number of important questions: How does company Y treat their employees? Who does company B buy their supplies from? How does company X treat our planet? What kind of neighbour is company C to the community in which it operates? How do various companies compare to their competitors in these areas? What risks are they bearing to their bottom line?

According to Industry Canada, corporate social responsibility is ultimately about delivering improved

shareholder and debtholder value, providing enhanced goals and services for customers, building trust and credibility in the society in which the business operates and becoming more sustainable over the long term. Investors in Canada and around the world are becoming increasingly interested in CSR and ESG considerations in securities selection and portfolio management because they know that these factors are linked to shareholder value. Yet the inadequacy of ESG reporting by corporations and the lack of standardization and comparability of CSR reporting makes it difficult for investors to gather necessary information on the environmental, social and governance profiles of companies, to compare companies and to assess risks and opportunities among companies.

In his book *Investing in a Sustainable World*, Matthew Kiernan supports the chorus of experts who charge that conventional disclosure does not provide the necessary information to be of sufficient value to investors. He describes traditional financial statements as only showing the tip of an iceberg, with much of the critical information remaining hidden below the surface.

In 2005, the United Nations Environment Program Finance Initiative retained the European law firm Freshfields to examine the legal framework of the integration of environmental, social and governance issues into institutional investment. Freshfields concluded that integrating ESG considerations into an investment analysis so as to reliably predict financial performance was clearly admissible and arguably required in all jurisdictions. In February 2007, Canada's National Round Table on the Environment and Economy found that social and environmental disclosures by Canadian companies were consistently deficient and under-reported, and called for enhanced disclosure.

So whose responsibility is it to tackle the issue of enhanced disclosure? The Ontario Securities Commission is charged with fostering fair and efficient capital markets and confidence in their integrity. David Wilson, chair and CEO of the Ontario Securities Commission, stated during his testimony before the Standing Committee on Government Agencies:

"Fundamentally, we believe that knowledge gained through the disclosure of information is the best protection for investors. The bedrock of our regulatory system is full, fair and timely disclosure of all information that could be expected to influence investment decisions....

"The logic is pretty simple: Knowledge protects investors. That protection fosters confidence in market integrity. Confidence makes for an efficient market. An efficient market fuels the economy, and a stronger economy is good for citizens and businesses."

However, a recent OSC review concluded that the disclosure of many Ontario companies was insufficient, particularly with respect to environmental issues. It is clear that steps to enhance disclosure must be taken in Ontario, just as they are being taken around the world. Various forms of enhanced disclosure regarding environmental, social and governance factors have been man-

dated in the UK, France, Denmark, Australia and South Africa, among others.

CSR principles have also been enunciated by the United Nations, the OEDC, the International Labour Organization and the European Parliament. There has been recent activity in the United States, with petitions filed before the US Securities and Exchange Commission calling for uniform disclosure and evaluation as it relates to climate change. And in May 2008, California passed a Senate bill which requires the development of an investor-based climate-change disclosure standard.

The actions being taken around the world are consistent with public opinion and the views of corporate leaders. According to a survey released in March 2009, 90% of Canadian senior executives consider reporting on the environmental and social impacts of their companies to be important, yet 78% believe that the average investor does not have enough information about sustainability performance. Seventy-one per cent of CEOs said that regulators should mandate companies to release information that could significantly impact earnings, in contrast to only 14% who opposed non-financial disclosure. Seventy-four per cent of CFOs accepted that legislation relating to disclosure and reporting of sustainability performance would become more stringent over the next five years.

Can ESG disclosure really help provide the information that can better protect Ontario investors? The accuracy of ESG analysis undertaken by Innovest analysts, who accurately forecasted the subprime mortgage collapse in October 2006, nearly eight months before the crisis, and who downgraded Bear Stearns some nine months before it collapsed, clearly tells us that the answer is a resounding yes.

Indices and research on sustainability and financial performance unequivocally conclude that companies with superior performance and positioning on sustainability achieved an on-average superior financial return. That only makes sense, because companies which think about and plan for the next 100 years have a much better chance of being around for the next 100 years.

The time to act is now. On March 10, 2009, the Amsterdam Declaration on Transparency and Reporting called on governments to introduce policies requiring companies to report on ESG factors or publicly explain why they have not done so.

Canada has fared better than many other nations because of a strong banking sector, and nobody will disagree that in large measure that is because of a strong, made-in-Canada, made-in-Ontario banking regulation system.

Perhaps the biggest lesson to be learned from our ability to withstand global forces and emerge stronger from the current economic downturn is the role a made-in-Ontario disclosure framework must play as we rebuild a strong economic foundation and a sustainable future for this generation and generations to come.

The capital markets are an essential part of the engine for economic growth in Ontario, and enhanced disclosure

reform will benefit investors, business and the province as a whole. Now is the time to lead here in Ontario and build that sustainable future.

To support my proposition, I turned to a recent quote from George Soros in his book *The New Paradigm for Financial Markets*: “There are systemic risks that need to be managed by the regulatory authorities. To be able to do so, they must have adequate information. The participants must provide that information even if it is costly and cumbersome. The costs pale into insignificance when compared to the costs of a breakdown.”

I look forward to hearing the debate on this resolution today. I would ask for the support of my colleagues all around the House. All of us sent here by our constituents have the responsibility to raise their voices in this chamber. The voices of our constituents are telling us loud and clear that in this time of economic crisis, it is time to be bold, it is time to take action and it is time to look beyond the horizon and find ways to ensure that Ontario will come out of this current global economic crisis in a way that is stronger, better and more sustainable for generations of Ontarians to come.

1340

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Let me say at the outset that giving investors more information, as opposed to less information, is obviously a good thing. It allows them to make good decisions; it allows them to make better decisions. I’m not sure if you can ever give investors enough information to help all of them make good decisions.

As the member pointed out, it was over a year ago, prior to the October collapse of the marketplace, that people were talking about the subprime mortgage meltdown, and yet very few people, in my experience, and certainly not the professional managers of pension funds, withdrew their money or put their money, or a significant portion of their money, into money markets where it would have been protected. The consequences of the size of that meltdown in the housing market couldn’t go unnoticed, and yet, even with all the information that was available, precious few people saved themselves from financial discomfort, or financial ruin in some cases. So I’m not sure how much information companies should be required to give. I think more information is always good, but it’s how it’s done and how it’s listened to.

This motion seeks enhanced Ontario Securities Commission accountability, which is interesting. Increased accountability from government and its agencies is a good thing. But this Liberal government should perhaps practise what it preaches. Yesterday, the Progressive Conservative opposition put forward a motion seeking similar accountability. Bob Runciman, our leader, moved that, “whereas the budget introduced on March 26, 2009, would give the McGuinty government the authority to spend an extraordinary and unprecedented amount of taxpayer money,” and it went on to talk about the 2005 Auditor General’s report, which was highly critical of the

McGuinty government’s lack of accountability and the transfers of taxpayers’ money, particularly at the end of the year. The Auditor General was talking about slush-gate, the \$31 million that went out the door very quickly at the end of the year. A million dollars of that money went to the Toronto Cricket Club. The Auditor General continued to find the government wanting in accountability—there were four different categories that our motion went through, which I won’t bother to list here. It suggested at the end that “each such report shall automatically and immediately be posted on an accessible and interactive government website, and be referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates and to the Auditor General.” That motion, which was introduced yesterday, was defeated by the Liberal government.

This government, I suggest, can’t have it both ways. You can’t demand disclosure from an agency or the companies that are responsible to that agency while refusing to disclose your own spending records. I believe it’s hypocritical. Is “hypocritical” a parliamentary term, Mr. Speaker? At times it has been; at times it hasn’t been. It does border on that. Let me say that it borders on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I think it would be a lot more helpful if you’d go right back to the resolution.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I’m working on the resolution. This initiative might be more appropriately tabled when the markets aren’t in such a tailspin, because this motion is going to put added pressure on individual companies that are listed by the Ontario Securities Commission. The additional information that would be required by this motion, if it is passed, would put the companies at a fiscal disadvantage. It would be very expensive for some of them to put this information in their annual reports, and the effect that that information might have on investments would be questionable in the vast majority of cases.

I would suggest to the member that the Ontario Securities Commission’s responsibility is to ensure that there is no illegal activity going on on the Toronto Stock Exchange, activity such as we saw in the Bernie Madoff case, the Ponzi scheme in the United States which sucked literally billions of dollars out of the market, or the comparable case in Canada when Mr. Tang, I believe it was, and his Ponzi scheme sucked hundreds of millions of dollars out of the Canadian market. I think that’s the business of the Ontario Securities Commission and that’s the business that they should be concentrating on. In fact, I would support a motion that they should be given further resources and they should do a better job in tracking those types of things down.

It was always disappointing to me that Mr. Black of the newspaper business was found guilty in some of those areas when in fact he was found guilty in the United States, and the Ontario Securities Commission—he was found guilty, so those crimes took place in Ontario, or some of them did, yet it was in the United States that he was found guilty. The Ontario Securities Commission never took him to court, and I think that was a

shame. The Ontario Securities Commission should have done a better job in that area.

I would suggest that at this point in time, the bottom lines of most companies in Ontario are severely threatened with profitability and that added responsibilities on their bottom line may not be the way to go at this particular time. Again, I refer back to my opening remarks, that more information in the hands of investors is always a good thing. It's how you do it and under what conditions.

The Ontario Securities Commission, of course, looks out for investors, taxpaying citizens who need to feel safe and protected against fraud and corruption. This legislation, I would suggest, has very little to do with fraud and corruption; it has to do with the social nature of their businesses, and I don't think that would help people make informed, profitable decisions when buying or selling stock.

I would also point out that perhaps another area that the Ontario Securities Commission should be investigating more and doing a better job of is moving towards a national agency. We're one of the few countries in the world that doesn't have a national agency, where a company operating across Canada doesn't have to register 11 times, I think, fill out 11 different sets of forms and register in every province they want to do business in, as well as at the national level. We should be working hard in order to reduce that amount of red tape for companies, as opposed to creating more red tape for companies to operate in the various jurisdictions in Canada, there being 11 at the current time.

With that, I would leave my remarks and wish the member opposite well in her presentation of her private member's motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I want to say right off that the NDP will be supporting this resolution. I want to thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for doing the work that needed to be done to pull all of this together, to talk with the different stakeholders and to bring this resolution before the House itself.

As the member is probably well aware, the NDP in the past has called for significant action to strengthen securities legislation, to change the way the Ontario Securities Commission operates, because, like her, we have felt that there are many things that have been left untouched, areas in which the public, both the investing public but also the public that is at the receiving end of economic activity, needs greater protection. We think this resolution by the House is consistent with the positions we've put forward before.

