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Monday 1 June 2009

Lundi 1^{er} juin 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 June 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1^{er} juin 2009

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jim Watson: A student art contest launched Ontario's new greenbelt awards celebrating the fourth anniversary of the world-renowned greenbelt. Ontarians have picked Etobicoke North student Esha Patel's artwork as the winning design from among four finalists and hundreds of entries. I'm very pleased to introduce in the gallery Esha Patel, a very talented grade 2 student at Highfield Junior School. She's in the Legislature, joined by her family: her father, Hitesh, her mother, Archana, and her brother Smit. Congratulations on your beautiful artwork, and thank you for supporting the greenbelt.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It gives me pleasure to introduce a team of people from Celestica in my riding who raised 4,100 pounds of food and \$3,000—along with everyone else in Celestica, but this is the winning team. They raised the most food and the most money for the Flemingdon food bank in the Flemingdon neighbourhood. I want to just quickly read their names: John Sloan, Muhammad Ijaz, Cherrylyn Roxas, Nicki Lakhani, Ramin Kompani, Marilyn Bond, Mandy Malarczuck is not able to be here, but she's part of the team—Tahir Shakeel, John C. Lee, Clayton Remedios, Amanda Montezer, Anita Jorge-Brion, Myrna Datu, Mike Andrade and Frank Silva. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to welcome to the Legislature the father of one of our pages. The page is Gerrit Wesselink; his father is Gerald, better known as Gerry Wesselink. Welcome, Mr. Wesselink.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a happy Tourism Week to you.

Today I'd like to welcome tourists from Wasilla, Alaska: my cousin, Dick Harren; his sons Wendell, William and Russell; and his father-in-law, Rene Chapelle, who's here from Houston, Texas. They've been to Casa Loma, the Hockey Hall of Fame, the Ontario Science Centre and the CN Tower. They're doing it up right, and we're very pleased. They're not here yet, because it's a little crowd-

ed, but they're on their way in, and we're delighted to have them visiting Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member for Haldimand–Norfolk and page Eileen Woolley, we'd like welcome her father, Patrick, her brother Edward and her sister Ellena, sitting in the west members' gallery today. Welcome.

On behalf of the Minister of Culture and page Elliott Yee, I'd like to welcome his mother, Sarah, his father, Irv, and his sister, Ruby, sitting in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Timmins–James Bay and page Kathleen Crump, I'd like to welcome her grandmother, Linda Burke, her grandfather, Terry Burke, and her cousin, Terri-Lynn, sitting in the west members' gallery.

I would like to welcome Anita Ratkovic-Baric, who is my executive assistant in my constituency office. Anita is seated in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park, Anita.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Last Thursday during third reading debate of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act, I was speaking to the absence of certification of forensic pathologists in the province of Ontario. At one point, I referred to pathologists in general, although I subsequently spoke about forensic pathologists.

It's erroneous to suggest that pathologists don't have certification. They, of course, specialize; it's four years of additional study. I would very much ask that that record be corrected, and I'm so very grateful to Dr. Ernest Cutz for bringing that to my attention. He clearly was paying close attention to the debate in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Last week, the CEO of eHealth Ontario said that the spending and tendering practices of the agency she runs were appropriate. She defended the secret contracts she handed out with no transparency, saying

they were needed to get “the best and the brightest.” Does the minister agree with Ms. Kramer?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for the question.

The investments in eHealth are significant, but I believe they will ultimately result in better patient care and more efficient health care service delivery. I can tell the member that the current leadership at eHealth Ontario is yielding good results, and they are on track to reach our goal of a modernized health care system.

However, although there are costs to conducting business, it’s important that taxpayer dollars are always treated responsibly. It’s important not just for eHealth, but for all of us who have the privilege of serving Ontarians, including every member of this Legislature. To that end, I have directed the eHealth board to undertake a third-party review to ensure that best management practices are being followed. The board has agreed to do so.

I plan to speak with the Auditor General later this week, when he is back in the country, about his review of eHealth—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Last week, the minister was quite bullish on this topic, and on Thursday he said he thought that taxpayers were getting good value for their money.

I assume that the minister has acquainted himself with Allaudin Merali, the senior vice-president of corporate services of eHealth Ontario. Mr. Merali is a contractor. He received one of the untendered contracts. He bills the taxpayers \$2,750 per day, some \$60,000 per month.

Does the minister believe that the taxpayers of Ontario are getting good value for their money with this particular contract?

Hon. David Caplan: It is a fact that eHealth is a project-based business that requires expertise from highly skilled technical individuals, and I can assure this member and Ontarians that we are drawing on expertise from around the world to build the best eHealth system for all Ontarians. I can tell the member that we’re not alone. Using specialized consultants for large-scale IT initiatives is standard practice for public and private-sector companies around the world.

I know that, as part of its transition plan, eHealth is moving to reduce its reliance on consultants. For example, it’s important to note that the percentage of consultants in the overall Smart Systems for Health Agency was higher in the fiscal year started under the previous government, in 2003-04, at 27% of overall expenditure, than it is today, at roughly 16%. We are working hard to bring this—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: No one is going to dispute the need to use consultants, but there has to be good value to taxpayers for their money.

It’s important to note that in addition to the \$60,000 per month that Mr. Merali was receiving for his fees, he

bills the taxpayers of Ontario an additional \$10,000 to \$15,000 per month in transportation, accommodation and meal costs. In fact in five months, the taxpayers of Ontario, all of the people who are waiting for electronic health records, paid for Mr. Merali to fly 33 times between Toronto and Edmonton. Can the minister please tell us why the taxpayers paid nearly \$24,000 for these flights between Ontario and Alberta?

1040

Hon. David Caplan: I can assure the member opposite and all Ontarians that I have discussed my concerns regarding some of the expenses that have been disclosed with the CEO and with the chair.

However, although there are costs of conducting business, it’s important that taxpayer dollars are treated respectfully. This is important not just for eHealth but for all of us, as I said, who have the privilege to serve Ontarians, including those of us here in the Legislature. While it may be allowable, there is the question about whether this is something that ought to be done. That’s why I have directed the eHealth board to take on a third party review of best management practices, and in fact the board has agreed and they are following through.

I hold my responsibility, as do all members on this side of the House, of ensuring value for taxpayer dollars, and I’m happy in further questions to be able to outline some of the—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: To the minister: Mr. Merali lives in Alberta. He used to work in Alberta, but he doesn’t work there now. Are you familiar with where Mr. Merali used to work?

Hon. David Caplan: The CEO and the board do take on the various individuals. That is not something that, of course, does cross for my approval.

I did mention to the member opposite that I want to speak about some of the milestones and achievements of eHealth Ontario, and it’s quite an impressive list. Since September, they have unveiled Ontario’s first comprehensive, published eHealth strategy. They’ve launched a pilot ePrescribing program, the first in Canada, and the pilot begins in Sault Ste. Marie and Collingwood. They are partnering with OntarioMD to roll out electronic medical records in primary care physician offices throughout the province. They’ve launched the baseline diabetes data initiative to measure the current state of diabetes care in Ontario, providing physicians with information to improve care for their patients. They’ve established a diagnostic imaging network across Ontario—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I didn’t hear that from the minister’s answer, but Mr. Merali used to work for Capital Health in Alberta. That organization was repeatedly slammed by the Alberta Auditor General for creative

accounting practices: creating artificial transactions to paint a false picture about finances. The Auditor General said this was done repeatedly. Mr. Merali was the chief financial officer. In August 2008, he stopped working there. Two months later, he showed up at eHealth Ontario, his salary effectively doubling under a secret, un-tendered contract. Does the minister still agree with Ms. Kramer's assertion that we're paying for the best and the brightest?

Hon. David Caplan: I've always said that it's an expensive undertaking and that we are going to engage the best in the world to be able to drive forward on electronic health care records and on an ambitious eHealth agenda for this province.

Wherever possible, it's my expectation that contracts are tendered in an open and fair competition. The eHealth board made a decision during a transition period to get eHealth moving forward quickly in this regard.

I have directed the eHealth board to undertake, as I've mentioned, a third party review to ensure that best management practices are being followed. The board has agreed to do so.

In addition, I will be following up with the Auditor General of the province of Ontario when he is back in the country tomorrow. I look forward to the AG's recommendations, and I look forward to the results of the review.

I will continue to—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Let's talk about value for taxpayer dollars. Between November and March, Mr. Merali billed the taxpayers nearly \$360,000: \$24,000 for flights between Alberta and Ontario; billing for luxury apartments; receiving \$2,750 a day plus a \$75-a-day stipend, and he still billed for his meals on top of that.

When the minister next gets up, as he already has said, he's going to say, "The Auditor General is investigating and that's all we need." But we know from reports in the Edmonton Journal that the organization to which Mr. Merali previously worked as CFO repeatedly ignored Alberta's Auditor General. So surely the minister must agree that the time has come to have a full airing of this mess at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Will you do that?

Hon. David Caplan: I can assure the member that CEO Sarah Kramer is an open and transparent individual and has discussed the issues raised publicly. I've directed, as I've mentioned, the board to undertake a third party review. Of course, an independent officer of this Legislature, the Auditor General of the province of Ontario, is in fact looking into it at the behest of the federal Auditor General, as are counterparts right across the country.

These are not new. I did mention to the member opposite, as early as April 9, that in fact this was the case. The auditor is known for his thoroughness. He is known for the work that he does and for providing good advice to this Legislature. I, of course, will take his comments and

his views and his recommendations under advisement. I will be meeting with the auditor. Frankly, the auditor is out of the country and will be back—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. We have four question periods left.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Since the McGuinty Liberals announced an 8% tax hike on everything from vitamins to gasoline, I've heard from thousands and thousands of concerned Ontarians. Frustrated, worried and angry everyday Ontarians have sent me faxes, e-mails and letters by the truckload.

Janice from the Red Pine Wilderness Lodge in Haileybury wrote about the \$100 extra in sales taxes that are going to hurt both her and her customers and her small business. Sue, a self-employed worker in Toronto, said, "This is a tough time for myself and many others, and this tax grab will hurt." Why are the McGuinty Liberals tacking 8% on to the bills of everyday Ontarians?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do thank the honourable member for the question. At the time that our government brought our budget forward, we knew that the challenging times were economic and at the heart of everybody's considerations. Accordingly, it was our obligation to bring forward a budget which sought to address the challenges of the times in appropriate measures. The government's budget is designed to do that: to enhance the competitiveness of our jurisdiction and to bring forward a wide array of tax cuts. The honourable member speaks to small business. That's why one of the elements of our government's budget was a reduction in tax rates for small businesses in recognition that it's necessary to make them more competitive so that they can reach out and find business opportunities. I'm sure that the honourable member did not tell that to the small business operator from Haileybury.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: That's not Janice's opinion, by far. Kevin from Roslin writes this: "I ask you, plead with you, not to do this.... We just can't afford it." Rhetorically, Bob from Kanata asks, "Is this your idea of how to help us?" Catherine, a Toronto realtor, says that the HST will "hurt the resale home market and prolong the housing industry's recovery from the current economic downturn." Greg from Owen Sound writes this: "I encourage you to revisit this proposed tax."

When will this government finally listen to Ontarians and abandon its 8% tax grab?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do think that it's important to recognize that in challenging times like these, it's the responsibility of a jurisdiction to ensure that it is able to compete for the business opportunities of the future. This is at the heart of the circumstances in all Ontario households: They need opportunities to work, and our province is taking the steps forward to ensure that we're competitive in that regard. That's why, alongside

the initiative that substantially streamlines the implication for business in terms of the paperwork associated with dealing with taxes etc., are tax reductions all across the landscape. Ninety-three per cent of the people in the province of Ontario on the first \$38,000 dollars of income will reap the benefit in terms of reduced taxes, and thousands and thousands of Ontarians will actually be removed from the tax rolls. All is part and parcel of the efforts to make our jurisdiction more competitive and make sure that people in the province of Ontario have the opportunity for good jobs.

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Worried about the HST's impacts, Bert from Innisfil wants you to maintain the existing PST exemptions. Debra from Ottawa weighs in: "Increased sales tax will discourage prospective new business, not encourage it." This from Donald from Toronto: "This will result in thousands of dollars of increased tax burden per year to Ontario families."

These are Ontarians who work hard and play by the rules. At the very time that their families are concerned and worried about job losses, about their savings and pensions, why is the McGuinty government, why are these Liberals, making the basics cost 8% more for these families?

Hon. George Smitherman: In addition to having missed, I'm certain, the opportunity on the honourable member's part to explain to those people who were in touch that there are tax reductions all across the piece, I rather suspect that in conversation with Bert from Innisfil, the honourable member also didn't take the opportunity to mention that they propose an increase in these taxes. That is the record that they have. They've been looking to increase these taxes.

At the heart of it, what we seek to create is a more competitive Ontario where businesses small and large will reap the benefit associated with lower overall taxes. These are opportunities to pass through the reductions in cost that are embedded in many products to those people who are purchasing those services.

We know that this has been viewed by many as the single largest initiative that we can take to enhance the competitiveness of the province of Ontario, to the benefit of those who wish to be employed.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Acting Premier: We're learning more and more each day about the outrageous spending at eHealth Ontario. In less than one year, the agency has burned through \$34 million on high-paid, high-flying consultants. This includes \$75,000 in salary and expenses to an Edmonton-based consultant who worked for 23 and a half days. It includes thousands of dollars in cab rides, and \$7,000 speeches. Does the McGuinty government condone this flagrant disregard of taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. David Caplan: I did comment earlier. I think it's important that all members understand—

Mr. Peter Kormos: David screwed up big time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member from Welland to perhaps choose different words.

Hon. David Caplan: The investments in eHealth are significant but will ultimately yield better patient care.

On Thursday, the critic from your party, I say to the leader of the third party, was saying that we need to accelerate the pace of our investment in driving out on an eHealth agenda, and I quite agree. In fact, I will indicate in later supplementaries—because I do believe that the leadership at eHealth is yielding good results and is on track to reach our goal of a modernized health care system, one that brings health care practitioners together, one that has better patient safety, and ultimately, better patient results.

However, although there is a cost of conducting business, it's important that taxpayer dollars be responsibly treated. It's not just important for eHealth but for all of us. That's why I had—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Good results? Perhaps this minister doesn't understand the seriousness of this fiasco. The McGuinty government is allowing emergency room closures in communities like Fort Erie; it's presiding over a growing health crisis in the 905—all of this as hundreds of millions of dollars go down the drain at eHealth Ontario and its earlier incarnation.

Rather than waste this money on \$7,000 speeches, you should be spending it on health care. That's what we believe on this side of the House.

Why is the McGuinty government wasting millions and millions of health care dollars that should be spent on the health care of all Ontarians?

Hon. David Caplan: On Thursday, the critic for the third party was urging that we implement eHealth. Now the leader of the third party is saying we should not. From one day to the next, it changes over there.

So far, what we've been able to see is the establishment of a diagnostic imaging network across Ontario so that images are available digitally, resulting in faster turnaround times for patients.

We've developed an electronic system to store images from hospital CT scanners for neurosurgical and neurological care, to improve patient access to care.

We've brought in the managed drug profile viewer, which is in use to help all hospital emergency departments across Ontario, to help health care providers quickly identify and prevent harmful drug reactions and provide more informed emergency care.

The premise of the member's question, by the way, is incorrect. Resources for Ontario's hospitals are only increasing in this province, contrary—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister should get around to implementing eHealth instead of pouring precious taxpayers' health dollars down the drain.

Ontarians have a good reason to be fed up. Their health care system is in crisis. With cutbacks and increased privatization, communities are forced to make due with less. Despite the evidence that there are serious problems, starting with out-of-control spending at eHealth Ontario, this minister thinks everything is well and good. This minister is either powerless to stop it or he is incapable of managing his ministry. When is he going to resign?

Hon. David Caplan: I disagree with the member. Ontario's health care is on solid footing. In fact, stakeholders in health care are saying they are pleased to see the commitment of this government, at least members on this side of the House, for providing enhanced resources in health care. In fact, eHealth is on track to deliver health records to all Ontarians by 2015 and is making progress in other areas.

ePrescribing: We've launched a first of its kind in Canada, a pilot program in two communities, in Collingwood and in Sault Ste. Marie, connecting up pharmacy with primary care. Over 3,000 doctors have or will soon have electronic medical records on their desks, serving in the order of four million Ontarians. All diabetic patients in Ontario will have an electronic health record by 2012. Full records for all Ontarians will be in place by 2015 or earlier. That's the commitment of this government—

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

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: To the Minister of Education: Today you will pass yet another piece of feel-good legislation. Our party offered many amendments to Bill 157 that would require mandatory reporting by principals of student-on-student assault in hopes that it would minimize the risk of children being victimized again and again after the initial assault.

Even your stakeholders agree, Minister. The case at C.W. Jefferys, where the principals did not report a gang sexual assault for months and months, has sent a strong message to school administrators that there are no consequences for not reporting and that no one is accountable. The Ontario Principals' Council felt the importance of a press release in which they put it simply: "The fact remains that there is no legislative duty for a principal or vice-principal to report student-on-student incidents...."

Minister, will you commit to introducing a new bill in the fall to replace—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, the member opposite knows full well that the legislation we have introduced actually implements many of the things that the member opposite was calling for.

She was concerned because there was not in legislation a mandatory requirement for teachers to report

serious incidents to principals. That is enshrined in this legislation. And I think the member opposite would agree that we have gone some way down the road to make sure that principals then are required to report to parents of victims. Principals are already required to report to the parents of perpetrators when there are serious incidents, and now they will be required to report to the parents of victims, except when they believe that there is the possibility of harm to that student.

I think that the member opposite has to understand that what makes a school safe is all of the adults working together. This legislation will take us further down the road in terms—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Minister, I repeat: A gang rape was not reported. These people have gone without any consequences. We have faith in doctors, police officers and lawyers, and they have clear legislation that describes the procedures they have to follow. Why should principals be different?

Your appeals were doomed to fail. The crown argued in its appeal that the non-reporting of the incident was a continuing offence and it did not end at the time of the alleged assault.

Minister, why won't you give principals clear legislative requirements? Why did you press charges in the first place, and why did you file a hopeless appeal? Isn't it because your appeal and your bill are just an attempt to appear to be doing something right?

I ask again: Will you commit to introducing a new bill in the fall to replace this inadequate legislation and finally bring mandatory reporting?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There are already requirements in place, and when there is professional misconduct, the Ontario College of Teachers takes action. That is already in place. There is already a criminal justice system that takes action when charges are laid.

I think the member opposite has to remember that the school system does not operate in isolation from all of the other statutes and all of the other systems that are already in place. For the school system to attempt to be the criminal justice system makes no sense.

What we have done is fill in gaps in reporting, which we consulted on across the province. My parliamentary assistant, the member for Guelph, went around the province and talked to educators. We have made it clear when teachers must report to principals. The other statutes that are already in place require further reporting—

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

COURT REPORTERS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Attorney General. Court reporters are skilful and do some of the most important work in the justice system. They are in our courts to record the proceedings, and further, are

mandated a very specialized task: to produce accurate transcripts of those very proceedings at home on their own time. Now, strangely, the McGuinty government is moving on a system of sweatshop justice here in Ontario. Why is the Attorney General proposing to have transcripts prepared in regional centres by people who have never actually been in court to witness the proceedings?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member is quite right when she says our court reporters do a very important and a very good job throughout the province of Ontario—and have for many years. That’s certainly been my experience as a practising lawyer.

She’s quite right that we want to do whatever is necessary to support those court reporters. She knows that there were some labour grievances that were pursued, and as a result of the labour grievances, it was necessary for the government to look at ways of addressing them. The proposal that she outlined was one of the proposals. It is not the proposal that we’re pursuing. We’re going to make sure that we have the appropriate means of supporting the important work that our court reporters do, the important work of transcript production, and we’ll be working through the labour relations process with OPSEU to make sure that we have the appropriate method in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: OPSEU represents 659 court reporters, and it’s fighting the McGuinty government’s proposal to build these sweatshops for the production of court records. What I want to understand very clearly from this Attorney General is, are you going to guarantee that your solution is going to keep every one of those court reporters who are in the courts employed doing the transcripts, ensure that not a single one of them is going to lose hours and maintain wages the way they should be maintained?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I think what the member will know is that the court reporters were doing their work in a certain way for many years. As a result of grievances that some of the court reporters pursued, a decision was made that has caused the government to sit down with OPSEU and say, “We need to address this decision,” a decision which would suggest that some changes are necessary. Now we’re working with OPSEU to address the result of that labour proceeding. We will be working very closely with our labour relations partners to address the result of that grievance that was successfully pursued by the union members. We’ll be addressing that and supporting the court reporters and the court reporting system as they need to be, in the interests of justice.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, today adoption records in Ontario will be opened for the first time in our history. Although there is much excitement about the steps our government has taken, I have

also recently read and heard the concerns raised by individuals across Ontario, in the media and otherwise. According to your ministry’s website, there are just over 3,700 disclosure vetoes that were filed, meaning 3,700 of 250,000 Ontarians have chosen to keep their information private. My question to the minister is, what has the ministry done to ensure that adopted Ontarians are aware of today’s news and understand the new rules?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to thank the member for her excellent question. Yes, adoption files will be open today. In preparation for that, my ministry has launched a very extensive advertising campaign in three phases to ensure that people know about the change in the adoption legislation. These ads were conducted in every province and territory in Canada and across the United States, with additional advertising in Arizona, California and Florida.

We have also sent out information packages to a variety of interest groups and adoption partners at every stage of our implementation. Furthermore, our website has been updated constantly, and from September 2008 to April 2009, we have had over 47,000 unique visitors and almost 60,000 hits on the adoption page of our website.

Ontarians have been engaged, and my ministry has fulfilled its duty to communicate—

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

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: While it’s absolutely crucial to ensure that adopted Ontarians are prepared for the changes coming into force, there may also be those who have given up a child for adoption and who are now anxious seniors, and others in Ontario, who may need some extra reassurance. Included in this group may be mothers who perhaps gave up their child decades ago in secret, only to be concerned today with having their information released.

Minister, when it comes to vetoes, what happens to individuals who just recently sent in those vetoes? Is there a backlog in the system, and if so, how will the privacy of these individuals be protected?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: That is very, very important. What I want to tell the House and Ontarians in general is that in order for a disclosure veto to be effective, it must be registered before an application for disclosure of information is processed. Applications for a disclosure veto have been available to the public since September 1, 2008.

The ORG has told us that there is no backlog with the applications as of May 26, so before any information is disclosed, all the application vetoes will be processed. Additionally, if a sudden wave of veto applications arrives later this week, they will be processed before any information goes out to requesters.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is again to the Minister of Health and has to do with the offensive

misuse of tax dollars at eHealth, an agency that he and his colleagues are responsible for. Sarah Kramer, the CEO of eHealth, has been unrepentant. As a matter of fact, she fully approves of her manipulation of the rules in order to give contracts to her consultant friends and fatten their bank accounts with scarce tax dollars.

Minister, you stood up here last week and again this week defending the practices of what I would describe as a rogue agency; an agency out of control, with no respect whatsoever for tax dollars. Your Premier says he's concerned, but I think you're trying to have it both ways. If there is legitimate concern, will you stop defending this agency and the CEO and refer this matter to the public accounts committee, if you have genuine and real concerns?

Hon. David Caplan: The Premier and I share the same concern about the appropriate use of taxpayer dollars. That's precisely why I met this weekend with Dr. Alan Hudson, the chair of the board, and directed the board to undertake a third-party review of the management practices at eHealth Ontario. In fact, the board has met and they are moving in that fashion.

As I also mentioned earlier in a supplementary, Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General for Ontario, is out of the province at the present time, but upon his return I will be meeting, or at the very least speaking, with him about the review he has undertaken related to eHealth and its legacy and predecessor companies.

I don't think the member should be under any illusion. I disagree with the rhetoric he uses, and I understand the partisan nature of this place, but I can assure the member that—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: You don't need a third-party review to know that something smells here and heads should roll. I have a receipt filed by Allaudin Merali, the \$75,000-a-month man we heard about earlier, for a six-night stay at the Royal York Hotel at a cost to taxpayers a little under \$2,100. There's a charge on this every day of his stay at the hotel for a \$15 drink at the exclusive Gold Lounge.

Minister, without obfuscating, can you tell Ontarians in places like Guelph and Goderich who've lost their jobs, who can barely afford to put food on the table, why they need to pay for a \$15 nightcap for your Liberal consultant?

1110

Hon. David Caplan: I certainly regret the rhetoric of the member opposite.

I have informed this House that I have discussed my concern regarding the expenses that have been disclosed with the CEO and with the chair. While these expenses may be allowable, I've reminded them that it's not a question of "can," but a question of "should." While there are costs of doing business, it's important that taxpayer dollars are respected. It's important not just for eHealth but for all of us, as I say, who have the privilege

to serve Ontarians, including every member of this Legislature.

I've directed the board of eHealth to take on a third party review. I will be in conversation with the Auditor General, an independent officer of this Legislature who has done a great service for the people of Ontario, who is well known for his thoroughness and for his professionalism. He will undertake that review, will have recommendations, will—

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

DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Minister of Transportation: Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner has called on the government to include an on-off switch on the new enhanced driver's licence to protect the personal information of Ontarians. Why is the McGuinty government putting Ontarians' privacy and security at risk by ignoring the commissioner's advice?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can say that we consulted extensively with the privacy commissioner while developing the licence. The member has expressed, I think, in committee some concerns about this. There was consultation with the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, but our ministry worked very carefully and very closely with the privacy commissioner of Ontario, who provided us with advice all along. We found that advice was very good, and we implemented as much as we could to alleviate some of the concerns that the commissioner had expressed initially. By the time we had finally developed the enhanced security driver's licence, most of the concerns had been addressed. We continue to work with the privacy commissioner to address any further concerns that might be present.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister, the reality is that there are a lot of recommendations that were made by the privacy commissioner that came forward as amendments to that bill that were ignored.

You've talked in the past about putting a sleeve on this licence to protect people, to protect their privacy. That sleeve is not adequate to protect people and their privacy from widespread sharing of their personal information, to protect them from being tracked.

You know that other jurisdictions in Canada have backed off on this because of concerns about expense and privacy.

The privacy commissioner is asking you to protect the privacy and security of Ontarians. Why are you ignoring the privacy commissioner's direct advice on this?

Hon. James J. Bradley: You know how people always get up and say, "Nothing could be further from the truth"? That's true, nothing could be further from the truth. I just said we've worked with the privacy commissioner all along.

He mentions the sleeve, for instance. Because one person writes an article in a newspaper that says the sleeve is

not adequate, that doesn't mean the sleeve is not adequate.

You will know that the information that is provided at the border is only a number that is required by the Department of Homeland Security.

That obviously has not changed the mind of the NDP government of Manitoba. Your fellow travellers who rule in Manitoba continue to have enhanced security driver licences available.

The interesting thing is, you demand these documents for people to cross the border, you say we should produce them, and when we do produce them you get up and criticize after—

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

TOURISM

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Tourism. Summer is just around the corner and children will soon be out of school. I know as a parent that it can be very difficult and a challenge to find fun, innovative and exciting ways to keep our children entertained during this time. I also know that family outings can be expensive and that now, more than ever, Ontarians are looking to spend their hard-earned dollars wisely, while enjoying the many locations and attractions that this province has to offer, including Ontario's west coast in the riding of Huron-Bruce.

Can the Minister of Tourism outline any programs that her ministry is offering which may help with the cost of family outings this summer?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to thank my colleague for the question today. It is Tourism Week. We're very excited to be celebrating and highlighting the great festivals, events and attractions that our province has to offer.

To answer the member's question, my ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, has a program that makes travel affordable for Ontario families. It's called the Fun Pass. It allows children 14 years of age and under to attend Ontario's tourism and cultural agencies this summer for free when accompanied by an adult. It represents a potential savings for Ontario families of \$120. This program, instituted under our government, will provide more than 1.5 million passes to children under 14 this year. We distribute it through the schools so that children across the province have access to these passes and can use them with their families.

It includes admissions to attractions such as Science North, Fort William in Thunder Bay, Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, Discovery Harbour in Penetanguishene, Ontario Place—

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

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I recall hearing of these passes from previous years and I know it's something that I have personally taken advantage of with my family. I know that my constituents really do enjoy them. It's an

affordable way to see our great provincial attractions with your family.

In Huron-Bruce, we certainly know something about tourism. My riding is host to so many public beaches; to name a few, Kincardine, Port Elgin, Goderich, Bayfield and Grand Bend. We feature local parks and many other attractions. It's important to get people out to these and many other locations in the province. It helps stimulate our local economies and it also provides very memorable summer fun for parents and their children alike.

Minister, could you explain why you feel that such programs are so important, particularly in these difficult economic times?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Again, to the member for Huron-Bruce, thank you for the great question. Certainly your region of the province has some great attractions, wonderful beaches and lots to do for families across Ontario and from outside Ontario. My family from Alaska is now in the House, so a shout-out to them, the Harrens from Alaska who are visiting and taking advantage of all Ontario has to offer.

The members may be interested to know that approximately 80% of Ontario tourism is made up of Ontarians. We're working hard to encourage our fellow Ontarians to spend their scarce vacation dollars here in Ontario through a "stay-cation." We have developed our popular There's No Place Like This ad campaign. Our most recent edition is now playing, featuring singer-songwriter Justin Hines. It's a lovely ad. We have seen success through this ad with a 5% increase in domestic tourism since 2007. We've also invested over \$25 million since 2006 through Celebrate Ontario to enhance our festivals and events. This year, with \$11 million, we're supporting 224 festivals—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Back to the Minister of Health and about his rogue agency eHealth and their arrogant CEO, who is telling taxpayers to eat cake: Minister, your defence of this is unconscionable. You have never stood in this place and condemned the spending practices of this agency, and it's a reflection on you and your competence in the job. You're sending a message to every agency of this government: "The culture of entitlement is alive and well in this Liberal government. Go for it."