1350

I'm sure the member knows there have been several high-profile inquiries into securities in Ontario and substantial recommendations for changing the way that securities are regulated. Those reports and recommendations have gone on to the great holding pattern in the

sky, where they continue to accumulate dust as the days go by. My hope is that at some point a resolution, perhaps this one, will be the straw that breaks the camel's back—I know I'm mixing metaphors mercilessly—and allow some forward motion on this. There's no doubt in my mind that this kind of resolution is required.

When you look at very recent history, there's no doubt in anyone's mind that the lack of corporate transparency and accountability—the irresponsibility—was at the heart of the financial crisis that North America, and indeed the world, is dealing with right now. Forty years ago, Milton Friedman said that the goal of corporations was very simple: to accumulate the highest possible profits and generate the greatest possible shareholder value. His position was summarized somewhat more succinctly in the movie *Wall Street*. A character, Gordon Gekko, had a great line: "Greed is good." Some days, a film scriptwriter can summarize many large volumes of ideology in one line, and in this case they did.

The simple reality is that there is extraordinary pressure every day on CEOs and senior managers to follow the Milton Friedman/Gordon Gekko line. Read the Report on Business, read the Toronto Star report on business, read the National Post: Every time quarterly results are published, there's a response on the part of investors in the stock market; there's incredible pressure to maximize at every turn the value that can be extracted from an operation. That means that long-term thinking gets pushed to the side; that means that thinking about the social impacts of a particular investment gets pushed to the side; that means that environmental concerns are pushed to the side—not in all corporations; some people seem to be able to balance it better than others, but the tendency and the pressure is strong, profound and relentless.

If you're going to counterbalance that, it is not simply a question of making charitable statements or making noises that give people assurance; you actually need regulations in place so that people understand the scale of risk they take when they invest in a company, and so that those companies act in a way that is far more socially beneficial to us, to our communities and to our province than simply accumulating profits would be. I know that those who subscribe to the "greed is good" school say that it delivers jobs and gives value, and that eventually, greed trickles down on the great masses below.

If we look at the impact of bank executives, trading house executives and others, who quite literally bet the farm—not a farm they own but the farm that had been invested in them by millions of investors and depositors—we look at a financial crisis that has devastated millions in the United States, caused a slowdown in our economy here and caused the loss of the private banking sector in places like Iceland. It was interesting listening to the BBC News a few weeks ago, where a commentator said, "Well, I previously said that UK banks were a hop, skip and a jump away from being completely nationalized. I now say it's just a hop." There is no question that the banking sector took a bath in jurisdictions where

regulation was skimpier, and investors took that bath along with them. They didn't want to do that. It was something that was forced upon them.

Some say that that crisis is greed gone wrong. All I can say is that the crisis is the inevitable result of a situation within which people are forced to maximize results, no matter what—no matter what. When you're in a situation like that, then you game; you play at the edges. You take huge speculative risks because, frankly, it's the only way you're going to beat the average. The bubble bursts, housing prices collapse, people lose their jobs, there's insolvency.

Companies do need to focus on a more sustainable approach, both to their own operations and their operations within the larger society. Some studies have shown that companies that have done that consistently have been able to perform well—not in the stratosphere but perform well. What we need to do in this province, and following on the resolution that's before us today, is make that approach far more part of our lives and the lives of those corporations.

Having had the opportunity to talk to a friend of mine who retired from banking about a year ago, I asked him why it is that in the United States you had all these banks go under and in Canada they were relatively stable. He said, "Well, having worked on both sides of the border, I can say there's absolutely no difference in terms of the intellectual capacity of bankers north or south of that border. The bankers in Canada were saved by the regulatory framework." Again, bringing in a regulatory framework that protects companies from exposing themselves to liabilities in the social sphere or the environmental sphere is not just good for society but good for business.

We look at the reality of climate change. The report by Sir Nicholas Stern for the government of the UK talked about the cost if we didn't act on climate change and the cost to act on climate change. The cost to act now was about 1% or 2% of GDP. The price of not acting is more like 15% to 20% of GDP, an impact on the global economy comparable to the Great Depression, World War II, events of that magnitude.

If in fact shareholders are putting money into companies that are creating greater and greater liability for themselves by being irresponsible in the field of climate change or irresponsible when it comes to toxic chemicals—there are companies that have had to go under, take bankruptcy protection because their liabilities for products like asbestos were so huge that the only way to keep even a small part of their operation going was to shield themselves through bankruptcy protection.

In bringing forward regulation that says investors should know when companies are gaming—frankly, when I say "gaming," I mean investing in toxic chemicals or utilizing toxic chemicals in a way that will present the company with a large-scale, ongoing, unaffordable liability in the future. The investors ought to know that, and companies ought to know that they're going to have to say what's going on there, so that the investment com-

munity—and the investment community, let's think about it. Sure there are lots of people who are millionaires, but there are a lot of people who parked their life savings in their RRSPs or mutual funds, hoping that the companies they put money into will be managed in a prudent, thoughtful and productive way. They don't think they're gambling when they put their money in an RRSP. If companies are not required to disclose their irresponsible actions, their liability-creating actions, then in fact small investors are being forced to gamble, and they shouldn't be.

In this society, private investment is arguably the most powerful decision-maker when it comes to structuring our economy. Governments have a role, but compared to the private sector it's relatively limited. The private sector decides where factories will be built. They decide where offices will be located. They decide the grand outline of the economy that we have. We set laws in this chamber and we set laws in other chambers, but companies have tremendous power. Bringing in and putting in place legislation that requires companies to be more responsible is in fact going to the place where most of the power is exercised and saying that if you in fact are going to operate in this community and if you are going to represent yourself as a safe haven for investment, you have to operate within this framework of rules, and that is a responsible thing for us to do.

1400

When you look at other jurisdictions who look at banks in Canada now and say, "Those banks aren't failing and aren't being propped up with hundreds of billions of dollars in loans," then our banking system can represent itself as relatively stable because we had a good regulatory framework—again, not because bankers on one side of the border are smarter or not. It's because we have had a fairly cautious approach—by luck or wisdom, I don't know, but we have had it and it was good for us.

My hope is that this resolution will spur the government to take action and put in place changes to securities regulation and to the operations of the Ontario Securities Commission so that in future, the engine of our economy, which in this case is the private sector, will operate in a framework that promotes social good as much as it promotes private profit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Thank you, and the member should know that the standing orders are in fact silent on the mixing of metaphors.

The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I will try not to mix any metaphors, Speaker.

It's a pleasure to join the debate today. It's interesting when we have private members' business: Sometimes you get interesting bills coming forward and sometimes you get bills that, personally, I don't find all that interesting, but every so often a bill comes along that is incredibly timely, and that would be the way I would describe this initiative that we're being asked to debate this afternoon.

I really want to express my admiration to the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for the amount of work she's

put into the preparation of the initiative we have before us, because it really gets to the heart of the matter as to why there are so many people, certainly in Canada, and I think in North America and around the world, who are scratching their heads these days and wondering just what exactly happened in the past 18 months. How did we end up in the state we're in, with the economy in the shape it's in, and how did so many lives get impacted in this way?

I think it gets back to the fact that in the past we had confidence that somehow, somebody in the regulatory system was looking after the best interests. Then we started to hear of companies named Enron, WorldCom, Parmalat, Lucent Technologies and AIG. Who ever thought that an organization by the name of Fannie Mae would have such an impact on our own lives? The world began to change and people started to ask questions as to who was looking after all this. "Who is looking after my best interests?"

If you go back to a speech that was made in 1998 by Arthur Levitt, the former chair of the SEC, he gave a speech that I think some people in the business paid a lot of attention to. It was called *The Numbers Game*, and it started to openly discuss what earnings management was doing to the securities system, how earnings management perhaps was presenting companies in a light that was not entirely accurate.

Financial statements can be a map or a maze. They can be a map that gets you right to the information you need, or they can be a maze where they put obstacles in your way so you can't find the information you really want as a private investor. Sometimes those hurdles are introduced purposely, in my opinion. That's where you need a regulator that has the ability to step in and say, "No, that has to be changed. If we're taking this out to the public, that's not accurate. You need to do some more work on that." That's where we start to rely on the auditors. That's where we start to rely on the opinion that auditors bring to financial statements.

It's interesting, though. We start school, all of us, when we're at about the age of five, and most of us are still in school in our early 20s. There aren't very many of us, I don't think, even in this House, who could probably analyze financial statements. That's what we go to financial advisers for. That's why we have bankers and financial advisers. They are the people who are supposed to guide us through this maze. It seems to me that we could do a better job in our educational system of ensuring that people, as part of the education that they receive to enter our society, are able to determine what a balance sheet is and what an income and earnings statement is, and what's the difference between a statement of shareholders' equity.

But people rely on the decisions that are made on a daily basis to plan for the future and they want to know that that information is accurate. The financial statements obviously will give you the quantitative state of a company, and the MDA, the management, discussion and analysis portion, gives you the qualitative, gives you the opinions.

We need to know that the regulator we have—and certainly I'm a strong supporter of a single regulator for this entire country; I think our party is on record of supporting that as well, and I hope the rest of Confederation comes around to that way of thinking in the near future. But when you look at some of the information that's presented to the average shareholder in the annual reports, you often get a lot of glossy photos of the latest gizmo or the latest product they're selling. You get a lot of fluff. You rarely see the financial ratios. It's not compulsory, for example, to put down your liquidity ratios or your profitability ratios or your market ratios—information that would be of great interest to somebody who was considering investing.

I think that the powers that are being asked for today by the member are something that deserves the support of this entire House.

My time is up, Speaker; thank you for allowing me to join the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion. Let me start by congratulating the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her hard work in putting together this motion. I know that she has done a lot of information-gathering in terms of the breadth and scope of this motion, and I'm very pleased to speak to it.

Let me start with thanking Mr. P.K. Pal, with whom I had the opportunity to practise law before being elected to this chamber and who is an expert on corporate governance, corporate responsibility, and environmental, social and governance reporting. The little bit I know is thanks to him. Under his tutelage I gathered a fair bit of knowledge about this very important topic.

We live in a day and age where there is a right to know on behalf of consumers, investors, shareholders and stakeholders. Information is essentially gold in today's era, and it's not sufficient that we receive from our corporations, our corporate partners, information relating only to financial or accounting information. We need to move further ahead and be able to receive information that relates to environmental issues, social issues and governance issues because of the impact that a lot of these businesses have on our lives on a daily basis.

In fact, I think that business is starting to realize that there is a premium on sharing this information, because consumers, investors, stakeholders and shareholders are becoming more and more aware; they want to know more about the nature and the degree of the business. That movement is very much, I believe, taking place globally. In Canada, we might be playing some catch-up, and this motion will play a significant role for Canada or Ontario to make up that ground.

I want to, for example, mention some standards that already exist, and I'm referring to a report entitled, *Carrots and Sticks for Starters: Current Trends and Approaches in Voluntary and Mandatory Standards for Sustainability Reporting*. If you look at the voluntary

standards that exist, there are some really good standards or organizations that have put standards out there—for example, the Global Reporting Initiative, which has produced guidelines “for voluntary use by organizations for reporting on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services based on reporting principles,” and AA1000 guidelines as to “how to establish a systematic stakeholder engagement process that generates the indicators, targets and reporting systems needed to ensure its effectiveness in impacting on decisions, activities and overall organization performance.”