We just got an e-mail here that eHealth Ontario last night—just last night—held a lavish reception in Quebec City for 850 people, including drinks. Can you confirm that?

Hon. David Caplan: First of all, I reject the premise of the member's question. I have said repeatedly in this House that I and the Premier have concerns about the kinds of expense claims that have come to light. That is precisely why I have directed the board of eHealth Ontario to undertake a third party review. That's why I've taken the step to engage the Auditor General of the

province of Ontario in the review that he is doing and that is ongoing.

1120

I know that the results the agency is achieving are good results, that they are on track to reach our goals of a more modern health care system. I think all the members of this House would want to share in having an eHealth system that connects patients better, that enables better patient safety and a more efficient health care system, things like a diabetes registry and ePrescribing—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: That's a double-D answer—depressing drivel. Really, we've asked you very specific questions.

We have hundreds of thousands of people in this province who have lost their jobs. The province is facing unprecedented economic challenges. People don't know where they're going to be tomorrow, let alone a year or two from now. Their pensions are faltering. People are genuinely concerned, but you're standing up here day after day, every question, defending the unconscionable.

This agency is wasting scarce tax dollars. Minister, take a look at the offensive, offensive history of this agency and the arrogance of its CEO in her public proclamations. You have not condemned her. I ask you, why are you standing up here day after day, defending this rogue agency?

Hon. David Caplan: This government has outlined a very ambitious and important delivery for eHealth initiatives. In fact, the conference that the member offered earlier is a national conference, not one that is put on by eHealth. Unfortunately, I think this is the problem when members opposite get a little carried away in their rhetoric. That's why we've asked a third party to come in and review financial controls and management practices. That's why the Auditor General, an independent officer of this Legislature, is in fact in place, doing the appropriate review. I'm surprised that the member opposite doesn't have confidence in the Auditor General, given the thorough and excellent work he has done on behalf of Ontario taxpayers in this province.

I have tremendous confidence in Mr. McCarter and his team. I know this member showed disdain for auditors in the past. He's disagreed with the Auditor—

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association knew you were considering greater access to information to support school administrators and teaching staff to strengthen school improvement plans. However, OPSBA, and I quote, did not “envision the data assembled for this purpose would be used in the context of the school information finder site.”

We can't find a single stakeholder group who supports the inclusion of statistics about income, education level

and recent immigration on your website. Minister, who were you listening to when you set up this site?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We were listening to people who said that the kinds of rankings that are done by the C.D. Howe Institute and the Fraser Institute are overly simplistic. They do not show a fleshed-out profile of schools. If we're going to provide information to the community, to principals, to parents and to community members, then we should have a profile of schools that shows more about a school than just test scores, because that's not enough to get a full picture of what a school is about.

As the member opposite knows, I'm very aware that there are some stakeholders who are concerned about the school information finder, which is why we have set up a consultation process. We're going to be having some round table conversations about what more information could be on that school information finder, so that the profiles of schools would be as complete as they need to be.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, it's clear that you, the Premier and maybe the C.D. Howe Institute obviously think there is an appetite for this kind of information. But the Colour of Poverty Campaign has made the following statement on behalf of numerous community, multicultural and immigrant organizations it represents, and they say, “As it is currently designed, the school information finder has the effect—if not the intent—of promoting segregation and undermining the values of inclusion and equity that are fundamental to the public education system in Ontario.”

The information on this website, I tell you, is odious. When are you going to remove it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the salient phrase that the member opposite used is, “As it is currently designed.” I've already said that we're going to be talking with folks who have concerns about this tool, and we're going to be talking about what more or different information should be on it.

But I have to say, as recently as this past Saturday I met with a group of parents at a town hall in Pickering with the member for Ajax–Pickering, and we had a conversation about the kinds of information that parents might want to get. One parent raised a comment about fundraising. She said, “We have this policy at our school, but I'm not sure what's done in other contexts. Maybe that's the kind of information that should be available to people school by school.”

That's the conversation we're going to have with stakeholders. I know that with the advice of the folks who are close to these issues on the ground, in our school communities, we'll get it right.

GREENBELT

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, the honourable Jim Watson. One of our government's proudest accomplishments was the creation of the greenbelt around

Toronto. It is, as you know, a 1.8-million-acre stretch of land approximately the size of Prince Edward Island. Of course, many of my constituents enjoy spending time with their families out relaxing and exploring the vast agricultural land and green spaces we have protected here in Ontario forever.

In 2010, we will be celebrating the fifth anniversary of the greenbelt, and part of the lead-up to that was the creation of the I Love Greenbelt Awards. I also understand that an art contest was launched to choose the design for the awards.

Minister, would you be able to inform this House about the art contest and about the winning design, especially as it involves some of the irreplaceable constituents of the great riding of Etobicoke North?

Hon. Jim Watson: It's with great pleasure that I inform the House about the winner of that contest that the honourable member spoke about. Her name is Esha Patel, and she is a student in Etobicoke from the member's riding. She is with us here today in the gallery. She's a grade 2 student.

We had submissions from hundreds of students across Ontario who participated in the contest. I had the pleasure of reviewing many of the great works of art that came from students from all parts of Ontario. I have to say that our selection panel had a really tough time because of the quality of the artwork, but Esha's work was exceptional, and we congratulate her very much. Our youth have truly illustrated that the greenbelt is a green space that provides us with clean air, with water and with great local food.

Again, our sincere congratulations to Esha.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I join with you in congratulating the Patel family, in particular Esha, on the successful entry to this contest. It is, as the minister has just said, truly a great way to illustrate all that the greenbelt has to offer.

The greenbelt is not only a great way to protect the environment around us, but of course there are a number of related economic benefits. For example, the David Suzuki Foundation estimates that ecological services and benefits provided by the greenbelt are valued at approximately \$2.6 billion a year. That's the approximate cost of eight million residents in the greater Golden Horseshoe; they would have to pay for clean water, scrub emissions going into the air and artificially pollinate crops.

Minister, given the success of the greenbelt, what further steps does our government plan, considering future growth?

Hon. Jim Watson: Growing the greenbelt is an opportunity to protect areas outside the existing greenbelt. Last year we put in place criteria, after extensive public consultation, that would consider requests from municipalities to grow the greenbelt. But we won't do this alone or in isolation. Any requests to amend the greenbelt plan will be carefully considered with input from municipalities; the Greenbelt Council, which does such a great job

advising me; aboriginal communities; and the greater public.

A request to grow the greenbelt must address six criteria. They must: come from a single-tier or upper-tier government that is supported by a council resolution; increase the size of the greenbelt; achieve the vision and meet at least one goal of the greenbelt plan; areas must include a natural heritage agriculture or water resource system of a type consistent with the greenbelt plan; complement other provincial policies; and they must complement the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe area.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Back to the Minister of Health about this out-of-control agency, eHealth, and the clearly out-of-control CEO. Minister, you've had an opportunity now to confirm if indeed the e-mail we received was accurate about eHealth Ontario holding a lavish reception in Quebec City for 850 people. If you can confirm that, I would suggest that if this is accurate, in the midst of a controversy over extravagant misuse of tax dollars by this agency, this would justify the immediate dismissal of the head of that agency. Would you agree?

1130

Hon. David Caplan: When I look at the leadership of the agency, I look at what the results are that they're achieving. I can tell the member opposite that the leadership at eHealth is yielding good results for Ontarians and for Ontario patients. They are on track to reach our goal of a modern health care system.

It's regrettable that when the member and his colleagues served on this side of the House, they set up the Smart Systems for Health Agency and gave it the wrong mandate. They provided it with the wrong direction.

It took my predecessor colleague, Minister Smitherman, to order an operational review. Their operational review said that we needed to do something different in order to be able to drive forward on an ambitious goal and agenda. The accomplishments of this agency since September have been in line with that ambitious strategy to drive forward on ePrescribing, to drive forward on a diabetes registry, to have—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Talk about rubbing it in the face of hard-pressed taxpayers and the unemployed in this province, the people who are really concerned about their future and their kids' future.

Interjection: They don't care.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Obviously this CEO doesn't care, the agency doesn't care, and the minister stands up and fails—every time we ask him a question or the other opposition party asks him a question—to condemn the activities of this agency. He thinks that a \$15-a-night cocktail, paid for by the taxpayers, is appropriate when this man is making close to \$3,000 a day from Ontario taxpayers, pulling an extra \$75 a day for meals

on top of that and flying first class back and forth to Alberta at taxpayers' expense.

All these unending expenditures condoned by the CEO, who is the most arrogant bureaucrat we've seen in many a moon, and this minister is standing up—Minister, if you continue this, clearly Ms. Kramer isn't the only one who has to go; you have to go.

Hon. David Caplan: I disagree with the premise of the member's question—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: I disagree with the premise of the question. I can tell you that I have repeatedly in this House, as has the Premier, talked about the need to be able to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are used wisely and that they are driving toward an ambitious eHealth agenda, an ambitious plan that will serve the needs of Ontario patients. Unfortunately and regrettably, that did not happen under a previous government, but we have taken steps to be able to correct that.

We now have in place Ontario's first-ever eHealth strategy. That is directing the kind of investment—like an ePrescribing regime, a diabetes registry, an electronic health record—that we had committed to Ontarians, by 2015, and earlier if we possibly can.

I do believe that I have had that conversation with the board and with the CEO about the need to respect taxpayer dollars. That's why I've asked a third party to review the management—

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

RETIREMENT HOMES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre responsable des personnes âgées.

On November 6 last year, I asked this minister about her government's progress in fulfilling the McGuinty election campaign promise to regulate retirement homes. Minister Carroll told me that she was quite pleased with her government's progress and that something would be announced in the months ahead.

Well, it has been seven months and we still haven't heard anything. Can the minister explain what happened to this promise?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm delighted to reply to my colleague from across the way.

We continue to be committed to the regulation of retirement homes. The Minister of Health and myself, our team and our departments are working closely on this project. I'm confident of the progress that we have achieved to date, feeling very positive of the direction in which we're going, and we'll be looking forward to an opportunity to share that news in the very early future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, this was the exact same response I got in November, except that now it's "the very near future." It used to be "the near future."

With the growing needs of Ontario seniors and the crisis in the alternative level of care patients, retirement

homes are being used to ease the burden on health care facilities. What's happening is that hospitals are actually discharging clients directly into retirement homes. Yet retirement homes are not health care facilities. There are no regulations speculating anything about patient care, staff resources—none of that is there in retirement homes. This is a disaster waiting for a time to happen, and God knows that we have had our fair share of tragic situations. Why is this government dragging its heels in regulating these homes when they're so desperately needed now?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: While I appreciate the honourable member's concern about time, I think it's far more important that we get this right. I'm not concerned about whether I use "future" or "near future." I don't think that is the major priority here, and I think it's rather disingenuous to imply that we have Wild West kind of retirement homes. We do not. We are already, within many different aspects of legislation, regulating aspects in the same way that we regulate other facilities, such as accommodation and food. The Ontario building and fire codes and the Health Protection and Promotion Act apply to retirement homes just as they apply to long-term care. In addition, we fund many different dimensions. We've had consultations. We are dedicated to getting this right. We're well aware of the situation described by my honourable colleague and we are—

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

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In these times of global economic uncertainty and transition there is much reflection on the nature and direction of our economy. How do we as a government and as a people best prepare Ontario to be a leader in the new economic order that will be upon us in short order? In these tough times for the workers and businesses of our province, the people of Ontario, Canada and many other nations see an opportunity in all the bleakness, an opportunity to couple two great policy aims to kick-start economic output through public investment in major stimulus projects and to use that mandate to make good investments in smart, strategic and immediate projects that will pay off now and pay off later.

A big part of our economic future hinges on having a trained and nimble workforce that can respond to the new knowledge- and skills-based challenges of the 21st century. What is our government doing to ensure that Ontario's campuses have the best learning facilities possible?

Hon. John Milloy: Last week I was very proud, along with my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, to announce through our co-operation with the federal government \$1.5 billion for infrastructure projects in Ontario's colleges and universities. The member who asked the question is obviously from the Ottawa area. I'd

just like to outline some of these investments for his part of the province: a new waterfront building at Carleton University, which will house a new faculty of public affairs; \$80 million for Vanier Hall at the University of Ottawa; Algonquin College is moving ahead with their environmental demonstration centre for the construction trade, as well as renewing their Perth campus; finally, \$26 million dollars for La Cité collégiale to build a new 911 institute which will offer emergency services training in French. All these projects are shovel-ready, and we—

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

DEFERRED VOTES

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE
AT SCHOOL), 2009
LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(SÉCURITÉ DE NOS ENFANTS
À L'ÉCOLE)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 157, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Brotten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Kwintner, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Sorbara, Greg
Crozier, Bruce	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fonseca, Peter	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Runciman, Robert W.
Bailey, Robert	MacLeod, Lisa	Savoline, Joyce
Barrett, Toby	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Munro, Julia	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 18.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome back Richard Patten, who's sitting in the east members' gallery. Richard represented Ottawa Centre in the 34th, 36th, 37th and 38th Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park, Richard.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Sitting in the east gallery is the ambassador of Portugal, Pedro de Almeida, and the Consul General of Portugal here in Toronto, Ontario, Dr. Maria Amélia de Paiva.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WINDREACH FARM

Mr. John O'Toole: An estimated 1,500 visitors will gather at WindReach Farm in Scugog township this month for the farm's 20th anniversary celebration.

WindReach Farm offers individuals with disabilities and/or special needs a place to enjoy farming, nature, outdoor recreation and therapeutic riding. Persons of all ages and abilities share these experiences with family and friends.

WindReach is the vision of founder Alexander J. Mitchell, often called Sandy. Sandy was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, but that hasn't kept him from living life to its fullest, enjoying sports such as skiing, horseback riding and sailing. His values and visions are encouraged at WindReach Farm. They welcome over 20,000 visitors annually and work with nearly 350 community organizations. WindReach provides programs for visitors, as well as work experience, accommodation and therapeutic riding.

The celebration is on Saturday, June 13, and includes sheep herding demonstrations, horse shows, adaptive sports, art, music and rides in a fully accessible hot air balloon, to name just a few of the highlights.

Congratulations to founder Sandy Mitchell and all the friends of WindReach Farm for 20 years of celebration, and the many community volunteers who make this a very special community in my riding of Durham.

RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr. Dave Levac: Today I rise to commend the high school students of Pauline Johnson Collegiate, Brantford Collegiate Institute and North Park Collegiate and the volunteers for organizing a great Relay for Life, a fundraiser campaign for the Canadian Cancer Society held in my riding on May 22, put on solely by the high school students themselves.

I would also like to thank the teacher advisers, the administrators, the police officers and St. John Ambulance who were in attendance throughout the event, ensuring that the students were safe and secure from 7 o'clock in the evening on Friday through to 7 o'clock in the morning on Saturday.

The Canadian Cancer Society relies on volunteers such as these great students from across Ontario and Canada to lead the fight against cancer. The money raised at the Relay for Life campaign in Brant will go to the Canadian Cancer Society so that they can continue to research all the types of cancer there are, provide support for people living with cancer and offer the public comprehensible and credible information on cancer itself, risk reductions and the treatments provided.

The positive actions of these students, and of other students holding Relays for Life in the riding as well, involved in organizing, participating and seeking sponsors for the Relay for Life, need to be fully recognized. We are constantly hearing negative stories about young people and their attitudes towards community service, but I can tell you factually, after spending time with these students, that their good deeds in our communities across the province should be heralded and they should be thanked immensely. We thank those students for the great work they do for the Relay for Life.

DOUG MILLER

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yesterday, our country, our province, the county of Simcoe and the community I live in, Coldwater, lost a true gentleman and a community leader. Our friend Doug Miller passed away yesterday, May 31, after a very, very brief illness.

Doug spent his whole career working with the Ontario government, with MTO, as a project manager. He was well respected, and he was really and truly an ambassador for this ministry.

Doug was a very healthy individual. He never smoked, he never drank. He exercised regularly, and he played hockey up until February of this year, at the age of 80.

He belonged to many sports organizations, council, the fire department, and he was an admired mentor to many of the individuals in the community.

He is survived by his wife, Arla; his children, John, Betty, Cathy and Terry; their spouses; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Firstly, I want to thank Doug and Arla, because 10 years ago we were going through a provincial election—it was actually June 3—and Doug was instrumental in

selling memberships and running my campaign office. Both he and Arla worked extremely hard to get me elected, and I will never forget the effort and the admiration he had from the community as he went about selling memberships and asking people to support me.

It is a great loss for the community. I want to offer our condolences to Arla and her family. We truly have lost a great person in the province of Ontario, and he will be missed by everyone.

COSBURN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased to announce that Cosburn Middle School, in my riding, has won music awards. At the Kiwanis Music Festival of Toronto, our students received the following awards: silver for choral, gold for grade 7 concert band, and gold for grade 8 concert band. It's the first time that Cosburn has ever received gold in the Ontario Band Association festival, and as a result they were invited to the Yamaha MusicFest national competition, where the grade 8 band garnered yet another gold.

This week, on Wednesday, June 3 at 7 p.m., Cosburn music council will be holding a concert. This is Cosburn music council's first fundraising concert, and I invite all of you to come and see how talented these young musicians are. Their concert is called Inspiration. The event is the culmination of a year's hard work by over 300 students in their choir, vocal chamber ensemble, grade 7 and grade 8 concert bands, grade 7 and 8 jazz bands, jazz combo ensemble and rock band. Chad Doucette, Canadian Idol fourth-place finalist in 2006, will be the special guest star. The concert is at East York Collegiate Institute. All funds raised will help support this extra-curricular music program and its growing initiatives. All are welcome.

Among those who should be congratulated for all of this are the choir director, Jane Agosta, and the instrumental music director, Kevin Hrycay. Monica Maurin is the president of Cosburn music council. George Rowell is the principal.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM
FUNDING

Mr. Mario Sergio: I'm delighted to announce that the McGuinty government and the federal government have partnered to stimulate the economy through large-scale infrastructure programs all over Ontario. I would specifically like to commend this government's ongoing commitment to revitalizing our educational and research facilities, including York University, located within my riding of York West.

This joint venture between the federal and provincial governments has resulted in nearly \$100 million in funding to York University just last week alone. This massive funding allocated to our reputable university shows the commitment by the McGuinty government to Ontario: Not only does it provide students with better

access to education and higher learning, but it also demonstrates its commitment to our economy by creating jobs. I'm proud of our government's investments, and I'm proud of this government's ability to collaborate with the federal government so that more money quickly reaches sectors of our economy that need it most, keeping Ontario on the right track as we move forward.

This past week alone—part of this money is going to ameliorate, improve and build a wonderful new addition to Osgoode law school at York. It's going to benefit very largely not only the local economy, but also the students of York.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Last week, the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario was here at Queen's Park. They made a good case to members of all parties to ban the use of credit scoring in all lines of personal insurance. The government prohibits credit scoring from being used to rate or underwrite auto insurance—and we agree with that completely—but credit scoring is still allowed for property insurance.

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Some insurers are using credit scoring for home insurance and causing rates for some of my constituents to greatly increase or be cancelled outright. When that happens, drivers with multi-policy discounts see their auto insurance go up by as much as 15%. It appears that some insurers are getting around the auto insurance ban by jacking up rates on home insurance based on credit scoring.

Credit scoring affects those least able to pay for it: the unemployed, newcomers and single parents, and it appears to be spreading. In my riding, workers who have been laid off in the auto sector may be affected by this unfair, discriminatory practice through no fault of their own. Changes need to be made as soon as possible to protect drivers and homeowners during these difficult times.

The government already acknowledges that credit scoring is unfair to consumers and not in the public interest. Premier, we need to know, will you expand the ban on credit scoring to allow all lines of personal property insurance to be removed from credit scoring as soon as possible? We await your response.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Bill Mauro: Reps from Thunder Bay's Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 397 are bursting with pride thanks to one of their outstanding apprentices.

Kent Wicklund, an employee of Enerdry, came home a winner from the recent annual Canadian Conference of Sheet Metal Workers held in Winnipeg. At the conference, 11 apprentices participated in a competition that saw them attempting to design and create a copper umbrella holder. They had three days to mould flat pieces of

metal into a large vase, and were judged on three portions: theory pattern, drafting and practical.

Kent Wicklund was already the champion in the Ontario and Thunder Bay competitions. Last summer, a similar competition with a handful of classmates in Thunder Bay earned him a ticket to compete in a provincial competition in Ottawa against a dozen of his peers. His win in Ottawa got him to Winnipeg. Kent finished his five-year sheet metal apprenticeship in December and hopes the recognition will help him in his career.

This is the second year in a row a Thunder Bay apprentice has placed in the national competition. Curtis Halstead landed in third place when the conference was held in Quebec last year. He had won the provincial competition the previous year.

Congratulations also go out to Rick Thompson, Enerdry shop foreman and night school instructor for apprentices, who assisted Kent in his training, and Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 397 business manager Dave Bradshaw. To them, we offer our thanks. These gentlemen have continued to enhance the reputation of the building trades sector in Thunder Bay when it comes to skilled trades.

They have a long, established reputation, from coast to coast, as being some of the best-skilled tradespeople in our country, and these recent apprentices continue with that tradition.

CANADIAN FORCES

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: On Friday, May 15, the town of Forest in Lambton Shores in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex was the location for a parade to welcome home eight members of the Canadian armed forces who were all returning home to the area after recently serving in Afghanistan.

The returning soldiers were: Captain David Anderson of the First Hussars; Master Corporal Matt Williams, First Hussars; Corporal Joel Fraser, First RCR; Corporal Jim Cosgrove, First Hussars; Corporal Jim Brand, Third Battalion RCR; Trooper Chris Brown of the Royal Canadian Dragoons; Private Jarrod Charron of the Third Battalion RCR; and Private Jamie Scherer, Second Service Battalion.

The veterans were greeted by crowds of family, friends and neighbours lining the streets, waving Canadian flags and wearing red shirts to show their support for the Canadian troops. The parade began at the library, led by the Legion colour guard, and drove along downtown Forest before ending at the Legion. People not only applauded as the soldiers were escorted along the route, but then many walked alongside these young men as the parade moved toward the Legion Hall.

The strong pride and support for these local boys was very evident in this rural community, but so was the relief and happiness for the safe return of these young men to their families and homes.

I would like to thank the organizers of the parade: Dan Dew, Brad Pettigrew and the Forest Legion, who organized the event to show the support and the appreciation we have for our troops serving in Afghanistan. Through their efforts and those of many others, the town of Forest was able to give these vets a homecoming parade to remember.

AZORES DAY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'm pleased to rise today and recognize Azorean Day. Today, Canadian-Azoreans have gathered here at Queen's Park to celebrate their heritage and raise the Azorean flag.

Heading the special ceremony will be the President of the government of the Azores, Sr. Dr. Carlos César, and the president of the regional assembly, Sr. Dr. Francisco Coelho.

Here with us as well is Portugal's ambassador to Canada, Dr. Pedro de Almeida, and the Consul General of Portugal in Toronto, Maria Amélia de Paiva, in the east gallery. Thank you for being here.

They are joined by approximately 200 visitors from the autonomous region of the Azores who have come to attend a weekend of festivities in Ontario and the flag-raising ceremony, along with many Azorean Ontario families. In total, approximately 500 people are here at Queen's Park today to celebrate their Azorean heritage.

The Azores is an archipelago comprised of nine distinct and beautiful green islands. Founded by Gonçalo Velho in 1427, the Azores are located in the mid-Atlantic, off the coast of Portugal. Its nine islands—Santa Maria, São Miguel, Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico, Faial, Flores and Corvo—are rich in tradition and history. [Remarks in Portuguese].

The islands have been a strategic location throughout the centuries for early explorers and navigators, as well as fishing fleets destined for the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador. The region is known for its active volcanoes, its green mountains, its unique ecology, its religious festivals and especially its generous people.

I have a special fondness for the Azorean people. My wife, Zenaida, is a native of the Azores.

The Azorean people have made a tremendous impact on Ontario and on Canada as a whole. In fact, Ontario is home to one of the largest Azorean communities in the world. Approximately 80% of Ontario's Portuguese population comes from the Azores.

The flag-raising celebration today is especially significant because this is only the second time that the Azorean officials have travelled outside of Portugal to celebrate the raising of their flag. The first time was last year in Massachusetts, and now Azoreans have honoured Ontario by being here today.

On behalf of all the members of this House, I say to our guests: [Remarks in Portuguese].

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM ABUSE ACT (POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS (PROCURATIONS)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 188, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui en ce qui a trait aux procurations.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: As June is the month that's recognized for seniors in Ontario, I'm pleased to introduce the substitute decisions amendment act, powers of attorney, 2009. The bill is intended to protect seniors and other vulnerable individuals from the abuse of powers of attorney. I appreciate the advice and input I've received from constituents in the preparation of the bill, and more specifically from Brenda and Alan Hoyne. I'd also like to thank Tammy Rankin, chair of the Durham Elder Abuse Network; Sergeant John Keating, the senior support co-ordinator for the Durham Regional Police Service; and also Richard Wall, who was a Bliss Institute of Applied Politics student who worked with me as an intern; as well as Andrew Galloro; and Vanessa Yolles, legal counsel.

The purpose of the bill technically is to improve the security of seniors. The short title of the bill would be an act to protect vulnerable people and elders from abuse.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 189, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 189, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This bill re-enacts new definitions of "employee" and "employer." An "employee" is

defined to include anyone who works on a personal basis or supplies services on a personal basis in an activity or enterprise, whether a person receives wages directly or indirectly from the employer. An “employer” includes every entity or person involved in an activity or enterprise who is directly or indirectly responsible for the work of a person in it.

A provision is added to the act specifying that all employers of an employee are jointly and severally liable for any contravention of this act and the regulations and for wages owing to any employees.

The bill makes various amendments relating to unpaid wages. The bill provides that any authorized deductions from an employees’ wages are deemed to be unpaid wages owing to the employee, that unpaid wages earn interest and that unpaid wages constitute a lien, charge and secured debt against the employer.

A new part respecting employment agencies is added to the act. Employment agencies are prohibited from charging or receiving a fee for employing or obtaining employment for a person or providing information about employers seeking employees.

The bill also adds a new part allowing a person to file a claim for unjust dismissal in the specified circumstances. If an employment standards officer decides that a person has been unjustly dismissed, the officer may order the employer to pay compensation to the dismissed person, to reinstate the person to their previous position and may order any other thing that is equitable in the circumstances.

The bill adds a provision prohibiting an employer from paying different employees at different rates of pay or providing different employment benefits to different employees solely on the basis of factors such as the number of hours that an employee works, where their work is otherwise similar.

A number of changes are made to the procedures regarding complaints and enforcement. Currently, an employment standards officer has the discretion to respond to complaints by making various types of orders. The bill would require that orders must be made in the specified circumstances. Complaints regarding termination due to alleged reprisals are to be dealt with under an expedited procedure and the terminated person may, at their request, be reinstated to their position pending resolution of the complaint.

CEN-TOWER INVESTMENTS LIMITED ACT, 2009

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Cen-Tower Investments Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT, 2009 LOI DE 2009 SUR LES DROITS ET RESPONSABILITÉS EN MATIÈRE DE BIENS

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 190, An Act to amend the Expropriations Act and the Human Rights Code with respect to property rights and responsibilities / Projet de loi 190, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’expropriation et le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui a trait aux droits et responsabilités en matière de biens.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: The bill amends the Expropriations Act and the Human Rights Code to enhance the protection that Ontario law gives to owners of property, whether real or personal.

Under the Expropriations Act, an inquiry officer in an inquiry is required to consider the merits of the objectives of the expropriating authority and to add, as parties to an expropriation inquiry, the owners of all lands affected by the expropriation. The decision of the approving authority is subject to judicial review.

The amendments to the Human Rights Code recognize, subject to specific limitations at law, the right to own property, whether real or personal, the right to peaceful enjoyment of one’s property and the right to freedom from search of one’s real property and home and from seizure of one’s personal property located there. Those rights have long been recognized at common law but are largely missing from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The amendments to the Human Rights Code also include the moral responsibility to maintain one’s real property. The short title is Property Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2009.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Hon. Brad Duguid: It’s an honour for me to rise in the House today as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, two years after Justice Sidney Linden released the report of the Ipperwash inquiry. The report of the Ipperwash inquiry is very significant. It’s the road map for the government to work in partnership with First Nations and Metis in order to improve the quality of life for aboriginal communities in Ontario.

The creation of a stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was one of the key recommendations of Justice

Linden's report. It's because of this report and the efforts of various individuals that I stand before you in this capacity.

Today, as we celebrate our progress in moving forward on the recommendations outlined in the report, we must also reflect on the tragic loss of Anthony O'Brien "Dudley" George at Ipperwash Provincial Park in September 1995, an unfortunate tragedy that we cannot undo; a loss, however, that has kindled a new relationship between aboriginal people and our government, based on respect and reconciliation.

I'd also like to recognize the perseverance and achievements of a variety of people who were involved at the time of Dudley's death and since: Dudley's brother, Maynard Sam George, and his wife, Veronica; the Honourable Gerry Phillips; Maria Van Bommel, MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex; Chief Liz Cloud of the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation; former National Chief Ovide Mercredi; former Ontario Regional Chief Gord Peters; former Kettle and Stony Point First Nation Chief Tom Bressette; Justice Sidney Linden; the community of Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point; and the members of Aazhooдена and the municipality of Lambton Shores. I applaud the efforts of all these individuals and others. The list is simply too long to acknowledge everyone.

Last week, I experienced the honour and privilege of signing the historic Ipperwash park transfer process agreement with Chief Liz Cloud and the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point and the residents of Aazhooдена. During the course of that day, two interactions with people demonstrated to me just how significant this agreement really is.