The International Standards Organization, ISO, is working on developing guidance standards for social responsibility. The European Union is another great example; it has put directives in place and I think is probably the most advanced jurisdiction when it comes to CSR and ESG reporting, where there are minimum mandatory standards for EU countries in terms of corporate social responsibility and environmental standards.

So I think it’s necessary that we take that step as well and create a framework for enhanced reporting. I really do want to stress that disclosures that are understandable, comparable and outcome-focused, as referenced in this motion, are paramount to ensure that transparency is maintained and information is shared.

1410

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I’m pleased as well to join in the debate, the discussion, today, and as well want to congratulate my seatmate from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing this matter before the Legislature.

I’m hoping in part that the support that’s being expressed around here can be extended even more broadly and that the member from Halton might consider—I know in his comments, if I can paraphrase, some of his concerns were in regard to timing. This may or may not be the best time for one to be entertaining this type of review and/or implementation. If you have a look at the timing, what the member is suggesting is that a report be submitted to the Minister of Finance, I believe it’s January 1, 2010, obviously the end of this year, with recommendations regarding next steps. So it’s not an immediacy of implementation, as much as one would like to see that; there is a process involved, and I’m sure that any recommendations would be sensitive to the economic climate that we find ourselves in.

I almost wanted to start my comments by adding in a disclaimer. When I look online at what’s being offered up for sale or if I get something in the mail, there’s often a disclaimer: “Past performance will not be an indicator of future results,” and there’s a whole bunch of gobbledegook that goes with that which I don’t understand, frankly, in spite of, at times, my role within the Ministry of Finance, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. My role, like many in this place, is to sift through information on a policy level but draw upon the expertise of those with that level of expertise in this

place, within the bureaucratic framework in which we work, as well as stakeholders.

I think what the member is clearly asking for in this resolution is for those with expertise in the area to outreach, to engage with the key stakeholders in the area of investment, to look at key issues around the ESGs in particular, as well as the corporate social responsibility part of that, to look at what the implications are on a go-forward basis, and to be considerate of our current economic climate as a driver for this when people are asking for the opportunity to be better informed in regard to their investment initiatives.

As others have said, few of us are immune now from investments in areas that are less traditional than our parents or grandparents might have seen. You know, we hear about ethical funds on a regular basis. What does that really mean to us? What level of reporting is there around what an ethical fund is all about? What about fair trade practices and issues around labour practices or child labour practices? There are any number of issues we need to consider.

I think the member has brought forward a resolution that has appropriate legs within the structures we have and that would provide value to the minister. I hope the members of the Legislature will be able to support this resolution today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I want to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues from all sides of the House—the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, the member for Oakville, the member for Ottawa Centre, the member for Danforth and the member for Halton—for their comments.

I think we have an opportunity in this House to make Ontario a jurisdiction that provides greater protection for investors, that moves us beyond short-term thinking to true sustainable analysis and puts Ontario in a position to match best practices that have been developed around the world by a variety of thoughtful individuals.

I want to close by saying that I believe this is the exact right time to undertake this analysis. Mervyn King, who’s the chair of the board of directors at the Global Reporting Initiative, at the launch of their Amsterdam Declaration in March, stated the following: “As we seek to rebuild our economic system following the financial crisis, transparency on economic, social and governance issues from our companies must be paramount. Regulators, financial markets, companies and civil society will need comprehensive information on which to assess strategic risks and opportunities.”

Some other great authors, Don Tapscott and David Ticoll, in *The Naked Corporation* say the following: “Free markets depend on strong governments. Public interests are greater than the sum of all private interests. And open market economies depend on clear rules, rigorously enforced.”

I think that the strength of our banking sector in the current time of economic crisis proves the point well. We

have made-in-Ontario, made-in-Canada solutions that have worked well to protect us from the storms around the world. Let's take an opportunity now to move Ontario to a position where we will grow, where we will be a jurisdiction that progressive dollars will want to invest in that will be able to develop that sustainable economy that we all want for our children and generations to come. The time is now.

CAREGIVER AND FOREIGN WORKER
RECRUITMENT AND PROTECTION
ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RECRUTEMENT
ET LA PROTECTION
DES FOURNISSEURS DE SOINS
ET DES TRAVAILLEURS ÉTRANGERS

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act respecting the recruitment and protection of caregivers and foreign workers / Projet de loi 160, Loi ayant trait au recrutement et à la protection des fournisseurs de soins et des travailleurs étrangers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence has 12 minutes.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm here today to make my fellow colleagues aware of a very important situation that exists in our province and really throughout this country. It's in regard to the plight of the caregivers who live in our communities across our province. My bill tries to address a series of systemic abuses that occur in the treatment of these wonderful people who are caregivers for our elderly and for our children and families.

The basis of the bill deals with trying to correct a problem that exists with a program that was instituted over 17 years ago by the federal government. It's called the live-in caregiver program. It was designed to fill a shortage of nannies that existed in our communities. It allows Canadians to import foreign caregivers through employment agencies, which in Ontario are neither regulated or licensed. In other words, if you want to have a live-in caregiver for your grandmother or an elderly relative who's sick or for a child or your children, there's a program, and it's a good program. The trouble is, there are many challenges in this program being effective.

The proposal that I have is really based on what just went into effect in Manitoba on April 1. What the Manitoba legislation does is it licenses and regulates anybody who's involved in the recruitment of foreign workers and ensures that they are bona fide companies or agents, they're registered and licensed, they are to abide by a code of conduct, and they can be fined if they don't abide by the code of conduct, or their licences can be suspended or revoked if they don't abide by the rules. I'm asking that our government undertake the same initiative, and I've brought forward my private member's bill in an attempt to try and get these protections brought into Ontario.

Subsequent to my introduction of the bill, there has been an indication from the Minister of Labour that he's looking at introducing substantive legislation. So I hope that the bill has good fortune and it does become law that the minister will introduce. Meanwhile, we have this bill before us, which I think is a good template. It's not a perfect bill but is one that has been passed in Manitoba and instituted to protect foreign workers in Manitoba.

The essence of this bill is really the result of an incredible series of articles that were introduced in the Toronto Star by two veteran reporters, Robert Cribb and Dale Brazao from the Toronto Star, who did some investigative reporting to find some abuses that were quite astonishing.

1420

There was one case of a young nanny-caregiver who said in public, "My employer cared more about the family dog than she did about me." The poor caregiver was bitten three times. She wasn't allowed to go for medical treatment. In fact, she was asked to sign a waiver saying that the family was not responsible for the dog attacking her three times.

There was another case—and this is not only happening in Ontario. In Vancouver, there was this young nanny, Marissa. She was working seven days a week, no days off—from 7 in the morning till 11 o'clock at night, seven days a week. She asked to have one hour off to go to church. That was refused.

There was another caregiver who had the courage to come forward and say that she was being housed in a basement with dozens of other caregivers, their passports and bank books taken away from them. In essence, it was like a form of indentured servitude right here in Toronto.

There were numerous examples in this Star series about the conditions these caregivers are in. Much of this abuse that this bill tries to deal with is perpetrated by the recruiters. These recruiters find it very lucrative to bring in these hard-working women, for the most part. They come from Hong Kong or the Philippines. They come here to Canada basically to earn a few dollars so they can send money back to their mothers and fathers in the Philippines or feed their children back home. Yet what the recruiters do is they charge them these under-the-table fees. It's not bad enough that they're sometimes underpaid, but then they charge them \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000, up to \$10,000 in kickbacks and tell them, "If you object to this fee and you don't pay me back the fee"—in fact, sometimes they charge them a fee plus 20% interest—"we'll make sure that you are going to be fired. You're going to lose your job and you'll be sent back to the Philippines." That's the line they give them.

There is one sad case in Toronto right now as we speak, of a nanny who is in a coma. Obviously, she's unable to work. The employer wants to fire her. The tragedy there—I mean, it's so obvious—is she would be deported if she comes out of the coma because she wasn't able to do her duty. The employer wouldn't give her a T4 slip, so she wouldn't be paying her taxes, therefore she wouldn't fulfill the federal contract as it's stipu-

lated. She's in a coma and can't work, so the fear her friends have—and thankfully they think she will come out of the coma—is that she'll be deported and not fulfill her contract because she's in a coma.

This is how ludicrous the situation is right here in Ontario. It also happens right across this country. The live-in caregiver program provides incredibly good service to people, yet in 17 years there have been no protections made for the caregivers in the program. The recruiters and the agents used to be licensed in 2001 in Ontario. In 2001, the licensing of these foreign recruitment agencies was taken away, so it's a free-for-all. Anybody—a butcher, a plumber, anybody—can be a recruiter. There are no checks. In fact, the Canada Border Services Agency thinks that 90% who come are exploited by these recruiters. Many of them have no jobs they're supposed to be lined up with when they get here.

“Documents obtained by the Star show Canada Border Services Agency officials believe there is ‘ongoing fraud and misrepresentation’ within the program, but the immigration and human resources departments are not taking action.”

This is a whole industry: “The Star has interviewed two dozen caregivers who came to Canada over the past five years. Almost all arrived to find their employers did not exist or had hired someone else.” You're supposed to link the caregiver with the employer. These hard-working caregivers come and find out they've been taken under fraudulent circumstances.

Anyone can open what the Star calls “a nanny importing business.” They treat people like chattels. The Internet and local newspapers are filled with ads from dozens of Ontario agencies claiming to have nannies on hand, as if they're some kind of chattel. Thousands of them come to Canada just looking to work. One border service agent working with the federal government said, “This is clearly human trafficking.” That's what is going on. There are no checks and balances federally, and it was deregulated in Ontario in 2001.

The Canada Border Services Agency said, “The caregivers are innocent and are left obligated to pay the agency fees but are left without employment.” The Canada Border Services Agency has listed 20 companies they know as being fraudulent; 20 companies are listed. They know, but they don't broadcast them. Instead of going after the agents and the agencies that are fraudulent, do you know what they do? They go after the nannies. They threaten to deport the caregivers, and yet none of these agencies have been shut down. The only shutdown I've been able to see in the Star series was when the government of the Philippines jailed someone from Toronto who was involved in this exploitation. The government of the Philippines did it; the government of Canada did nothing; the government of Ontario has no regulation of these agencies that are just exploiting vulnerable people.

This is a proposal that I think needs some serious evaluation. These caregivers, who are in homes in all our ridings, are just trying to fulfill a simple contract. They

want to work hard; they want to take care of children and the elderly. But in their attempt to do that, they're getting very little protection and a lot of exploitation by these operators. This type of legislation would at least license, register and create awareness. There would be an online registry, hopefully, that could be seen by a potential caregiver in Hong Kong or in Dubai or in Manila. They could see whether that company is licensed in Ontario.