When I arrived at a traditional sunrise ceremony on the shores of Lake Huron, right in Ipperwash park, I was greeted by a respected elder who, with tears in her eyes, gave me a huge hug and said, "I've waited all my life for this. I really never thought it would happen in my lifetime."

A second moment of truth came after the ceremony when I was speaking with a group of school children. A young girl leaned over to me and said, "My parents have been speaking about this land all my life. Does this mean it really is ours now?"

You can't believe the feeling I had, explaining to these schoolchildren that this land will soon belong to them, and their children when they have families. The excited looks on their faces as they looked around at the beautiful land their forefathers once walked told the whole story.

But more remains to be done. The Ipperwash report was released on May 31, 2007, and includes 100 recommendations spanning the responsibility of 10 different ministries and the federal government.

This government has already implemented and is moving forward on a great number of Justice Linden's recommendations. As Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I'm honoured to co-chair the Ipperwash Priorities and Action Committee, along with Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse. This committee brings together First Nation leadership with representatives from the provincial and

federal governments. Since its establishment last spring, the Ipperwash Priorities and Action Committee has worked to prioritize Justice Linden's recommendations in ways that best meet the needs of First Nation people and communities across Ontario.

We're also working with the Metis Nation of Ontario to implement the report's recommendations in ways that best meet the needs of Metis people in Ontario. Through an agreement signed last November, we're working to improve the well-being of Metis children, families and communities, while working to protect and promote the distinct culture, identity, and heritage of Metis people.

We have established the New Relationship Fund to help First Nations and Metis more effectively engage with government and the private sector. We've committed \$30 million toward reaching a resource benefits sharing plan with aboriginal communities.

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As well, ministry staff have been meeting with their federal counterparts to discuss ways to improve the Ontario land claims process. My ministry has set targets of three years to remove the claims backlog and three years to process new claims.

Many of Justice Linden's recommendations involve efforts across government, and I am proud of the progress our government has made. Recent government initiatives stemming from the report include improved mining legislation recently introduced by my colleague Northern Development and Mines Minister Michael Gravelle. Ontario, through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, is the only province to specifically dedicate part of the federal police officers recruitment fund to First Nation policing. The Ministry of the Attorney General, along with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, is working to provide more meaningful use of aboriginal community justice opportunities and improved access to justice.

I'm proud to say that, utilizing Justice Linden's report as our guide and by working together with First Nation and Metis people in this province, the government is making strides toward healing, reconciliation and building a better future for all Ontarians. We've gone from what may have been described as an historical low in the relationship between the Ontario government and aboriginal peoples in communities to what is now considered by many to be an historical high point.

We will continue to address historical wrongs and inequalities as we work together to close the socio-economic gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Ontario. I look forward to achieving continued success together with aboriginal partners.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and his statement today concerning the Ipperwash report and Ipperwash Provincial Park.

The Ipperwash inquiry results were released some two years ago. There were over 100 recommendations put

forward by Justice Sidney Linden. Many of those recommendations have still to be acted on. One of the most pivotal recommendations in the Ipperwash inquiry was that Ontario should establish a permanent, independent and impartial agency to facilitate and oversee the settling of land and treaty claims. The government has done little as of yet to create a body.

As a member of the opposition, I'd like to point out further inaction and the problems with this government's approach to dealing with controversial issues, and that is the situation at Caledonia. If you look at Caledonia, it has been over three years since the occupation started there, and it goes on and it's having a terrible effect on the whole area. This government's haphazard approach to dealing with land claims and their inaction with Caledonia is creating real uncertainty in the area so that economic development in the area is in a very poor state. The good relations that did exist between the First Nations communities and the other communities in the area of Caledonia that existed for some 200 years have been adversely affected and continue to be adversely affected because this situation continues to go on.

The representative from Haldimand–Norfolk, a few weeks ago, asked a question to do with that area. Past Premier David Peterson was brought in to help try to settle things. He did negotiate and transfer some lands in that area. In particular, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk brings up the 378 acres at the Burtch Correctional Centre. I guess my question and the question that the member from Haldimand–Norfolk was asking is: What was the benefit of negotiating these 378 acres of land to the First Nations? The situation there continues; the impasse continues. Relations between communities have been wrecked, and we have the whole economy of that area negatively affected, for First Nations communities as well as the other communities in the area.

We have the ongoing blind eye—that this government doesn't want to address the situation of illegal cigarettes in the province. Some 50% of the cigarettes being sold in the province are illegal cigarettes being sold through smoke shacks. What are the consequences of that? Certainly the health consequences are significant, particularly for First Nations youth, in that they have a very high incidence of smoking. Those cigarettes have been shown to have—as bad as cigarettes are, the illegal ones are worse than the production ones—more chemicals and various other things in them that shouldn't be in them. So we have some real health concerns there, not to mention the lost revenues for the province of Ontario. This government turns a blind eye to that.

They have gone on now for some three and a half years not settling the situation in Caledonia. The member from Haldimand–Norfolk brings up questions about what other Ontario Realty Corp. land in that area might be up for grabs to be negotiated away and what's going to come from it. He brought up the Sprucedale correctional centre, a former OPP office, a horticultural research farm—all near Simcoe—the Jarvis and Canfield MTO yards, the Cayuga courthouse, Rock Point Provincial Park, Selkirk Provincial Park. Some 4,700 acres in South

Cayuga and 1,400 acres in Townsend—so that's an uncertainty in the area represented by the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

In conclusion, in the short time I have available, I would just like to point out that from the opposition's perspective, there are many problems still out there. So the minister can talk about the Ipperwash report—though even with the Ipperwash report, most of the 100 recommendations have not yet been acted on.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to share a few comments on the statement made on Ipperwash by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Our party certainly welcomes the important step of returning Ipperwash park to its rightful owners, the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation people, who had this land taken away without their consent 60 years ago. We welcome this act as a way of remembering and honouring the memory of Dudley George, who was so unjustly deprived of his life 14 years ago.

To really deeply honour Dudley George, we must also remember that hundreds, if not thousands, of other First Nations people across Ontario continue to struggle for their basic rights and dignity to this day. Too many First Nations people in Ontario are stuck waiting for their land claims to be resolved.

Two years ago, the Ipperwash inquiry led to recommendations to speed up the resolution of outstanding land claim disputes in Ontario. Justice Linden recommended that the disputed land should be returned immediately to Stony Point First Nation and that they should also receive compensation. So I ask, where is the compensation?

Justice Linden recommended the establishment of a permanent, independent and impartial agency to facilitate and oversee the settling of land and treaty claims. I ask, where is this agency?

Justice Linden recommended that Ontario improve public education about its land claim policy as well as aboriginal burial and heritage sites. Here again, I ask, where is the public education?

Justice Linden recommended that the OPP should establish a formal consultation committee with major aboriginal organizations in Ontario. Where is the committee?

Justice Linden recommended that the OPP establish an internal process to ensure that racist and culturally insensitive behaviour by police is dealt with publicly. When will this take place?

Justice Linden called for the establishment of an Ontario aboriginal reconciliation fund. Where is the fund?

Too many people who stand up for their rights as First Nations people continue to experience what I call the strong arm of the law—as did Mr. Dudley George: people like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Chief Donny Morris and his fellow council members, who were bankrupted by court fees and sentenced to jail, all for trying to protect their own land from mining; people like former Algonquin Chief Robert Lovelace, who was imprisoned for fighting plans to mine uranium on land claimed by the Algonquin First Nation near Sharbot Lake.

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Let's celebrate the return of Ipperwash park to its rightful First Nations owners, but let's not be too self-congratulatory in the process. Let's remember that even as this government honours Dudley George today, it continues to violate the rights of First Nations people across the province by failing to implement the recommendations of the Ipperwash inquiry, by failing to ensure that the federal government deals with the backlog of land claims, and by failing to ensure aboriginal peoples' right to full, prior and informed consent before mining takes place on their land.

The return of Ipperwash lands to the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation people is welcomed, but it is only one step on the long journey toward justice and reconciliation for First Nations people in Ontario.

INJURED WORKERS' DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of Labour on a point of order.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in commemoration of Injured Workers' Day, and that a moment of silence be observed.

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

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'm honoured to rise in the Legislature to speak on behalf of Ontario workers who have been injured on the job. Today, June 1, is the day when we pay our respects to those who have been injured or killed simply because they went to work—simply because they went to work.

Workplace injuries affect not only workers; their families, their friends, their co-workers and their communities also suffer. We have the duty to do what we can to prevent this unnecessary loss. We must do what we can to ensure that at the end of the day everyone can come home to their families and friends safe and sound.

Our government takes workplace health and safety very seriously. We made a commitment to reduce the annual rate of workplace injuries by 20% from 2004 to 2008. We hired an additional 200 health and safety inspectors. We focused inspections on workplaces with the worst health and safety records. We exceeded our ambitious goals. From 2004 to 2008, Ontario's annual rate of lost-time workplace injuries dropped by over 20%.

My ministry continues to work with our health and safety partners, such as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and safe workplace associations to instill a culture of injury prevention in all workplaces. We're seeing real results in the prevention of workplace injuries, but we still have a lot of work to do, and we must do it together to see our efforts succeed. I assure you that these efforts will continue.

My ministry's current strategy for enforcing the Occupational Health and Safety Act is called Safe at Work Ontario. This strategy gives inspectors more flexibility to work with employers to develop a strong health and safety culture in the workplace. At the same

time, this strategy targets for proactive inspection those workplaces with the highest rates of injuries.

Our prevention efforts are just one part of the equation. We must also have a compensation system for those who have suffered workplace injuries. The McGuinty government has been working to put more money into the hands of those workers injured on the job through Workplace Safety and Insurance Board benefit increases.

You see, from 1994 to 2006, there was erosion of inflation protection that saw injured workers' benefits increase by only 2.9% while inflation rose by almost 29%. Our government sought to redress this by enhancing benefits for more than 155,000 injured workers. We've increased benefits by 2.5% in each of the last three years. Future increases to benefits are now under review, and we must continue to work with the WSIB and our health and safety partners to remove the hardships, the hurdles and the stigma associated with being injured at work.

Today we reflect on the devastation caused by workplace injuries and fatalities. This is a day to remember those who have lost their lives or who have had their lives forever altered by workplace injuries. This is also a day for every one of us to strengthen our commitment to workplace health and safety. There is more to do, and I believe that we can do it by working together.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm privileged to be able to speak on behalf of the official opposition about Injured Workers' Day, June 1, 2009. Injured Workers' Day is a day to reconfirm our commitment to a safe and healthy workplace. It is also a day when all of us are reminded that every year, far too many of our fellow Ontarians are injured on the job. The WSIB states that there are some 275,000 workplace injury or disease claims per year. Many of these are life-altering incidents, sometimes with shattering consequences to the injured worker and their family. As elected representatives, we have an obligation to workers injured on the job that they will be taken care of.

Workplace safety is an issue that rises above partisan politics. There is not a member in this place who wouldn't do everything in their power to make sure that we have safe workplaces. We may differ on how we make sure we have safe workplaces, but there is no one here who has a monopoly on workplace safety. That is why I do have a word of warning today on making sure that injured workers get the support they need when an accident happens.

We all support the role that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board plays in taking care of injured workers and in raising awareness of workplace safety. Although sometimes graphic, the advertising campaign that the WSIB ran recently was a good example of raising public awareness. On our side of the House, we want to make sure there is a strong WSIB so that injured workers can continue to receive the support they need. That's why our party is very concerned about the state of finances of the WSIB.

The WSIB, as everyone in this House knows, had a commitment to wipe out its unfunded liability by 2014. That will be the 100th anniversary of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Unfortunately, the unfunded liability is the difference between what the board has to pay injured workers and the assets they have on hand to do so. Recently, the board quietly announced they were no longer going to be able to meet that commitment. As a matter of fact, they announced that the unfunded liability had ballooned from \$8.1 billion to at least \$11.5 billion. They have not set a new target to eliminate the unfunded liability; they have just abandoned the old one.

I believe that we owe it to injured workers to make sure that the WSIB is going to be able to meet those future commitments. I'm concerned that given the current finances of the board, they may not be able to do so. They either will have to reduce benefits or increase premiums—or I suspect that they will do a combination of both.

Injured workers need a strong, financially stable WSIB. They need it and they deserve it. In order to make sure that's what we have, we suggest that the Provincial Auditor go into the WSIB and do a comprehensive audit. If we want to have a safer and healthy future for Ontario workers, we need a strong, financially viable Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm honoured to stand before this Legislature to speak about the plight of injured workers in Ontario. I was privileged to speak to those injured workers who came to the Legislature today to seek support from this government.

This morning, at a press conference, a group including the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, the Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury and Injured Workers' Consultants groups released a report titled *Impacts of Workplace Injury: Is This What Justice Meredith Envisioned? A Study of the Economic and Social Impacts of Workplace Injury and Illness*. The report starts out with a quotation from Justice Sir William Ralph Meredith, for whom the Meredith principles, the foundation of workers' compensation, were named. It states: "A just compensation law based upon a division between the employer and the workman of the loss occasioned by industrial accidents ought to provide that the compensation should continue to be paid as long as the disability caused by the accident lasts, and the amount of compensation should have relation to the earning power of the injured worker."

Justice Meredith did not want the injured worker to become a burden upon his relatives or friends or upon the community. Sadly, this basic tenet of workers' compensation has been forgotten. Statistics show how many injured workers are Ontario Works and ODSP recipients. This does not take into account the number of injured workers who are not part of any other program, but live in poverty in Ontario every day.

This morning the report was released, a rally was held, and a vigil is taking place to bring to light the plight of injured workers all over our province.

1350

At the rally, injured workers were clear in their demands for the implementation of cost of living for their compensation. The government should be ashamed that Injured Workers' Day is an annual event. We should be treating our injured workers with the compensation they deserve, not pushing them to rallies to hold a vigil and stand in OW and ODSP lines just to make ends meet.

The following quote from the report says it all: "For nearly 20 years" they've "been asking the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), and subsequently the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), as well as successive provincial governments to track down the employment wage losses and health outcomes of workers with permanent disabilities. Neither the WCB/WSIB nor government departments have taken on this task."

Since my election, I've been after this government to eliminate deeming and experience rating and to return to a true compensation system. The Premier had the chance to begin these necessary changes to the WSIB. Instead, he reappointed one of the problems, the chair, Mr. Mahoney. He has a majority and can return to the workers' compensation system but chooses not to take this necessary action. Many injured workers—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: The member across is mocking injured workers, I guess.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm mocking you.

Mr. Paul Miller: Many injured workers who contact me talk about being made to feel like they are leeches on society, that they are faking it and the huge impact this has on their healing time. Professional assessments by injured workers' health professionals are often disregarded by the WSIB in favour of the board's hand-picked professionals' opinions.

Many applicants don't even get satisfaction at the first contact with the board. A teacher whose student in the classroom twisted her arm, causing serious injury to her rotator cuff and two months off work, had her claim denied. How can that happen? How many more defeated injured workers like her have fallen off the record, but live on with pain and restricted mobility?