In fact, even employers—prospective people who want a nanny—have been calling my office and saying, “How do I know which company is legitimate? I don't know. Can someone tell me? What are the 20 bad ones that have been listed by the Canada Border Services Agency? We have no way of knowing.” This legislation would at least give people the right to know who the fraudulent ones are and get them out of business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I want the member to know that I will be supporting this legislation. It reminds me of days gone by, back in the 1960s, when there were foreign agricultural workers coming into Ontario in a very unregulated fashion. I would hasten to say that the vast majority of them were treated well and treated fairly, but there were always those who would take advantage of a situation. I think that perhaps we're dealing with the same situation here, in that many of these nannies are well treated and have become virtual members of the family they're working with; however, as is so often the case, the few will ruin the system for the many. That's what happened with the foreign agricultural workers. That legislation started in Ottawa. You need enabling legislation in Ottawa to make this system work. The enabling legislation in Ottawa was passed, I believe it was in the early to mid-1960s, and allowed the provinces to set up a system whereby foreign agricultural workers came into the country. They would work in various parts of the agricultural industry, mostly horticulture—fruits and vegetables—in those crops that are very, very labour intensive.

1430

Over the years, there were always people who would run up very close to the rules. Of course, those are the people who make it difficult for everyone else. Those are the people who force more and more rules and regulations to take place, to the point where now the hours of work are regulated, the pay is regulated, the number of workers is regulated, depending on the economy in Canada and in Ontario, whether you can get Ontarians to do the work—if there are any Ontarians who want to do the work that these foreign agricultural workers are doing today—ensuring that you are protecting Ontario jobs for Ontarians, but also making sure that businesses in Ontario can hire foreign agricultural workers to make sure that their crops are harvested, to make sure that their crops are planted and maintained throughout the growing season.

We find that this system, which has been operating now for over 40 years, is operating extremely well. It

doesn't interfere with Ontario's labour markets, by design, and it provides employers with workers who look forward to this kind of opportunity.

In the early days, it was often commented that foreign workers, particularly from Mexico and Jamaica, would come to this country and earn in three months what it took them five years to earn in their country of origin. When they went back, they and their families would live very, very well for the nine months that they weren't here. They would come back the following year for another three-month or four-month stint. Those things all worked very well.

It also developed that many of them understood what our system was here in Ontario, and they would make application for immigration to Ontario, obtaining a permanent job here, making application for immigration, and become Ontario citizens through it. We've got some extremely beneficial citizens in Ontario that have developed through that agricultural workers program. I can see nothing but success out of that program.

In fact, one chap who worked on the Chudleigh farm—his name was George Bailey—got a job at Rockwell International, which was a plant in Milton, and worked there for a number of years. He married, had children, was a Canadian citizen and raised a family. Of course, one of his children was Donovan Bailey—a rather fast Canadian, world record holder in the 100-yard sprint. He brought Canada great prestige around the world, and his father immigrated to Ontario under those conditions.

I would support this legislation. I congratulate the member for bringing it forward. I think in Ontario that everyone deserves a great deal of respect, more so than in other places that we hear stories of from around the world. I've been fortunate in life that I've seen some of those places around the world, personally. I can tell you that some of the conditions that people live in are pretty bad. It has been said that 60%, 70%, or maybe 80% of the world gets up in the morning and hopes that they'll have enough food to eat for that day. We're lucky in this country in that when we get up in the morning we hope we can stay on our diet for just one more day.

So I congratulate the member for bringing this to the House, and I look forward to supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to stand and support the bill by my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence. I know that he will more fully recognize some of the guests in the members' gallery, but I'd just like to greet them and say, “Magandang hapon-po sa inyong lahat.”

Just before I talk about the bill, I'd like to point out how effective this particular member has been in the past in some of the resolutions that he has introduced. The many, many things about which the member for Eglinton–Lawrence can say, “This has been adopted into law” because of what he has done include red-light camera legislation; the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine; the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act, which

he drove personally; the end of mandatory retirement, which he stood up for first; and portable external heart defibrillators in public places. So, when this member stands up and says, “There's a wrong that I aim to right with a piece of legislation,” the chances are excellent that that wrong is, indeed, going to be righted and turned into law.

This bill, the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, would, if passed, have some of these key components—this is the difference it's going to make. It's going to:

- license and register foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies. We've just passed into law a bill, Bill 139, that does pretty much that for temp agencies. We already have a template that shows that this can be done and in a fair, equitable and responsible manner;

- prohibit recruiters from collecting fees from foreign workers. We've just done that with Bill 139 for temp agencies;

- protect the wages and benefits of foreign workers—again, not much different from what we've just passed this week;

- establish a public online registry of licensed recruiters—nothing wrong with more openness, just a splendid idea; and, to make sure there's teeth in the act,

- impose penalties of up to \$50,000 for corporations and \$25,000 for individuals who are in contravention of this act.

This is a bill that has been properly thought out. This is the kind of bill we need to do this job to make a difference.

We used to have some regulation of foreign workers, but they were deregulated some eight years ago. Currently, the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia prohibit charging foreign workers any placement fee—one of the single biggest abuses that this bill hopes to clean up—and they require all agencies to be licensed.

This bill was introduced for first reading just a short time ago: at the end of March. This is its second reading, and of course, from the Filipino community, which is so vibrant and has been such a tremendous community to get to know in the GTA—it has received some tremendous support from the Filipino community. It's certainly supported by Philippine Consul General Alejandro Mosquera.

Some of the issues here were brought out most notably recently in the Toronto Star investigation. Without going into a lot of the detail on it, it pointed out some of the awful conditions in which caregivers, who assume they're coming over to Canada for a better life, find that just about everything that has been told to them is bogus, and I know some of the other speakers on this bill are going to dwell on that.

With that said as the introduction, I'm going to leave some of the description of the meat of this bill to some of the other speakers. Thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

M^{me} France G elinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations. This is the first time I've seen you in the chair.

The NDP is pleased to support some of the provisions of this bill: certainly the licensing and registration of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies; the part that prohibits recruiters from collecting fees from foreign workers; the part that protects the wages and benefits of foreign workers; the establishment of a public online registry of licensed recruiters; and the imposition of penalties for corporations, and penalties for individuals who contravene the bill.

1440

There is much that the NDP can support in this private member's bill, but we would certainly prefer to see a more comprehensive approach, similar to what is being done in Manitoba under the Worker Recruitment and Protection Act. In Manitoba, the act aims to regulate the recruitment of all foreign workers, and to protect workers more generally, by requiring licensing of all employment agencies, individuals involved in recruiting foreign workers and anyone involved in recruiting children under 17 for employment purposes. Under this act, these employers will be required to register with the province when they want to bring workers to Manitoba and use only recruiters licensed by the province. The new rules also prohibit charging workers any fees; they would be paid by the prospective employer.

More specifically, as of April 1 of this year, all Manitoba employers wanting to recruit foreign workers are required to register with the employment standards branch. Employers are also required to provide information about their companies and the types of positions for which they are recruiting. They also need to provide information about third party agencies and individuals that would be involved in the recruitment process.

Under what they have in Manitoba, foreign worker recruitment consists of anyone who assists a foreign worker in seeking or finding a job in Manitoba, or assists an employer in seeking or finding a foreign worker for a job in Manitoba. It does not matter whether a fee is charged or not.

Neither a recruiter nor an employer can ever charge or collect a fee, directly or indirectly, from the worker. The employment standards branch will conduct inspections and investigations to ensure that fees are not connected to seeking or finding work.

The Employment Standards Act requires fundamental reform. The issues related to foreign recruited workers cannot be fit in one nifty package. The issues addressed in this bill represent only some of the issues facing temporary agency workers, and peripheral workers more generally.

To really get at the fundamental challenges facing what we call peripheral workers in today's labour market, there are broader issues that must be addressed in a fundamental rethinking of the Employment Standards Act.

My colleague Cheri DiNovo will be tabling an important private member's bill to deal with some of these issues that are not in this particular bill here today.

First, when we look at the reality of what happens in the labour market, it is impossible to separate out one form of employment, such as foreign recruitment work, from other forms of employment, such as employment disguised as independent contracting.

Regulating foreign recruitment work alone may act as an incentive for employers to shift practices to other, more unregulated forms. In other words, we need to integrate legislation that deals with these workers into a broad update of employment standards and protection of all workers.

Second, protecting foreign recruited workers through improving employment standards is just one side of the coin. Workers need to be able to enforce their employment rights while they are on the job. With no protection in the workplace, many workers are denied minimum standards such as overtime pay.

When violations of minimum standards occur, workers must absorb the lost earnings until they can find a new job, or be fired, when they try to get permanent work. That is why we need legislation that includes improved employment standards enforcement.

Third, the Employment Standards Act has an important role to play in establishing a framework for equality. The government should not enable employers to impose inferior working conditions on workers because of the form of employment or because of their employment status. Equality and non-discrimination for temp agency workers is central to policy reviews of temporary agency work in European countries, in the European Union, and in the International Labour Organization. So too, must Ontario address equality of working conditions for temp agency workers.

In the UK, the government has finally recognized the need for regulating temp agency work and for providing for equal treatment. This is very notable, because the UK has one of the largest temp industries in the European Union. The UK government agreed on a deal on May 20, 2008, between unions and employers that will see agency workers in the UK receive equal treatment. Many other countries in Europe have adopted provisions for equal treatment of temporary agency workers. Our neighbours to the east, Quebec, have a labour code that prohibits employers from paying lower wages for workers doing the same task because the person usually works fewer hours. If you do the same task, you get paid the same amount. There is no principle reason why temporary agency workers should not have the same type of protection here in Ontario.

Equality and non-discrimination for temporary agency workers is conspicuously absent from this private member's bill, and it should be changed. Not only must we begin discussion on the principle for employment policy, but we need to begin making strides like our European counterparts. It is therefore essential that indirect and temporary agency workers should receive the same

working and employment conditions, pay package, statutory and employer-sponsored benefits and conditions that the client companies provide to other workers in all forms of comparable work.

So while the NDP can support many of the provisions that are being put forward in this private member's bill, much more needs to be done to protect all workers in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: First of all, I would like to congratulate the member from Eglinton–Lawrence on introducing this bill. As the member from Mississauga–Streetsville has already indicated, when Mike Colle stands up and he sees a wrong to be righted, for some of us that really means falling in behind him to support him and there's no way to really stop him. So congratulations to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

I'm also delighted to see some people from the Filipino-Canadian community here today. Since someone already spoke some Filipino, I would like to add my congratulations and simply say, "Mabuhay Filipinas." I recognize Mel Catre here, who is the former president of the Filipino-Canadian association, with whom I had the great pleasure, 21 years ago, to go to the Philippines. We were talking about the rights of foreign-trained professionals at that time, because what had happened with many professionals was that they were not receiving equivalency for coursework that they had taken in the Philippines. So we visited about seven universities and found that equivalency was lacking in Canada. Congratulations to him because he took the lead on it, and we were successful in getting more equivalency for their courses in the Philippines.

But today it is clear, as Mr. Colle already indicated, that the federal government has not really done its job. If they had taken the first step to protect these foreign workers and caregivers, there would be no need to introduce this bill in this Legislature. Since they have really failed us, it is incumbent upon the province to introduce this bill to ensure that workers and caregivers are being protected. I think most of us know that these unregulated agencies for jobs will charge foreign caregivers up to \$10,000. What a shame. Caregivers come to Canada with the hope of obtaining landed immigrant status, but sometimes they even find that the jobs that were promised them weren't even there. Despite these jobs being not being available to caregivers, agencies continue to demand payment of their fees, and they even go as far as suing these caregivers for unpaid fees. Imagine that: to pay, sometimes upfront, a down payment of up to \$10,000 to be promised a job in Canada that then does not materialize. That is a real shame, and that's why this bill should be supported, and I hope it will be supported, by every member in this Legislature.

1450

What we want to do here is, we want to make sure that some of these abuses do not happen and workers are being protected. Imagine this: Your employer will say,

"I'm sorry, but the organization that had given you to me wants me to ensure that your passport is given to them because you still owe the fee." Wow; what a way to start a life. There are roughly 20 agencies here in Ontario alone that are involved in this sort of activity, which we might even say is really fraudulent activity.

I know that there are some other speakers. I have a whole speech prepared for another half an hour, but I will have to stop now to give the minister a chance to speak. Thank you very much, and congratulations to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's a great pleasure to stand in support of my colleague the member for Eglinton–Lawrence on Bill 160, the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act. It's really a testament to the strength of the member for Eglinton–Lawrence's belief in our multicultural community, in social justice and in our diverse Ontario that he has brought this legislation forward.

It's extremely important that we all recognize the importance of this legislation. It's not a coincidence that there are members of the Filipino community here with us. I welcome them and thank them for being here. It was in March, actually, that I had a meeting with Mel Catre in my constituency office. I said to him at that time that I was very concerned about this issue, and, in fact, I informed the Minister of Labour shortly after that meeting. Then, at around the same time, Mr. Colle introduced this legislation into the House, so it's very timely. I'm very pleased that the Minister of Labour has indicated that he is going to be taking action and that he is going to be making changes, but even if it's a symbolic act, it's very important to vote for this private member's legislation today.

I also want to acknowledge the Toronto Star. I think that we have to recognize, as politicians, that it's very important in a democracy that we work together—politicians, journalists and members of the community. That's how a democracy functions. We all support each other in raising issues of social justice and making sure that action is taken—bringing those to the forefront. It takes all of us to do that.

In this case, we're talking about maltreatment of individuals who come to Canada to look after children, to look after seniors, to look after some of our most vulnerable family members. The women—and the majority of the people we're talking about are women—need to have the protection of legislation at the provincial and federal level. I know we've all acknowledged that the federal government needs to come to the table.

I'm pleased to understand that the Progressive Conservative Party had an epiphany on this issue, but in fact, the regulation was removed in 2001. One of the things that I think is a travesty in this province or in any government is that when we move ahead on a social justice issue—that we not pull back, that we continue to move forward and that we not repeal legislation that puts

protections in place. It's important that we push forward and that we do this.

Our grand, diverse province requires that we support each other, that we get to know each other, even though our backgrounds are different. Our national project, this national project of Canada, further demands that we remain alert to the needs of individuals and groups of people, especially those who are new to our country, people who have come to realize their dreams and who, by doing so, enrich and strengthen who we are.

I want to read from the newly released equity and inclusive education strategy just briefly. Michael Adams says our national project "is the effort to live in a country of peace and prosperity, with laws that are just, with people who are humane, and where citizens of all backgrounds encounter equal opportunities when they set out to realize their potential, contribute to their communities, participate in the Canadian economy, and engage in the Canadian political system." That's what this is about. I'm happy to be supporting this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank the member from Halton. I know that he did some great work on Yom ha-Shoah, recognizing the Holocaust day. I certainly respect his battle for social justice. I appreciate that support.

To the member from Nickel Belt, I appreciate her comments. I know she is not the critic for this, but this is the Manitoba act. Anyway, I appreciate those comments.

In terms of the other battles in terms of labour equity, there are many battles to fight. If we want to win the war for social justice, we have to win one battle at a time. This is one battle, in protecting vulnerable caregivers, we have to all be united in fighting and winning.

I want to mention some of the guests who are here. Talking about fighting and battles, an incredible warrior for social justice for 20 years, Pura Velasco, is here; Arlinda Insigne from the Filipino association; Yolanda Ladines from the Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians; Cipriano Ladines from the Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians; Evelyn Pagkalinawan, a great volunteer in social housing; my good friend Sister Haydee from Our Lady of the Assumption Church—and Father Ben and Mario and all the people, the grassroots help at the Assumption church. Thank you, Sister.

Natty Nano is here; José Saavedra; Buddy Ibe Librado; Mel Catre—and the member from Parkdale so eloquently described his great work. I know the minister mentioned the Toronto Star. They did great work, as we've mentioned, but the Filipino press and Tony Sicat, the chair of the Filipino press club, have been crying out about this issue for many years, and nobody listened. They should also be commended for the work they did in trying to bring this to light. The Toronto Star highlighted what they've been saying.

I want to congratulate all the people who have been fighting on this front for many, many years. It's really

important that we listen to them. This legislation is a reflection of our attempt to really do something. It's not a Filipino issue; it's a social justice issue.

HEALTHY DECISIONS
FOR HEALTHY EATING ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009
FAVORISANT DES CHOIX SAINS
POUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINTE

M^{me} Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to amend various acts respecting nutritional information and trans fat content of foods and drinks provided by food service premises / Projet de loi 156, Loi modifiant diverses lois qui traitent de l'information nutritionnelle et de la teneur en gras trans des aliments et boissons fournis par les lieux de restauration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure to rise before this House today to bring Bill 156, the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, to second reading. Il me fait plaisir de présenter le projet de loi 156, Loi de 2009 favorisant des choix sains pour une alimentation saine.

The need for this bill is apparent in every community across this province. It is undeniable: Ontario is in the midst of an obesity epidemic, and it is no secret that obesity is incredibly costly to both the health care system and the lives of individual Ontarians. Bill 156 aims to take a step towards combating the rising obesity rates in this province.

1500

This bill will not solve the problem of obesity by itself, but it sets the stage for a new era of consumer information and corporate responsibility. It places the tools of healthy eating into the hands of every Ontarian walking into a fast-food establishment. It allows Ontarians to use the knowledge they have to make better choices and it encourages a more nutritionally literate consumer culture.

It has been estimated by the Ontario Medical Association that 60% of Ontario adults are either obese or overweight; a full one quarter of children in this province are obese, and half are also inactive. The Ontario Medical Review, the publication of the Ontario Medical Association, actually had a front page on childhood obesity. We know that 75% of these obese children will grow up to become obese adults.

The health effects of obesity are clear: a higher risk of breast, colon, kidney and esophagus cancer; a higher risk of type 2 diabetes; a higher risk of chronic kidney disease and other chronic illnesses. We have a wait-time strategy in Ontario for hip and knee replacements. If we did not have 60% of our population either overweight or obese, we would not have a waiting list for hip and knee

replacements, because people who are overweight and obese make up the vast majority of people who need hip and knee replacements.

The OMA estimates that the health impact of an overweight and obese population is more than \$2 billion a year—\$2 billion each and every year that would be better spent on keeping people healthy. This is a lot of money being poured down the drain needlessly, if you ask me.

Bill 156 is proactive. It's a public health measure that will be one of many steps needed to reverse the trend of unhealthy eating and unhealthy weight so prevalent in our province. This bill follows in the footsteps of other cities around the world and some US states that have enabled similar legislation. New York City, California and some cities in the United Kingdom have passed laws that mandate food providers to post calorie content directly on their menu. I have copies of some of those menu boards—I don't think I'm allowed to show them, but I will read them to you—that you will recognize.

We've all been to a McDonald's. We've all seen the sandwiches, the menu pack. Well, a quarter pounder is 510 calories; if you want to have a meal deal, it's 290 calories. If you want to upsize this, it's 1,130 calories. I have them for Quiznos, for Starbucks, for Subway, for a juice bar and for Mexican restaurants. It's basically information that is already available—it is available to people in Ontario also—but it is so hard to get. You either have to look on the Internet or you can ask for a brochure that is hidden underneath some counter someplace. Some have it on a poster on the wall. Well, research shows that only one in a thousand people—one in a thousand customers—actually looks at those. Once you put the calorie content on the menu board in the same font as it is for the price, one in two customers will use it to make a healthier choice. It changes everything. The information is available; all we're asking for is to put it on the menu board so that before you make your choice, before you order, you take into account the number of calories in your food.

I would say that Ontario has an opportunity to be a leader in public health. We are standing at a crossroads when it comes to making the connection between food, weight and health outcome. However, I do not think that anyone in this House would agree that food that we consume every single day does not have an impact on our broader health. All the same, some may question the need for that bill.

We would think that everybody is supposed to know that a burger and fries from a fast-food chain is bad for you. But looking at the research around perception of nutritional content is a wake-up call. Studies have found that nine out of 10 people underestimate the calorie content of restaurant food by half the actual calories, or an average of 600 calories lighter. With a conservative estimate of going out to a restaurant just once a week, that 600-calorie underestimation amounts to about 30,000 calories a year, a weight gain of about nine pounds a year. That's not insignificant. Even studies that have used

dieticians as their subjects found that estimations of calories are still off base by a quarter to half of actual content. This means that a seemingly healthy sounding meal like a chicken fajita will be estimated at about 700 calories when it really comes in at 1,660 calories. This is a lot of calories.

The OMA had a nifty board yesterday that showed clearly that when people go to the sub sandwich shop, a lot of people will say, "Well, I chose the tuna because, you know, fish should be healthier, the omega 3 and all that." Well, the tuna melt sandwich in the sandwich shop is 1,230 calories—almost two thirds of what I should eat in a full day, and that's in one sandwich. If you had chosen the BLT or the turkey sandwich, you would have been at about 310 to 470 calories—way lower. So just by looking at the menu items, people are not able to guess. That's why we need clear calorie counts next to the menu items in the same font as the price, so people can make good choices.

I have a list of others that are the same. We talked about hamburgers and fries. People have estimated their content is about 777 calories, when the reality is 1,240. When it comes to fettuccini Alfredo, people would guess about 700 calories, when the reality is 1,500, almost 53% more.