Does the WSIB even have a handle on the real numbers of injured workers in Ontario? I think not.

The research begun with the report released today will hopefully—hopefully, Speaker—give the government the starting point that it apparently needs to do the right thing by Ontario's injured workers.

The writers say it best in the conclusion of their report: "It is our hope that research findings will increase awareness of the problems with the compensation system in Ontario, inspire reform, and bring the system closer to the just compensation for the duration of injury or illness envisioned by Sir William Meredith."

Premier, and the government, I encourage you to take the lead on this issue and begin the reform necessary for injured workers in this province. Scrap the insurance system now in place and begin the process to return On-

tario to the workers' compensation system it so desperately needs.

In closing, the government is bragging about all their increases, 2%, 2.5%, even 3%, if possible. Well, it works out to be about \$5 a week. I don't know what this minister and that government could do on \$5 a week—not a heck of a lot. You might be able to buy a paper.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all members and our guests to please rise as we observe a moment of silence for workers killed or injured on the job or who are victims of occupational disease.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind those ministers who are in the House and those ministers' legislative assistants who are watching in their offices of standing order 99(d) and the written questions. I would ask you to peruse the order paper to see if you have any outstanding questions. We need to ensure that those questions are answered for the members who wrote them.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends downgrading the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia to an urgent-care ward; and

“Whereas, if accepted, that recommendation would increase the demand on emergency room services in Sarnia; and

“Whereas, as of today, many patients are already redirected to the Petrolia emergency room for medical care; and

“Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of the Petrolia emergency room will result in the loss of many local doctors; and

“Whereas Petrolia's retirement and nursing home communities are very dependent on easy access to the CEE hospital;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia as is.”

I agree with this and affix my signature to it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas physically present pharmacists have served the Ontario public well over the years by ensuring high levels of safety and care, and the requirement for the physical presence of a pharmacist to operate a pharmacy and compound, dispense or sell a drug in a pharmacy should be left intact to protect the public interest;

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

“We request that the laws requiring the physical presence of a pharmacist to operate a pharmacy and compound, dispense or sell any drug in a pharmacy be left intact; specifically, clauses 146(1)(a) and (b) and 149(1)(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act be left intact and unchanged, and legislation should not be introduced which undermines the protections and service offered by physically present pharmacists.”

I agree with this and I affix my signature and give it to Joseph to be delivered.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Dave Levac: As I introduce this petition to the Legislative Assembly, please allow me the grace of introducing Mr. Bob Brown and his guide dog Boon, and Mr. Marc Proulx and his guide dog Felix, from my riding, who have come to watch the proceedings today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas First Nations, Ontario, Canada and the world have a responsibility for the perpetual care and maintenance of our land and resources; and

“Whereas First Nations, Ontario, Canada and the world must work co-operatively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from power generation; and

“Whereas demand for clean electricity continues to grow; and

“Whereas our electricity demands are mostly reliant on fossil fuels, nuclear energy and hydroelectric (water), and all three will remain a part of the mix as we transition to renewable forms of electricity such as wind, solar, biomass and geothermal; and

“Whereas natural gas has the lowest greenhouse gas emissions of all the fossil fuels; and

“Whereas duly appointed leaders within the Haudenosaunee Six Nations confederacy, the Six Nations elected band council, the province of Ontario and the Ontario Power Authority support, in principle, the Eagles Nest power plant power generation facility; and

“Whereas the proponents, Guswhenta Developments, have completed a Six Nations territory community-wide survey and received majority community support; and

“Whereas the Eagles Nest power plant establishes a template to explore further partnership opportunities toward the completion of new transmission lines and the

restoration of existing lines within the Haldimand tract; and

“Whereas these initiatives and partnerships will provide an opportunity for the community of Six Nations to become energy self-sufficient over a 20-year period; and

“Whereas this power plant will assist in replacing the power from the soon-to-be-decommissioned Nanticoke coal-fired plant; and

“Whereas this native and non-native partnership will benefit the Six Nations, Brant and Ontario economies and will help to restore and enhance the goodwill and co-operation between these political entities;

“Therefore, be it resolved and understood that we, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to issue a directive in respect to the Eagles Nest power plant power generation facility and the historic partnership this project represents.”

I sign this petition and hand it over to Ajoy, who is our page.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Toby Barrett: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It contains signatures gathered by the Grand River branch, United Empire Loyalists.

“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 also affix my signature to this petition.

1400

TUITION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have thousands of names here on these petitions. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government cancelled the tuition fee freeze after only two years and approved fee increases of up to 36% over the next four years; and

“Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by more than four times the rate of inflation over the past 15 years; and

“Whereas a majority of Ontarians oppose tuition fee increases and support greater public funding for colleges and universities; and

“Whereas improvements to student financial assistance are undermined by fee increases; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s recent increase to student loan limits is set to push student debt to approximately \$28,000 for a four-year program; and

“Whereas per-student investment in Ontario still lags significantly behind the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to stop tuition fee hikes and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“—reduce tuition fees to 2004 levels for all students in Ontario and implement an immediate tuition fee freeze;

“—increase public funding for post-secondary education to promote access and quality;

“—expand access to financial aid in Ontario, especially for part-time students; and

“—double the number of upfront, need-based grants for Ontario students.”

I sign this petition.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition on Bill 149.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas protecting and preserving” Ontario’s cemeteries is a shared responsibility “... and a foundation of civilized society; and

“Whereas failure to safeguard one of our last remaining authentic original heritage resources, Ontario’s inactive cemeteries, would be disastrous for the continuity of the historical record and our collective culture in this province;

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

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

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

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I have many petitions—hundreds—from Emsdale, Huntsville, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst, to do with the new McGuinty sales tax.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

“Whereas the new 13% ... sales tax will be applied to products” and services “not previously subject to provincial sales tax such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services; and

“Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by” Mr. McGuinty’s new “sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

"That the McGuinty government should remove" the new "... sales tax from its 2009-10 budget."

I support this petition.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mike Colle: This petition is from unemployed workers seeking fairness.

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

"Whereas over 75% of Ontario's unemployed"—especially workers in St Catharines—"are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa's unfair eligibility rules; and

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

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

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

I'm in solidarity with the unemployed workers of Ontario and their seeking of justice, and I affix my name to the petition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O'Toole: I have a petition from the constituents of the riding of Durham that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take" all "the necessary actions to fund our hospitals equally and fairly. And furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan of the Central East Local Health Integration Network address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete

range of services appropriate for the growing community of Clarington."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and to present it to one of the pages, Brittany.

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax ... that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families."

I support this petition. I'm pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Stephen.

BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from students at the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre in my riding.

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre....

"Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area" and is located right on the subway, making it very handy; and

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

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

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

I support the students and staff at Bathurst Heights and I affix my name to the petition.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: A friend of mine, Fran Moreau, presented a couple of thousand of these to me

the other day. It's called Save Our Outpatient Services. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network has mandated that the Huronia District Hospital balance their budget and the interim CEO has decided to remove outpatient services from the Penetanguishene site: diagnostic testing, laboratory, ultrasound, the diabetes program, dietitian counselling, nurse practitioner and physiotherapy services; and

"Whereas the diabetes program and dietitian counselling have been shown to make a financial saving to Penetanguishene General Hospital by reducing the number of hospital admissions and complications. The number of Ontarians with diabetes has increased over the last 10 years and is projected to increase from 900,000 to 1.2 million by 2010; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has promised \$741 million over four years to manage, treat and prevent diabetes, and the closing of outpatient services does not appear to be a responsible solution to balance the budget on one hand and spend many unnecessary dollars in the community on the other hand; and

"Whereas the diabetes program and dietitian counselling are housed in the wellness centre at the Penetanguishene site, which also includes the nurse practitioner who provides medical services to many orphan patients. These departments will no longer be. Will these orphan patients be abandoned even more?

"Whereas the diagnostic testing and physiotherapy services will not be available in Penetanguishene and this will put a financial burden on many citizens to travel to Midland on a weekly basis for many who have no personal transportation, at a cost of \$16 to \$19;

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

"To ensure that diagnostic testing, ultrasound, the diabetes program, dietitian counselling, nurse practitioner and physiotherapy and health and wellness services on the Penetanguishene site remain."

I'm pleased to sign that and pass it to Joseph to present to the table.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have hundreds of petitions here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas foreign workers are subject to illegal fees....

"Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect" these workers....

"Whereas a great number of foreign ... caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis ... with limited protection;

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

I support this petition and affix my name to it, along with thousands of others.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIP ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ORDRE DES MÉTIERS DE L'ONTARIO ET L'APPRENTISSAGE

Mr. Milloy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 183, An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades / Projet de loi 183, Loi visant à réviser et à moderniser le droit relatif à la formation en apprentissage et aux qualifications professionnelles et à créer l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate.

Hon. John Milloy: It's a pleasure for me this afternoon to lead off the debate on Bill 183. At the outset, I wish to indicate to the House that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill. I want to take a second now to thank my parliamentary assistant for all the help that he's offered me in my role as minister and certainly thank him in advance for his help in terms of shepherding this bill through the system. We certainly thank him for his interest in post-secondary education, as well as the training side of things and the apprenticeship side.

The bill we have in front of us today at its core establishes the Ontario College of Trades. And by "college" we're not referring to the concept of a community college; rather, we're talking about a regulatory body similar in nature to the College of Nurses, the College of Early Childhood Educators, the Law Society of Upper Canada—the idea of a self-regulatory body which would give the skilled trades here in Ontario an opportunity to take control of their future, as it were.

I think all of us recognize the increasing importance that is played by the skilled trades here in the province of Ontario. I want to take a second to share some statistics with those who are gathered here today. The trades make up nearly 10% of Ontario's workforce, with close to half a million active, certified journeypersons in Ontario. Ontario's apprenticeship system, the system which leads one to the skilled trades, is the largest in the country. We have 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today in Ontario, in more than 150 apprenticeable trades.

The trades are diverse. They cover four sectors: construction, service, industrial, and motive power or automotive repair. Apprentices, as we all know, receive on-the-job training, as well as classroom training in a variety of training centres that include 64 community colleges.

Close to 11,500 apprentices received certificates of qualification each year for the last five years.

I think that gives a bit of a context to the members here in the chamber of how important the skilled trades are.

I also think we have to recognize that during this time of economic upheaval the skilled trades are playing an increasingly valuable role. All of us are aware of the stimulus packages that have been brought forward by our government as well as the federal government, and of the literally hundreds of thousands of jobs that are being created, many of them in the construction area, one of the most high-profile skilled trades.

Madam Speaker, as I'm sure you're aware, we're looking at an investment, announced in our budget, of \$32.5 billion in infrastructure. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the fact that last week I myself as well as my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, along with our federal counterparts, spoke about 49 post-secondary education infrastructure projects across the province of Ontario—about a \$1.5-billion investment. I could go on and talk about the Green Energy Act, 50,000 jobs being created over the next three years, many again in the construction and skilled trades area.

What this means for the province of Ontario is that we need to make sure that we have more and more people going into the skilled trades in all areas but most particularly in construction. We've put it in this context. We need to make sure that these young people are receiving the proper training and that they're completing their apprenticeships.

Yet at the same time, as well as having this increasing demand, we have some demographic projections which tell a different story. More and more individuals in the skilled trades are reaching retirement age, so you have this perfect storm of an increasing demand on skilled trades and, at the same time, increasing rates of retirement.

So we have our job to do. We have to reach out and make sure that we can get young people into all areas of skilled trades and ensure that they complete their apprenticeships and receive the proper training, to ensure Ontario's prosperity.

That's the context of the challenges that are here before us, and I'm very proud to say that as a government, we've taken these challenges very seriously.

Since we took office in 2003, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of apprenticeships here in Ontario. We have about 50,000 more apprentices today than we did when we took office. We've increased the rate of registration in our first term by 25% and set the target of increasing it by a further 25% in the mandate that has come forward. How have we done that? We've done that through a variety of policies, programs and initiatives. I'll just offer a few to the House.

We have our co-op diploma apprenticeship program, which combines a college diploma program and apprenticeship training, leading to a certificate of qualification. This offers a unique apprenticeship training experience for young people.

We have the Ontario youth apprenticeship program or OYAP, as it's known, a school-to-work transition program offered through Ontario secondary schools. It allows grades 11 and 12 students to earn co-operative education credits through work placements in skilled trades.

Our pre-apprenticeship training program helps potential apprentices develop their skills and trade readiness, to help them find work as apprentices. There's no cost to participants, who include high school graduates, early school leavers, unemployed youth and adults, aboriginal peoples and newcomers to Canada.

I'll also mention the women in skilled trades program, which offers women up to a year of in-class and on-the-job training.

Interjection: That's a very good program.

Hon. John Milloy: A very excellent program.

Following graduation, women are qualified to work in skilled trades and to enter apprenticeships.

Through incentives, we're making it easier for employers to hire apprentices, and we're enhancing these incentives to recognize the challenges they face during these difficult economic times.

Our 2009 budget, as members are aware, included funding to make the apprenticeship training tax credit the most generous in Canada. We've increased rates by 10%, and we'll double the annual maximum tax credit, bringing it to \$10,000. We will extend the ATTC, as it's known, for a year so that it can be applied to salaries and wages paid during the first 48 months of an apprenticeship program, and we're making the ATTC a permanent tax incentive.

That's a quick outline of the challenges that are facing our province in terms of recruiting more individuals to skilled trades, and some of the excellent work that I think our government has done going back to 2003.

We're here today because we believe it's time to build on this excellence and move to the next step by establishing a college of trades. I said at the outset that such a body would be a self-regulatory agency or body that would allow, in a sense, the skilled trades to govern themselves.

But just to give the Legislature a little bit of an understanding of some of the more specific things such a college would do, I'll go through a quick list of some of the categories that it would be involved with.

The first and the most important, I think, would be to promote careers in the trades and attract more people to them. This is especially important for young people so that as they're finishing high school, they see going into the skilled trades and becoming an apprentice as a real opportunity for them.

We also have to promote careers amongst under-represented groups. Unfortunately, when you look at the skilled trades, you do not see a large number of women going into many of the areas of skilled trades. You see under-representation when it comes to aboriginal peoples and people with disabilities. We have to make sure that we reach out to these groups, promote the skilled trades and allow them to complete their training.

The college would also help make it easier for internationally trained workers to get certified and find work in the trades in Ontario. We often have debates and discussion here in the Legislature about the famous doctor driving a taxicab, but we also have to make sure that if a new Canadian comes to Canada with equally valuable skills in the skilled trades, we can help remove any obstacles so that they can get the accreditation they need.

The college would set training and certification standards to serve the skilled trades sector and the public interest—again, making sure that individuals are receiving the proper training not just as apprentices but also, once they've completed their training, that they can continue to upgrade it.

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It would conduct research to help make sure Ontario has the right workers for the future. Again, here is an area I don't get particularly defensive about when the opposition or critics say we don't know enough of what is going on in our apprenticeship system. I agree, and that's why part of the mandate of a body such as the college would be to look at the apprenticeship system and do the type of in-depth research we need to make proper policy decisions.

It would give the skilled trades sector ownership of critical decisions on issues and—some of these are brought up in the House on a regular basis—compulsory certification and apprenticeship ratios, again, giving the skilled trades some ownership of these issues and allowing them to come forward with a process to deal with these fairly.

I just want to take a minute and perhaps outline to members the history of this idea of a college of trades, and then perhaps finish with a bit more detail about what the legislation in front of them contains.

Members may remember that my predecessor as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, who is now the Attorney General, was confronted with a challenge within the skilled trades sector, and that involved the issue of compulsory certification. Members may be aware that of the 150 or so trades that exist in the province of Ontario—I think it's about 153—21 are compulsory. In other words, and I'll pick one that's very high profile, you cannot practise as an electrician unless you have actually completed the apprenticeship training program, passed the licence and received the requisite certification. It is a compulsory trade. We have 21 of those where you have to demonstrate the fact that you have completed all the licensing and all the accreditation in order to practise. The question is, should that be expanded?

A number of groups have come forward and said, "Our particular trade is so important that we believe the only way someone should be practising it is if they've gone through the system." Right now, it's what is called voluntary, which means that although people can pursue training, they can also go and hang a shingle out and call themselves a person who can perform that particular task.

The problem in the province of Ontario is that we have absolutely no process to deal with those applications. If a particular trade comes forward and says, "We wish to be seen as compulsory," there is no process for us to take a look at safety implications or economic implications and come to a conclusion.

So my predecessor, now the Attorney General, as I said, asked Mr. Tim Armstrong, the former head of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, to take a look at the whole question of compulsory certification and how the province of Ontario might come up with a process to deal with it. Mr. Armstrong conducted extensive consultations, and in the course of these consultations and discussions with ministry officials and with me, came to the conclusion that to hive off compulsory certification as one issue really didn't make a lot of sense, and that the apprenticeship system and the skilled trades training system we have in Ontario—there were a number of very different yet connected issues out there that were challenging the sector, and what would be much better would be to create this college and give the college the authority, the resources and the wherewithal to deal not only with issues of compulsory certification but with a number of issues I spoke about a few minutes ago, in terms of promotion, in terms of research and in terms of training standards etc.

Mr. Armstrong came forward with a very detailed report; I recommend it to members who are interested in it. He spoke about what a college might look like: It should have a board of governors with a balanced membership; a certification role that, together with the college name, would enhance trade status and prestige; capacity to deal with the needs of the sector; the ability to establish expert panels to consider decisions on compulsory certification as well as ratios; and a role for the college in enforcement and complaints.

We accepted Mr. Armstrong's recommendations in his report—very general in nature. We then proceeded to ask Kevin Whitaker, the current chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, to take a closer look at Mr. Armstrong's recommendations, go out and undertake detailed consultation with all members of the sector and come up with a proposal for a college. Mr. Whitaker undertook those recommendations—I want to thank him as well as Mr. Armstrong on the record for their very hard work and also for their thoughtfulness—and came back with a report, much of which is reflected in the legislation that is here before you.

The principle behind the college is very much about giving the skilled trades ownership, in a sense, of many of the policy questions and finding solutions to many of the challenges that come before them. But it's also to create a level playing field. I think anyone in this Legislature who has dealt with skilled trades knows that there are different perspectives that come forward, and anyone who has sat through question period and heard my critics raising various issues knows that there are different perspectives and views on many issues. What we want to do through the college is create a body which will allow

this discussion to go on, which will allow the college to adopt basic principles that are accepted by anyone so that they can look at many of these very challenging questions and complicated questions and come to the right decisions.

I just wanted to take a minute and perhaps walk members through some of the highlights of the legislation that's before them and provide a little bit of technical background as we kick off the debate today.

The proposed legislation would retain important elements but replace the existing Apprenticeship and Certification Act and the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act, standardizing governance for the sector. As I say, the important elements, the basic elements, of these would be retained, but we'd try to standardize governance.

Under the bill that's in front of us, the college of trades would have a duty to serve and protect the public interest in carrying out its objectives and functions. The college's membership, if this legislation were to pass, would include certified journeymen and persons who employ them or who sponsor or employ apprentices. The college's balanced approach to governance would consider the needs of employers, employees, apprentices and other partners. It would ensure balanced representation, including from employers and employees. It would include representatives from the industrial, service, construction and motive power sectors—all four of the skilled trades—and include non-affiliated members representing the public to bring an outside perspective to the college.

The proposed governance structure includes a board of governors, four divisional boards reflecting these four sectors, and individual trade boards for each of the skilled trades. This recognizes that some issues affect all trades while others are particular to, and may arise in only, one of the four divisions. Appointees to the college, if the legislation passes and it is established, may have particular stakeholder constituency backgrounds and would be selected based on that expertise. However, their first duty would always be to represent the public interest.

Nevertheless I think, as is normal in any decision-making process, that differences of opinion will certainly arise. So the governance structure that's outlined in the bill before us has provisions to prevent deadlock on decisions. College appointees would reflect the diversity in Ontario's society and the college's membership. They would reflect different workplace realities across the trades and appropriate proportions of unionized and non-unionized employers and employees, small and large businesses, rural and urban settings. College appointments would be made with attention to groups that have been historically underrepresented in the trades. I mentioned some of them earlier: francophones, aboriginal Ontarians, women, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

The college of trades would also provide an open, systematic and transparent process to deal with critical

issues affecting the trades sector, including compulsory certification and apprenticeship ratios. We know that in some cases it can be difficult to achieve consensus on these important issues. Certainly, Mr. Armstrong's research noted that sometimes there's a difficulty resolving them within the current decision-making framework, and we've heard questions raised here in the Legislature about apprenticeship ratios on many occasions. I have admitted to this Legislature that the current process is not always ideal.

We went out and talked to stakeholders—Mr. Whitaker did—and stakeholders were almost unanimous in the view that neutral, objective and impartial adjudication processes were the appropriate and fair way to decide and resolve ratio disputes as well as applications for compulsory certification. Through this legislation we propose that Ontario, like other jurisdictions across Canada, implement a separate process to deal with these decisions. The college would be able to refer applications for compulsory certification or ratio reviews to three-person review panels from a roster of adjudicators who have proven their impartiality and neutrality. This process would use clear guidelines and principles for the consideration and disposition of these applications, and would draw on empirical research where necessary in coming to its decisions.

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We believe this model of decision-making would address all of the significant procedural concerns and criticisms stakeholders have had with the current system. Not only would the college set standards for its membership, it would have the ability to hold accountable to those standards. Like other regulatory professional colleges, the college would have the capacity to investigate complaints and render judgments in response to these complaints. However, I want to stress that this would not replace the role that government currently plays performing a variety of enforcement functions through the ministries of transportation, labour, and training, colleges and universities, as well as the inspections and enforcement secretariat, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the Electrical Safety Authority and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. All of those would continue in their enforcement role, and obviously the college would play a complementary and important role.

So that is a very quick overview of the context within which we're bringing forth this legislation, some of the background to its history, how we came to where we are today and a little bit of a more technical overview of what's here in the bill. As I said at the beginning, at the end of the day we always have to remember that at its core what this college of trades is about is increasing the importance of trades in our province, ensuring that young people, especially individuals from groups that aren't overly represented in the trades, see trades as a very valuable and honourable profession, and that we can have a college that allows them to address many of the concerns in the sector themselves.

With that, I look forward to continued debate and discussion on Bill 183. And as I indicated at the outset,

I'll be sharing the remainder of my time with my parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Richmond Hill.

Mr. Reza Moridi: At the outset, I would like to thank Minister John Milloy for his keen interest and leadership in the development of this bill; this very major, significant bill. I thank the minister for that.

I'm pleased to elaborate on Minister Milloy's remarks on the proposed Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009. As you know, if passed the act would establish the Ontario College of Trades, a regulatory college that would help modernize the province's apprenticeship and skilled trades system. It would raise the status of the skilled trades, putting them on a similar footing with teachers, doctors and nurses, all of whom have their own professional regulatory colleges. The legislation would retain important elements but replace the existing Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998, and the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act, standardizing governance for the skilled trades sector. This would make it easier for workers, apprentices and employers alike to navigate the system, a tremendous challenge given its scope and scale. By promoting careers in skilled trades, the college would help ensure that Ontario has the skilled workforce it needs for the future—a vital concern for Ontarians.

We have heard from Minister Milloy about how we need to encourage workers to train to master the technological changes occurring in the economy, and to provide greater skilled trades training opportunities for young people, because Ontario needs more skilled workers now and in the future.

A recent Manpower Canada survey of 1,909 employers showed they are having difficulties filling jobs in the skilled trades in spite of the economic downturn. The college would help address this by making the trades attractive career destinations, by adding value and prestige to certification and by attracting groups not traditionally working in the trades or not currently participating in the workforce to their full potential.

Not only would the college help with recruitment, it would give the sector the lead in deciding how apprentices should be trained, to ensure workers are prepared to meet the needs of the new economy. This would help us make sure training standards can adapt to rapidly changing industries and labour markets. We need the skilled trades sector, through the college, to lead us in this process.

Research on governance models from other jurisdictions shows that each strives to ensure that their governance is industry-driven. This was true of regulatory colleges for professions and also for the trades governance models that we examined. After all, who knows the business of our skilled trades better than industry? The college would allow industry to exercise leadership for the trades, within a framework that balances interests and puts the public interest first, where it belongs.

The college of trades would have a duty to serve and protect the public interest in carrying out its duties. Its

membership would include both certified journeypersons and persons who employ them or who sponsor or employ apprentices.

The college's balanced approach to governance considers the needs of employers, employees, apprentices and other partners. The proposed governance structure is based on a review of models from other provinces in Canada and other countries, as well as other college models in Ontario. As Minister Milloy noted, appointments would be balanced, reflecting different workplace realities across the trades, the appropriate proportions of unionized and non-unionized employers and employees, small and large businesses, rural and urban settings. Appointments would be made with attention to groups that have been historically under-represented in the trades, targeting francophones, aboriginal Ontarians, women, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

The college of trades would provide an open, systematic and transparent process to deal with critical issues affecting the sector, including compulsory certification and apprenticeship ratios. Stakeholders were almost unanimous in the view that neutral, objective and impartial adjudication processes were the appropriate and fair way to decide and resolve compulsory/restricted applications and ratio disputes.

The college would be able to refer applications for compulsory/restricted status and ratio reviews to review panels made up of three people from a roster of adjudicators who have proven their impartiality and neutrality. These adjudicative review panels would determine appropriate journeyperson-to-apprentice ratios and classifications of trades as compulsory or voluntary. Review panels would use clear guidelines in making these decisions. They would also be able to draw on empirical research, where necessary, in executing their duties. We believe this model of decision-making would address all of the significant procedural concerns and criticisms stakeholders have with the current system.

Not only would the college set standards for its membership, it would have the ability to hold it accountable to those standards. Like other professional regulatory colleges, the college would have the capacity to investigate complaints and render judgments in response to those complaints.

The proposed college of trades represents a logical next step in our government's agenda for the apprenticeship and skilled trades system.

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But the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities would continue to play a significant role in apprenticeship and the skilled trades. Stakeholders have agreed that the government should retain some of its current responsibilities so as to participate in and manage the broader public interest in apprenticeship and skilled trades without necessarily interfering with an industry leadership exercise through the college.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities would retain functions supporting the apprenticeship system, the precertification and training phase, the registra-

tion of apprentice and employee training agreements, school scheduling, the administration of exams and the funding and recognition of training providers.

The ministry would also retain the ability to approve and fund training providers. It is appropriate that, as a funder, government would continue to exercise responsibility over the way and the manner in which training funds are disbursed.

The ministry would also retain responsibility for the creation, alteration or abolition of specific trades. Through this redistribution of responsibilities, the college of trades and the government would be able to collaborate on how best to achieve mutually agreed upon policy objectives. Each would have its own role in a modernized system, with industry playing a major, significant role.

Our government has taken, and will continue to take, significant steps to ensure that Ontario has the skilled workers it needs for the future. We have done this through initiatives to help apprentices, employers and training providers. Our record on apprenticeship is a strong one, and I want to remind you of some of our successes.

We have made a significant contribution to improving training facilities. We have created a number of programs to encourage participation in apprenticeships, and we are pleased that the ministry exceeded its apprenticeship target of 28,000 new apprenticeship registrations last year.

We are making it easier for employers to hire apprentices through incentives, and we are enhancing these incentives, the apprenticeship training tax credit, for instance, to recognize the challenges they face during difficult economic times.

This government has shown its commitment to investing in apprenticeship and the skilled trades and to helping it weather the economic downturn, but we recognize there is more to be done both by our government and by the proposed college of trades.

We need to conduct research to better determine the workers Ontario needs in the future and learn more about the complex factors influencing apprenticeship completion rates.

On completion rates, I don't want to leave the impression that our government has been idle. On the contrary, we acknowledge there is work to be done on completions and have taken steps to address this—moving forward on research to better understand the issues and to set meaningful performance targets and working proactively with apprentices and training providers to improve support for completion.

We look forward to making more progress on completions in the future and collaborating with the college on other challenges, should the legislation pass.

In short, we need to continue to provide Ontario employers, apprentices and skilled tradespeople—its training providers and its employers—with the tools they need to succeed. By giving industry a greater role in recruitment, governance, certification and apprenticeship

training, we can build on the significant role the skilled trades already play in Ontario's prosperity.

By establishing the college of trades, we would take the successes we have achieved in apprenticeship and skills training one step further.

We would draw more Ontarians to the trades, making sure Ontario has an adequate supply of workers. And we would let industry lead us in making sure these workers have the skills we need for success.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to respond to the minister and parliamentary assistant in their introduction of this new Ontario College of Trades bill.

The current government has been in power since 2003. All I see, on my side, are the problems, particularly to do with access to apprenticeships. Yet here they have another new bill planning on establishing this college of trades that won't do anything like changing apprenticeship ratios until 2012.

All I hear about are problems. For example, I was up at the Shawanaga First Nation, north of Parry Sound, speaking with a councillor there about what his son was up to. He said his son wanted to be an electrician—this was a year and a half ago—and the problem was, his son couldn't find anyplace to get the apprenticeship experience. That's one example.

Just this week I received a resolution from municipalities in Parry Sound, from McDougall, from Parry Sound, from Seguin township, and in it, it says, "It has come to our attention that to obtain a second apprentice in a business in some trades, you may need at least three licensed journeypeople," and it goes on and on.

It's not rocket science. The government could change those apprenticeship ratios tomorrow. It's not doing that because of its cozy relationship with unions in this province. Those are the simple facts of the matter. We're seeing young people in this province suffer because of a relationship this government has that is very detrimental to both business and the young people who are trying to develop skills in this province. I'm sure that some of our speakers, when they get a chance to talk to this bill, will bring that up. All I see are the problems that are caused by the inactions of this government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaking from a trades history, I went through all these changes that the government and past governments have put forth.