An article in the Ottawa Citizen in December of last year talked about the consequences of food advertising strategies. When it says "low fat", people tend to consume more, but once they see the actual number of calories, people know how to make wise choices. Without actual nutritional information, you may eat a whole-grain fruit muffin instead of that maple dip doughnut, not realizing that the muffin actually has twice the amount of fat and twice the amount of calories than the doughnut. It's hard to make right choices when you don't have the correct information. We know that when consumers are provided with calorie information while ordering, they consume 15% less calories than those who do not have that information. This adds up quickly over a person's lifetime.

The introduction of calorie labelling at the point of purchase has the potential to make small but significant changes to dietary habits over a long period of time. A study published less than a year ago in the Journal of the American Medical Association says that "publishing caloric data at the point of purchase" may "increase awareness and change consumer purchasing decisions, leading to fewer calories consumed. Simultaneously, restaurants may then have a greater incentive ... to reformulate their menu, which in turn could also lower caloric intake."

This is exactly what has happened. In New York City, after a very similar bill was introduced, they saw a dramatic drop in some menu items that had very high calories beside them and an increase in some of the menu items that didn't. What also happened is that big stores like Starbucks and Mr. Sub started offering menu items with way lower calorie intake, to give people a choice. This is an opportunity for significant change we have

before us today. It is the kind of change that can have a real impact on the lives of Ontarians, making it easier for them to make healthier choices for themselves and for their families. This is the kind of preventive health care that we need: action that works to keep people well, rather than always investing in treatment while people get sick.

1510

I hope that all members of this House will recognize the opportunity before us today and vote in favour of private member's bill, Bill 156. It is doable, and it will help to improve the health of the people. Why vote that down?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I am privileged and honoured to stand up in my place and comment on Bill 156. I know the member from Nickel Belt has a good record of understanding for health in this province of Ontario, since she worked as a nurse, I believe—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Physiotherapist.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Okay—in health care for many years.

It's important for all of us to recognize the importance of healthy eating. I'm proud to be part of this government. As you know, since we were elected in 2003, we've taken many different important steps toward creating healthy habits, especially in our schools, by banning junk food from school cafeterias, from the vending machines, banning the trans fat, and also creating a good environment and creating awareness among the students across the province. I get the chance and privilege to go to many schools and high schools in my riding of London–Fanshawe to promote healthy eating habits in the schools with a program launched by the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Education.

I listened to the member from Nickel Belt speaking about the calories and content and the number and percentage—many different things. But it was a puzzle. We don't want to create some kind of obstacle for many different businesses across Ontario, especially in this difficult time. I know many restaurants and many chains in the province understand the implications and the complex issue of obesity and trans fat and calories, and that's why many of them compete on a regular basis by advertising and trying, as much as possible, to provide healthy food for many people across the province.

I know it's a very difficult task. I know the OMA is trying to push some issues forward, and I know the food chains are trying to create a balance and respond to it, because I know the business people from the restaurant association are very responsible people, and they want to stay in business, no doubt about it.

I remember, while I was in the food business service in my first career, when Kentucky Fried Chicken changed their name from Kentucky Fried Chicken to KFC, because they know the impact from the name, the title on the top—

Mr. Peter Shurman: KFC?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: KFC. They changed it from Kentucky Fried Chicken to KFC because they wanted to attract more people. They also changed the content of the oil and the fat they use. Everybody has an interest in attracting more business and remaining competitive in the market area, because it's difficult. Let me tell you, it's difficult.

But the most important thing: We are, as elected officials, to create a balanced approach, protect our people, and also create some kind of awareness to create a different culture, to create a culture of awareness among our people, because now I think, since we tackled the issues with the students and the schools—we're dealing now with adults. I think we should respect our adults, because the adults know exactly the fat coming from French fries or burgers.

Also, we have to remember that sometimes when we do the combinations with burgers, put toppings on them, we can lower the content of calories by 40%, or some different combinations of drinks can also change the whole balance of calories and nutrition. So we have to take all these elements into our considerations. I'm not an expert in this field. I know my colleague Sophia Aggelonitis from Hamilton Mountain has a lot of expertise in this matter. Also, Dr. Jaczek has great experience. They are going to speak and comment on Bill 156. Again, thank you for allowing me to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: There's something about bills like this that always attracts me, that always makes me want to speak out. I'm always speaking to bills that remove individual responsibility, because I put great stock in individual responsibility.

To tell you the truth, if this were a college debate as opposed to a debate here in the Legislature, I could probably easily take either side of this, for one very simple reason: I like to be informed about the nutritional value of individual foods, and I work very hard to inform myself. That's the nub of what I want to talk about.

I have debated private member's bills put forward by this member before. I don't mean to patronize her in any way by saying this: I have nothing but respect for her position and the passion she brings to it, but I can't really support the bill. I have to ask the question: Why wouldn't we want to make our own decisions? That is what separates the member for Nickel Belt and myself. I believe in legislation, generally speaking, that protects me from you and you from me.

I don't like legislation that purports to protect me from myself, and that's what this kind of legislation is. We could just sit back and let the government tell us step-by-step what to do and what to think. Certainly there are times when I've spoken in this Legislature when I've said that's precisely what they're trying to do.

I hearken back to a part of my life when I lived in Montreal. A fairly noteworthy mayor by the name of Jean Drapeau was in charge of Montreal at the time. The

debate of the day was whether or not to fluoridate the water. I favoured fluoride in the water for myself, but Monsieur Drapeau said that he didn't want to fluoridate Montreal's water because it imposed a form of medicine on everyone when not everyone would be disposed to taking that medicine. Indeed, there were some conditions that mandated no use of fluorides, and those people would have to drink bottled water, which wasn't even available at the time. So he didn't do it. Notwithstanding that, I favoured it, so I used fluoridated toothpaste and made sure that I got treatments at the dentist.

The point I'm trying to make is, sometimes you want something like the information this member wants to mandate on people, but you want to do it yourself.

Bill 156 wants to force restaurants and foodservice companies to have calorie counts listed on all menus, and it wants to limit trans fat levels. The issue is not what is good to eat and what is not. We all know what a burger and fries every day does to us. That's a terrible thing. It's not something that I want to do, and most thinking people don't want to do it. It's kind of like smokers. Everybody I know who smokes says, "I know that this is a terrible thing to do," but they do it anyway because it's something that they elect to do.

This is really about common sense. If I'm going to eat and I'm going to make an informed choice, is it going to be the burger and fries, or am I going to have whole wheat bread, lettuce, tomato and some turkey breast on it with mustard? The answer is, I'm going to make that choice and I don't need anybody to tell me over the counter that that's what I should choose if I want to be healthy. People who don't want to be healthy are not going to care whether that information is there. We're smart enough to know what is good and what is bad for our health in terms of food content, and we need to take responsibility for our own actions.

Why is there a need, I ask myself, to legislate, to regulate, to mandate everything? The market has controlled this to a very large extent. My friend from London-Fanshawe talked a moment ago about the change in name of Kentucky Fried Chicken. That is an example, to take the word "fried" away so it was rather masked. But that's just cosmetic. If you take a look at some of the other examples, you could cite Subway, the chain that sells submarines. Subway has, because the market wanted it to, created a line of submarine sandwiches that are served on whole wheat bread and have nutritional facts available, because they thought it was good for their marketing. Not all their submarines are like that. You can buy meatballs covered with cheese, and goodness knows how much there is in the way of calories and cholesterol in that. But you can buy the ones that have eight grams of fat and are 200 calories, and those are the ones that, more often than not, I choose to buy, because I'm making an informed decision.

The same thing, if you take a look at McDonald's. You can eat a Big Mac every day if you want, or two or three, or you can give your kid five bucks and say, "Go and buy a salad at McDonald's"—they serve those

now—"and get yourself a chocolate milk." And the kid can go in on his own and buy the Big Mac and the Coke.

These are the kinds of things that will happen unless you educate yourself and your children. The label is not what does it. We have labels at home. We have, if we want to have them, books on the subject. Informed people do that job of informing themselves.

1520

Tim Hortons, for example, is commenting on this bill. They say that if the bill passes, there would be, in these very difficult economic times, an impact as well—additive economic hardship: (1) Some Tim Hortons are located in areas where there is excessive unemployment; (2) We're putting up the minimum wage; (3) We've got the McGuinty grab tax coming in next year. Now you would add a significant cost by saying you have to tell everybody who comes into Tim Hortons how many calories there are in a Boston cream versus how many calories there are in a cruller versus how many calories there are in a Dutchie, and by the way, we have the whole sandwich selection.

Then we've got the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association providing us with statistics, and these statistics are dumbfounding. If I take the same example I used a moment ago of Subway restaurants, if they had five items on the menu—and they don't, but I'll get to that in a minute—with the choices of ingredients you could put in the sandwich, you would have 120 different combinations. So you'd have to do the assessment on 120 different combinations. If they had 10 items on the menu and the same assortment of ingredients to put in the sandwiches, they'd have 3,628,800 combinations to assess, and if they had 15 items on the menu, which Subway restaurants do, by the way, they would have 1.3 trillion combinations. What are you going to do? It's impossible to have a calorie guide for every single menu item—virtually impossible to do.

Another comment comes from the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association. They're expressing concerns around the bill too. They feel that these kinds of changes do not address the real problem. They also feel that the changes should come from the federal government, in order to maintain national standards. There has been an awful lot of comment from a variety of stakeholder groups. Another aspect of this is the fact that you've got regional supply chains. So, even if you go into the same chain restaurants from one jurisdiction to another, you may not get consistent caloric or nutritional value out of exactly the same product because of supply chain differences from one area to another.

So you've got, number one, the issue of being self-informed and, number two, this very serious issue in these very serious times of the costs involved with getting this information. Issues on the cost side include having to send foods to a lab to get accurate testing. How many people know of someone who owns a restaurant and can actually afford to send their foods to a lab to get tested? I realize the bill addresses chains, but it talks about restaurants that do in excess of \$5 million. In

Toronto, we have single restaurants that do in excess of \$5 million.

The latest forecast for food services and restaurant industry sales would show them falling by between 1.5% and 2.5% in 2009. Real food service sales will drop by 4.6%, the largest decline since the 10.6% drop in sales in 1991—thank you very much, Rae days.

I'll conclude by saying there are a lot of reasons to think in terms of knowing what you're eating. I have basic trust in people to be self-informed enough to believe that they do know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't know where you start after a speech like that. In some ways, it's like *déjà vu* all over again. In some ways, it's like watching every public health battle that has ever been fought in this province and in this country being re-fought with the same arguments that were discredited over decades that have passed.

My colleague the member from Nickel Belt has made a very straightforward, logical argument for a very straightforward bill. I don't know if the words "common sense" have been rehabilitated yet, but I'll use them nonetheless. I think it was a pretty common sense argument that if you tell people what calories they're going to take in, they can make an intelligent decision on their own as to what they're going to buy. That's all. It's an information bill on something that's fairly straightforward: basic food.

The member has made some very good points about the reality of the obesity epidemic in this society. She talks about 60% of adults in this society being overweight and a quarter of children being overweight. That is of consequence. That is of significant consequence. Her example, which was a good one—I didn't know about this—was that we have a waiting list for hip and knee replacements. Most of the people on those waiting lists are overweight. If people weren't overweight, we'd have far less demand for that sort of joint replacement. That is a simple impact on our health care system and our quality of life.

A few years ago I was on a walk for the Hellenic Home for the Aged—a really great charity. They operate in the GTA. They've got a home in Scarborough. I was out there going on the walk, and there was a Dr. Oreopoulos—who's well-respected in the Greek community; he works on dialysis—talking about the flood of patients he had to deal with, the impact of type 2 diabetes, the impact of obesity causing type 2 diabetes, and ultimately the human impact of people who have to be subjected to that operation, whose lives were limited by that kind of procedure, and talking about the need to take on this issue, because it just kept coming at him in waves.

What is brought forward here today is a fairly limited suggestion that people be made fully aware of the nutritional impact of what they consume when they're in a restaurant, not telling them what they can buy—except

for the trans fat part, and I'll speak to that separately—but giving them the information so that, as Mr. Shurman said, they can make their own decisions. It's straightforward. It's not complicated. In this society—frankly, in any human society—knowledge is power. When people have knowledge, they can make decisions. They can make smart decisions, they can make stupid decisions, but they get to make decisions. That seems straightforward.

Knowledge provokes change. It was earlier cited that the Journal of the American Medical Association noted that restaurants and others that had to post the caloric content of the food they served paid attention; reformulated. That makes sense as well. No one wants to be known out there as the "fat city restaurant," the one that guarantees that you will put on weight. There's an opportunity there for knowledge; not just to give people individual power, but for companies, for restaurants, to re-evaluate how they proceed and to offer healthier options to the population as a whole. We in this chamber, on every side, want to ensure that medicare continues for decades to come. If we're going to protect medicare and deal with the rising tide of health care costs in this society, then we have to make sure that people are healthy.

Part of making sure that people are healthy is giving them the information so that they can make intelligent decisions. That's what this bill suggests. What was presented along with the bill was the information that there are jurisdictions like New York and the UK where people are given the information now. Somehow, and I know this sounds bizarre, the restaurants in those jurisdictions have not been forced to close their doors. People are not wandering the streets hungry, bereft of the comfort foods they once knew. No, they could read, they could count and they could make a decision on what they were going to eat. I think it probably works. A wild idea, but actually giving information to people probably actually works and allows restaurants to continue on.

I have to say, I have a number of friends who own restaurants, who work in restaurants, who do, I think, an excellent job. They care about the people they serve, they care about their communities and, frankly, they work hard and they have to make tough decisions. Some of my friends, when I was on Toronto city council in the 1990s and I introduced a smoke-free bar and restaurant bylaw, had tremendous difficulty with that, because their whole business model, over decades, had been premised on allowing people to smoke. They were nervous, they were frightened and, as much as they liked me, they disagreed with me sharply.

At the time, for those who were around, newspapers had stories about how we wouldn't be able to get tourists into Toronto because if people from Germany or from Los Angeles or from New York couldn't smoke, why would they come to Toronto? What would the point be? Restaurants would close and again we would be wandering the streets in large masses, hungry, smokeless, destitute. Once again, a fear put out on the street about taking simple action to protect public health was shown

to be baseless. Not only is North America going smoke-free very largely; it's spreading to Europe and maybe, eventually, China.

1530

I want to say to those who care about health care, who care about the restaurant business, that they should be paying attention to this private member's bill. What is being brought forward today, frankly, I think, will be seen in the rest of the world tomorrow. It's tragic to me that we're behind New York, that we're behind the UK, that we're behind Denmark in trans fats. We want to protect people from heart disease.

A friend of mine, a few years ago—a very vigorous guy, tremendously active—was struck down by a stroke. It changed his life radically. He came back, he got a lot of function but not what he had before, and he misses it. I don't know if trans fats were responsible, but I do know that statistically, a higher level of trans fats in the food supply will result in more heart disease of a variety of kinds that will result in human tragedy. There is no need for us to add to human tragedy in this world. We've got enough. We've got a surplus. Let's reduce it. This act will help take another small step forward. I don't mean to underrate the act, but it's another small step forward in protecting the health of the population and protecting our health care system so that it will be able to deal with the more profound problems that are unavoidable at this point.

There was talk about a balanced approach. There was talk about this being a difficult time. I want to say that this may be a difficult time for all kinds of manufacturers. I'm sure there are people who make products now that are dangerous. There are people who make products that, if those products were consumed by a person, would poison them. But we don't say, "You know, we've got to do something about these companies. Let's get rid of those skull-and-crossbones stickers on the bottle so they can sell more of it." We don't say that we should gut our safety regulations so that we can improve business. No, that would not be moral. It would not be practical. All we're saying here is, there's a risk to human health. It's relatively, easily addressable in a small way, at a cost that is inconsequential, given that it's in place in other jurisdictions and the foodservice industry continues to operate and prosper.

We, in this Legislature, in this chamber this afternoon, can actually say, "Yes, we should take yet another small step forward for the health of the population." I see no reason why this assembly should not support this bill. If it does not, then we will have thrown away another opportunity. It will be much like the beginning of the fight to get smoking out of restaurants, bars and public places, something that's looked back on now as simply a reasonable and sensible thing to do. Let's not repeat some of the mistakes of the past; let's move forward with this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Before I begin, I would like to recognize and welcome the many members from the

restaurant and hospitality industry who have come here to view this very important debate. As someone who has worked in this industry for many years, from a dishwasher to a waitress, bartender and cook, I'd like to thank them for their dedication to one of Ontario's most important industries.

I think every member of this House would agree that helping Ontarians to live a healthy lifestyle is an important priority. That is why I appreciate the spirit of this bill, but in the interest of Ontarians, I believe we have to take a closer look at this bill. I have five concerns which must be given strong consideration in this debate.

First, on average, one in 10 meals eaten by Ontarians is made at a restaurant or a takeout facility. That means that those nine other meals are eaten in our homes, in our kitchens; they are prepared in our kitchens. So what this bill is saying is that we want to make sure you're eating right that one meal, but not those nine meals. If we do that, we run the risk of taking a piecemeal approach, which would not address the root problem.

Secondly, this bill focuses on calories. I believe that we must consider the nutrition and balance of the entire meal—an equation that would include calories but not use them as its sole measurement. For example, a glass of skim milk will have more calories than a diet soda. Using only calories to measure how healthy a food item is could be misleading.

Thirdly, the issue is that we are very fortunate to have a wide variety of restaurants across our province that offer Ontarians a wide variety of food choices that frequently change. This issue of customization is very important for this debate. Consider a specialty coffee shop. You could have tens of thousands of different drinks. If you order a latte with soya milk or skim milk, with sugar or no sugar, it's all customized, and how do we label all of that?

The fourth issue, and a very important issue, is that restaurant ingredients change frequently and supplier substitutions are commonplace. One ingredient can affect the nutritional profile of dozens of items on a menu. For example, when one restaurant chain changes a sauce, it can affect the nutritional composition of 40 menu items.

The other issue we really need to take a look at is trans fats. I am so encouraged by the work Health Canada and the restaurant and hospitality industry have done with the trans fats task force. Their good work has made it clear that this issue is one that would be best addressed by a Canada-wide strategy. Other provinces agree. For example, the Alberta health minister recently said, on March 13, that Alberta will not pursue a province-wide ban on trans fats: "A lot of products used in this province are not manufactured in this province. It would only make sense to have a national strategy."

There is no question that leading a healthy lifestyle is very important to everyone here in this House. However, I do believe that this bill requires a closer look, and that is why I will not support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I don't think anyone would argue that obesity is a problem in our society. However, that obesity is a personal responsibility. I finished my last debate indicating that we get up in the morning and we hope that we can stay on our diet. Some people with more willpower than I have are able to do that and others are not.

This would add increasing onus on the restaurant business. I think it's a well-known fact that restaurant businesses in Canada—in fact, in North America—have some of the highest failure rates of any business. To add further financial responsibilities into that mix through this addition of red tape would only make that situation worse. There is a strong argument that this sort of legislation should come from Ottawa, although I don't have a great deal of confidence in any of the four or five parties in Ottawa to make the right decision in this case.

This bill also segregates the market into two different sizes—over \$5 million and under \$5 million. Anything that separates Canadians, I don't like. I don't think there should be two types of Ontarians, two types of Canadians. I think that we're all Ontarians and we're all Canadians, and I think segregating the market is fundamentally wrong.

Again, dealing with caloric intake of individuals, calories don't tell a very good story in many cases. If you take a glass of milk as opposed to a glass of diet soda, you might find that the milk has far more calories in it—perhaps 100 calories. I don't think anyone would argue as to which of those two beverages would be the most beneficial for people. The same could be said for yogourt and granola, which would be a very healthy choice as opposed to a doughnut or a cruller.

1540

The member from Thornhill made a very good point about customized orders and how 1.3 trillion different combinations could flow out of that story. That would be just a horrendous situation to try to deal with through the red tape that that would create. Customized orders, of course, is something that could go on and on, and you would literally never be able to receive your order at the counter.

I seem to have red tape mentioned twice in my notes. Of course, red tape is something that we, on this side of the House, are somewhat opposed to. I'm pleased to hear that some of the members on that side of the House are also opposed to it. It has been something that, traditionally, the third party kind of falls in love with. Sorry, Peter.

It would also mean more public inspections. Public inspection—we all know what's happened with public sector payrolls. They are sitting at about two thirds of what the increased number of workers are.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt has two minutes to reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, there's still time on the clock for our party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Okay. Member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: There are other people who want to debate as well.

I only have two minutes left on the clock, so I wanted to talk about the fact that the \$5-million cut-off was really put into the bill because we're not after the small mom-and-pop restaurant that's trying to make a living. I know they wouldn't be able to do the calorie count.

The \$5-million limit is really to target restaurants who already have that information; they just don't make the information accessible in a way that can be used by the public to make informed choices. So to have a brochure under a counter and have 15 people behind you pointing their fingers at you to get out of the way because they want to read the little brochure is not workable. When they have it in front of them, 50% of the people use that information to make healthy choices.

When we talk about customized orders, I couldn't agree more. We have the menu board from Starbucks, which advertises 10,000 different drink choices. Guess what? They have the calorie count for each and every one of those 10,000 drinks, and it's really easy to read. It's the same thing with Subway, which advertises being able to make 1,000 different types of sandwiches. Here I have menu board from Subway that shows the calorie count for each of those sandwiches.

There are ways to convey information that can be used. Their graphic designers were really creative and were able to bundle that information into headings where Starbucks, for example, says, "Blended coffee beverage with light base for a third fewer calories." It's up to you to do the one third less, and then the list goes on and on. The same thing with Subway, which says, "For a foot long, add 660 calories," etc. So you get the choice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to rise in this House in support of Bill 156, which has been brought forward by the member for Nickel Belt.

During the last 18 months or so, I've had the opportunity to listen to Madame Gélinas. I know that her commitment to public health is paramount in all that she does, and I commend her for that. She likes to raise the bar, she likes to push the envelope, and she likes to bring issues of importance to people in this House. This is precisely what private members' public business is all about. She has certainly done it with this particular bill. Certainly there has been considerable attention paid, and she has received endorsements from many, many stakeholders, in particular the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and many, many others.

There is a crisis with our children. We have an epidemic of obesity. It has been said before today, and we'll say it again: One quarter of Ontario's children are obese, and we know that three quarters of those children who are obese will go on to become obese adults. They will be more likely to have cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and those chronic diseases obviously hamper those individual lives, but they are also very costly for our society to manage.

Having calories displayed prominently at the time of purchase is a step forward. It is a good step forward. It's going to allow our young people to make healthy choices. To quote Dr. Ken Arnold, president of the Ontario Medical Association, "Ontario's doctors are not telling people what they can and can't eat, but when you do eat out, you should know how many calories you are consuming." Earlier this afternoon, during the debate on the resolution of the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, one of our colleagues talked about the right to know, how important that was in today's society. Well, here we have an excellent example of the public wanting this information.

I think most people know I am a physician, but along the way I did earn a master's of business administration and I understand what competitive advantage is. In fact, I remember extremely well that before the region of York's no-smoking bylaw was enacted, a particular Tim Hortons decided to go smoke-free. A large banner was displayed. People flocked to that Tim Hortons. I believe that in a similar way, those restaurants, food service establishments with gross sales annually of more than \$5 million, will well be able to have that information, and I believe that when they start to display this, perhaps on a voluntary basis, that they too will also have a competitive advantage.

I think it's extremely important to support this bill and allow it to go to committee. More debate, obviously, is important, but I would encourage everybody in this House to give it their full attention, their full consideration, and allow us to stand up and make a statement on behalf of the health of all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt now has two minutes to reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank the members for London–Fanshawe, Thornhill, Toronto–Danforth, Hamilton Mountain and Oak Ridges–Markham for their remarks.

I would like to use my last two minutes to read from different health care organizations and what they have to say. I know that the member from Thornhill and the members from Hamilton and London–Fanshawe spent a lot of time explaining to you the position of the restaurant industry toward the bill. I now want you to have the flip side: the health industry's position towards the bill.

I'll start with the Ontario Public Health Association's president-elect, who is Liz Haugh. She says, "The measures proposed in Bill 156 provide a unique opportunity to empower consumers to make healthy choices and to foster a climate of corporate social responsibility that bolsters consumer confidence and the economic strength of the province. Our provincial investment in health promotion has produced a significant public interest in health and nutrition which should be leveraged to inspire leadership in these issues to the rest of Canada."

Now to the president of the Registered Nurses' Association, Wendy Fucile. She says, "Ontario nurses fully support this bill because it would require full food

establishments to limit the amount of artificial trans fats in the foods they prepare. This is important because trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart disease and early death."

I also have a quote from Bill Jeffery from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest: "Bill 156 offers a sound means of nutritionally informing choice in large chain restaurants and ridding the food supply of a dangerous additive"—that is, trans fats.

I also want to quote Ken Arnold, president of the OMA: "We are calling on the government to enact legislation that will require calorie content to be listed adjacent to the items on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Private members' public business having concluded before the expiry of the allotted 2.5 hours, pursuant to standing order 98(e), I am now required to suspend the House until 3:58 p.m.

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order: I seek unanimous consent to carry on the work of the House without the suspension.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. It's my understanding that in private members' public business, we cannot unanimously consent to have an earlier vote. All the members who are not in this House have an understanding that the debate will be taking place for 2.5 hours.

This House is suspended until 3:58 p.m.

The House suspended proceedings from 1550 to 1558.

CORPORATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Ms. Broten has moved private member's notice of motion number 81. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

CAREGIVER AND FOREIGN WORKER RECRUITMENT AND PROTECTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RECRUTEMENT ET LA PROTECTION DES FOURNISSEURS DE SOINS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS ÉTRANGERS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Mr. Colle has moved second reading of Bill 160, An Act respecting the recruitment and protection of caregivers and foreign workers. Is it the pleasure of House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Would the member like to refer—to which committee?

Mr. Mike Colle: The committee of the whole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): The bill is referred to the committee of the whole.

HEALTHY DECISIONS
FOR HEALTHY EATING ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009
FAVORISANT DES CHOIX SAINS
POUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINTE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Ms. Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 156, An Act to amend various acts respecting nutritional information and trans fat content of foods and drinks provided by food service premises. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In the opinion of the Speaker, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is going to be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1600 to 1605.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Kular, Kuldip	Phillips, Gerry
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Qadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Duguid, Brad	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Gélinas, France	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Jaczek, Helena	Moridi, Reza	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Kormos, Peter	Pendergast, Leeanna	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Delaney, Bob	Ruprecht, Tony
Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Shurman, Peter
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Sousa, Charles
Balkissoon, Bas	Jeffrey, Linda	Witmer, Elizabeth
Cansfield, Donna H.	Ramal, Khalil	
Chudleigh, Ted	Rinaldi, Lou	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 20; the nays are 16.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): I ask the member which committee she would like to refer the bill to.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Social policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m., Monday, April 20, 2009.

The House adjourned at 1607.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
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	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

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

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
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**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, Howard Hampton
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod
Gerry Martiniuk, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Lou Rinaldi
Liz Sandals
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, France Gélinas
Ernie Hardeman, 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

Continued from back cover

Rural Ontario

Mrs. Liz Sandals 6045
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky 6045

Violent crime

Mr. Garfield Dunlop 6046
Hon. George Smitherman..... 6046

Highway improvement

Mr. Peter Kormos..... 6046
Hon. James J. Bradley 6046

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)..... 6047

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Passover

Mr. Peter Shurman 6047

Barbara LaFleshe

Mr. Paul Miller..... 6047

Mohawk College

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis..... 6047

Earthquake in Italy

Mr. Ted Arnott 6047

Rouge Park

Mr. Wayne Arthurs 6048

Lake Simcoe

Mrs. Julia Munro 6048

Vaisakhi

Mr. Bob Delaney 6048

Passover

Mr. Mike Colle..... 6049

Easter

Mr. Charles Sousa 6049

MOTIONS

Committee membership

Hon. Peter Fonseca 6049
Motion agreed to 6049

Committee membership

Mr. Peter Tabuns 6049
Motion agreed to 6049

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Pension plans

Mr. Paul Miller..... 6049

Air quality

Mr. Charles Sousa 6050

Pension plans

Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6050

Lupus

Mr. Bob Delaney 6050

Cemeteries

Mr. Kuldip Kular..... 6050

Protection for workers

Mr. Mike Colle..... 6051

Pension plans

Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6051

Protection for workers

Mr. Mike Colle..... 6051

Beer retailing and distribution

Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6051

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Corporate reporting requirements

Ms. Laurel C. Broten..... 6051
Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6054
Mr. Peter Tabuns 6055
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn 6056
Mr. Yasir Naqvi 6057
Mr. Wayne Arthurs 6058
Ms. Laurel C. Broten..... 6058

**Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and
Protection Act, 2009, Bill 160, Mr. Colle / Loi de
2009 sur le recrutement et la protection des
fournisseurs de soins et des travailleurs étrangers,
projet de loi 160, M. Colle**

Mr. Mike Colle..... 6059
Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6060
Mr. Bob Delaney 6061
Mme France Gélinas 6062
Mr. Tony Ruprecht..... 6063
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne 6063
Mr. Mike Colle..... 6064

Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, 2009, Bill 156, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2009 favorisant des choix sains pour une alimentation saine, projet de loi 156, Mme Gélinas

Mme France Gélinas.....	6064
Mr. Khalil Ramal	6066
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	6066
Mr. Peter Tabuns	6068
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis	6069
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	6070
Mme France Gélinas.....	6070
Ms. Helena Jaczek	6070
Mme France Gélinas.....	6071

Corporate reporting requirements

Motion agreed to.....	6071
-----------------------	------

Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, Bill 160, Mr. Colle / Loi de 2009 sur le recrutement et la protection des fournisseurs de soins et des travailleurs étrangers, projet de loi 160, M. Colle

Second reading agreed to.....	6071
-------------------------------	------

Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, 2009, Bill 156, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2009 favorisant des choix sains pour une alimentation saine, projet de loi 156, Mme Gélinas

Second reading agreed to.....	6072
-------------------------------	------

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 9 April 2009 / Jeudi 9 avril 2009

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Wearing of pins

Hon. Michael Chan 6025

Budget Measures Act, 2009, Bill 162, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2009 sur les mesures budgétaires, projet de loi 162, M. Duncan

Mr. Michael Prue 6025

Mrs. Amrit Mangat 6030

Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6030

Mr. Yasir Naqvi 6030

Mr. Khalil Ramal 6031

Mr. Michael Prue 6031

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll 6031

Mr. Ted Chudleigh 6034

Mr. Michael Prue 6034

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll 6034

Second reading debate deemed adjourned 6035

Wearing of pins

Mr. Dave Levac 6035

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Dave Levac 6035

Mr. Frank Klees 6035

Ms. Cheri DiNovo 6035

Referral of Bill 147

Hon. Monique M. Smith 6035

Motion agreed to 6035

Holodomor Memorial Day Act, 2009, Bill 147, Mr. Levac, Ms. DiNovo, Mr. Klees / Loi de 2009 sur le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor, projet de loi 147, M. Levac, Mme DiNovo, M. Klees

Third reading agreed to 6036

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop 6036

Hon. Monique M. Smith 6036

Hon. Michael Chan 6036

Mme France Gélinas 6036

Hon. Jim Watson 6036

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur 6036

Mr. Gilles Bisson 6036

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) 6036

Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) 6036

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Government accountability

Mr. Robert W. Runciman 6036

Hon. Dwight Duncan 6037

Taxation

Mr. Robert W. Runciman 6037

Hon. Margaret R. Best 6037

Pension plans

Ms. Andrea Horwath 6038

Hon. Dwight Duncan 6038

Automotive industry

Ms. Andrea Horwath 6039

Hon. Dwight Duncan 6039

Taxation

Mr. Ted Arnott 6040

Hon. Monique M. Smith 6040

Unemployment

Mr. Paul Miller 6041

Hon. Dwight Duncan 6041

Cultural funding

Mr. Mike Colle 6041

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll 6041

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn 6042

Hydro rates

Mr. John Yakabuski 6042

Hon. George Smitherman 6042

Infectious disease control

Ms. Andrea Horwath 6043

Hon. George Smitherman 6043

Provincial purchasing policy

Mr. Joe Dickson 6043

Hon. Ted McMeekin 6043

Green power generation

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer 6044

Hon. George Smitherman 6044

Affordable housing

Ms. Cheri DiNovo 6044

Hon. Jim Watson 6045

Continued on inside back cover