I see problems down the road. The college of trades is a good idea. However, a few years ago, they split the trades. There were the construction trades and then there were the industrial trades. What they did in the industrial trades was start a program called multi-crafting, which gave you several disciplines, which I went through, which allowed me to be an industrial mechanic/welder/fitter/other: hydraulics.

Now they're telling me they want to go back to the individual trades. Now that all the steel plants are closing

and all the people in industrial settings are losing their jobs, these tradespeople are going to want to go into the construction trades or other things. Is their multi-crafting now not accessible? Is it not good enough for the construction trades because they want individual trades?

The construction trades have always remained: An electrician is an electrician, a welder is a welder, and so on and so on. They haven't multi-crafted. They've had their own identity since day one.

So what is a guy going to do who got his qualifications under the law from the government as an industrial mechanic/welder/fitter? When he goes into a construction trade, are they saying that now his qualifications aren't satisfactory for that trade in construction, even though the government has given him a certification number? So I'm not quite sure how this is going to work out.

When you form these colleges—the teachers complain about their dues to the college of teachers. The nurses complain about paying into the college of nurses. And sometimes they override their authority on how these individual groups feel.

So I think that this is going to require a lot of work, and I think that the government hasn't looked at a lot of this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'd like to thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities; the parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill; the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka; and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

In September 2008, when the government of Ontario announced its intent to promote the skilled trades and modernize the apprenticeship system by establishing a new college of trades, it was met with much positive anticipation throughout the education system that I was involved in at the time. It reinforced the efforts that were being made by educators across Ontario to show that the skilled trades are valued.

Ten years ago, the government of the day focused on a model of student success that said if you went to university, you were a success, and if you went to college, you were a success, but it ignored the skilled trades. As the education system implemented the plan, more and more students fell through the cracks, thinking that if they didn't go to university, then somehow they weren't being successful. Bill 183 is taking great steps toward re-establishing the great value we need to place on our skilled trades and those men and women who perform that service.

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I was at a conference in Halifax a couple of years ago, and they said at this conference that by the year 2017, Nova Scotia anticipates that their unemployment rate in the skilled trades will be about 1%. I met a teacher there who had recently quit as a teacher to become an electrician and found her salary went from about \$60,000 a year to \$150,000 a year. So it worked great for her, and the promotion of skilled trades there is great.

The arm's-length college of trades would promote careers in skilled trades while ensuring that Ontario's skilled trades system meets the growing needs of the economy, and it would put skilled trades on a similar footing with teachers, doctors and nurses, who also have their own professional colleges.

I believe this is the right step to take at this time, and I look forward to the discussion as it moves through this house.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I did listen to the bill—it's an important bill, given the state of the economy today—and I believe the member for Richmond Hill delivered the remarks that were given to him. I'm not sure he's really paying attention to how important this is for young people and skilled trades development. I can only say that from what I heard from the NDP member, Mr. Miller, talking about multi-crafting—I think it's a very important and insightful remark about trying to harmonize the trades and skill sets within trades.

This function of developing a brand new college is really a tax on workers. That's really what it amounts to at the end of the day. They are self-regulatory professions today. Now they're going to have to pay a fee, and the fee is being mandated by the government and is basically a tax. I'm suspicious, because I know the experience of the past, dealing with colleges. When they changed the college of teachers, which was done as a result of the Royal Commission on Learning, they had it dominated. The majority vote was by teaching unions.

I'm afraid that these craft-based colleges that exist today under the advisory committees will be going back to these vertical, non-integrated skilled trades groups that would be more divided. The college is going to try to find consensus, but the workers out there in the field, in the shop and on the floor with the tools are going to be paying an additional tax. They aren't really going to see any direct benefit, as I see it, except that they'll be getting this bill once or twice a month for \$200 or \$300 to belong to the college, which is going to make all the rules. So I'm very suspicious at this point.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member for Richmond Hill has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I wish to thank the members for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Durham, who made a contribution to this discussion.

This bill is about our young people. This bill is about tradespeople. This bill is about raising the profile and the appreciation of people who work in our industry, who are the backbone of our industry. The backbone of our economy is our workforce, and the major portion of our workforce is tradespeople, so we need to raise their profile. Society—the community—needs to recognize them in the same fashion as we appreciate doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, lawyers etc. This bill is about raising the profile of tradespeople, and about appreciating

their contribution to our economy. That is why we have brought this bill.

On the question of ratios, I come from a teaching and training background. My past 17 years of work partly related to training. I very well understand the meaning of the teacher-student relationship and also teacher-student ratios. On this very issue, our government has actually looked into this twice and modified ratios on two occasions. But I'm afraid that in past years, when our colleagues from the Conservative Party and the NDP were in office, they never touched the ratios. Under this bill, we are proposing that expert people—review panels, as they are called—sit down and review the appropriate number of ratios for that particular trade. So the provision is there, and the bill addresses those provisions as we go on.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: With Mr. Wilson not being available today, could I ask for unanimous consent of the House to defer his leadoff until another time?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the House? Yes. You've received that consent.

Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I appreciate being able to speak to this bill today: the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009. It's called An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades.

I'm very, very interested in this bill. I'm like Mr. Miller and a couple of others in the House—there are only a few of us in the Legislature who come from an apprenticeship background. I think any of us, of those who are here, like to advocate on behalf of apprenticeships, because I think there's a long history of maybe what we could call some mistakes that have been made, not just in any one party but a lot of parties, and in a lot of governments, over the history of apprenticeships here in the province.

First of all, I know that the government has been saying that this bill will raise the profile of apprenticeships. I'm just curious, and I truly have no idea how a college of apprenticeships is actually going to do that, because they really don't have the funding to do that. It's going to come off the backs of the people who are paying their fees. So right off the bat, I worry about that. I would have felt that raising the profile of apprenticeships and skills development would have been the responsibility of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. I know they've tried their best—and there have been a number of programs introduced by all the governments. Not just this government but other governments have tried to do that. The reality is—and I think a lot of people would agree with me in this House, and I'm quite sure that people in the general public would agree with me—that there has always been a stigma attached to being someone who works with their hands or someone who

works in the trades or works in a plant, as opposed to somebody who goes on to college or university.

My own personal thought is, instead of going in the direction of a college of trades and apprenticeships, I would far rather have seen—earlier today, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs talked about how proud the government was of creating their stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and I think we all agreed with that, because it's such an important message they sent. That's the direction I would have gone in. I advocate to my caucus members and I advocate to the public on this: I believe that a stand-alone ministry of apprenticeship and skills development covers a lot more than just apprenticeship. It covers all those people in our province who may fall through the cracks as a result of not being able to afford to go on to college or university, or people who have been in trouble with the law or maybe made some stupid mistakes in their lives and moved on. I would have thought that that would have been a better direction to move in. That's my opinion. In the meantime, the government is in charge. They're listening to their consultants and their studies and they're moving ahead with this Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act.

I'll be looking forward to the committee hearings on this. I would hope that this would be a really, really important piece of legislation that would generate a lot of interest from everything from chambers of commerce and construction associations and all the different unions that would be affected. You've got 150 trades that would be included under our apprenticeship programs. So you can imagine, from the hairdressing salons—all these sorts of groups that are included in the 150 trades would be out there making sure that they could have input and making sure we get this bill really, really right. I really look forward to that, and I hope I'll be able to actually sit on that committee and create some interest in some of the things.

One of the things I do want to say, though, is that when I say maybe we haven't done everything perfect, I'm not really sure what has happened in the history of our elementary school education. There are countries in the world that promote apprenticeships right from the early years of their elementary school. They look forward, the European countries that do that. By the time you get to secondary school, they move in that direction, and people sort of know that that's the direction they're going in. I can tell you for example in Germany to be any kind of an apprentice, any kind of a tradesperson, is a very, very special job. It's got the same treatment and the same honour, having a trade, as some of the high-profile professions that we have in our country, in Ontario today. We know that's not the same with tradespeople: We know that they simply do not have the respect that they deserve—what I think they deserve, anyhow.

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I think the fact that over the years we've closed a number of our shops in our secondary schools—I hear that complaint all the time from the general public, especially from parents who went to shops like automotive or

home economics, or they might have gone to wood-working classes. Now they're not even available—just in a few of the schools in the province. People tell me, “Why did we ever do that? Why are we not going in that direction and helping someone out with that?” So if the college of trades and apprenticeship had advice to give, I would hope that they would give advice on those types of things too. Maybe we do need so many shops in our high schools. Maybe there should be more done—and give direction to the Ministry of Education to do something with young people even in the very early ages of elementary school. That may be an opportunity.

There's a lot to talk about here in 20 minutes. I hope, if they have a job to do and they want to promote it, if they want to promote the fact that we need more apprenticeships and we need more skills development, that they would look at the fact that there's an opportunity out there by advising the Ministry of Training, the Ministry of Education and other ministries as well—the Ministry of Labour—of things that may be wrong, and that they would listen to it very carefully, if they do, in fact, want to raise the profile.

However, what we have done I think fairly well in the province of Ontario, since I went to a trade school—I went to trade school at Humber College and took plumbing and gas fitter licences there. I went to Georgian later on to take oil burner mechanic licences, and those are the certificates that I have. One of the things I think that's really important is the fact that the community colleges have filled a gap. I think there has been a strong improvement on that in Ontario and with things like women in skilled trades, with the Ontario youth apprenticeship programs and with the programs that we have currently running in the schools.

I want to put in a word, while I've got a second here, to say some fine things about Georgian College. It's in our backyard. I have two campuses in my riding, in Midland and Orillia. We also have a campus in—

Mr. Norm Miller: Bracebridge.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm getting heckled by my own member, here. We have a campus in Bracebridge; I wonder who the member would be. We have one in Owen Sound. I can tell you we're very, very proud of the team Brian Tamblyn has put together. He's the president and CEO of the college and the board, the team of people they've put together. In the Midland campus in particular, it is now called a skilled trades centre.

I'm quite proud of the fact that when I became an MPP in 1999—10 years ago; I think it's tomorrow, or on Wednesday—I can tell you that our community college campus in Midland was just two rooms in the back of a radio station; today we have a skilled trades centre, and it's been a very positive influence to all of the young tradespeople who can take the different programs at the Midland campus of Georgian College. So I did want to say a few things about that.

I think one of the things, as we're talking about this bill, will be raising the profile. I'm really concerned about, as we move forward, what the actual cost of it is.

I'm hearing all kinds of numbers being tossed around here. I'm not sure, but apparently, if you talk about retired tradespeople or retired people who have taken apprentices and those currently working, it's something around 600,000 people currently in the province of Ontario who would be eligible to pay into that.

First of all, the question would be, will it be mandatory? Will it be mandatory to pay for that? I can tell you right now, tradespeople work really hard and they respect the money that they have in a meaningful way. I can tell you that they just won't want to pay any sum of money because an invoice comes in the mail—or will the government actually provide some money for start-up for that as well? But I have no idea what that cost would be. If it's \$100 a person per year, if it's \$500 or \$50 or whatever it may be, I hope that money is—the one thing we want to see at the committee hearings is an explanation from the ministry staff of what they would expect those costs to be. I want to know right now—if this bill passes, I want to be able to pass on to all the tradespeople I have in my riding, apprentices, journeymen or retirees in all the different trades, something that would indicate that I know that, if we pass this bill, they're going to be expected to pay X number of dollars towards the cost of operating this particular college—whether it be mandatory or not. Then they're going to ask me, “Well, what's going to be the advantage of this college to me? I'm already a tradesperson. I've got a job. I'm working hard. I'm raising my family. I'm raising money for my kids to go on to post-secondary education. Why do I have to pay more?” So those are the kinds of concerns I've got.

The other thing that I really think is important is the makeup of the board. If you have a board—and I understand there are going to be 21 people on the board, as I read the legislation. A total of 16 of those will be from the different broad view of trades, and five from the general public, basically. But I know there are a lot of things we have to consider. I think I heard the parliamentary assistant and the minister both talk about aboriginals, visible minorities and the francophone community. But you know what? I think you've opened up a hornet's nest with the composition of this board.

I can tell you that things like all of the construction associations that we have—the Ontario construction association, or either small or large regional construction associations—may want to have a say, groups like the Ontario Electrical League that have had a strong lobby for the changes to be made to the ratios because they simply believe the ratio system we have is completely unfair.

You talked earlier about aboriginals and we talked about women in trades. Those are all areas that, I guess, if they have the money, they can put out fancy ads like the Second Career ads. However, why is it the job of the college to emphasize the profile? I think it's the job of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and that's why I go back to that ministry again and talk about my original proposal. I feel that if you have a stand-alone

ministry and talk about all the people who don't go on to college or universities, that's going to raise the profile, where a minister could visit a group of students in a grade 8 class or pay far more attention, he and his staff, and actually advocate on behalf of those people moving on in the future, and maybe find out what's happening around the world and advocating, as a ministry, the same way we would expect the Ministry of Tourism or any other ministry—the Ministry of Culture—these organizations that go out there and try to promote what they do and what's good about Ontario etc. I think there's an opportunity, so I'm putting in my two cents' worth here. I think that a stand-alone ministry of apprenticeship and skills development is still a very, very positive way to go.

I've only got seven minutes left here, and I'll try to wrap this up. However, one of the things that I found fairly interesting as I looked through this was the apprenticeship ratios, and I'm going back to that for a moment. There have been a couple of occasions here—I know when the former member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, Ms. Scott, was here, she tried to get the apprenticeship ratios changed to 1-to-1 on a resolution. The government, of course, turned it down. They said, “We're going to wait until our bill comes out on the college of trades and apprenticeship, and then that's when we'll deal with those kinds of things.” But what they do in this bill—that board isn't going to decide anything; they're going to go to what they call an expert panel. After they decide that they might change the ratios—they might consider changing the ratios—then they're going to go to this expert panel. We keep hearing “expert panel” on every piece of legislation this government brings forward, but that's who's going to make the determination.

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My question is, who's going to make up the expert panel? Will it be people who are biased towards having changes made at all? I think the minister and the government will have to answer a lot of questions when it comes to those types of changes, because I think it's so important that if organizations have a reasonable request of government to change the ratios, they are in fact allowed to do so in a very transparent manner, with proper reasons for why things are a certain way and why they're not and move in that direction.

I also want to say, as we discuss this bill, that when we talk about apprenticeship ratios, I believe that's a lot of what triggered this legislation today, because there were certain groups, most of them led by the large unions that simply—and I met some of the guys from the large unions out here in the hallways. They had their reasons.

Of course I met people from the Ontario Electrical League and associations like that who believe that the 3-1 ratio is simply completely unfair. It would be different if it was the same across the country, but it's not the same across the country.

Young people in the province of Ontario are discriminated against as far as apprenticeship ratios are concerned, because they are not treated the same as other

young people across our country. I think we mentioned that if it's okay in Moncton or it's okay in Vancouver or Edmonton, why do we have to be different here in the province of Ontario? The excuse that keeps coming back is that it's for safety, we're an unsafe society here, something like that. I'm not sure what the answer really is.

But I think that as we move through this legislation and we look at the future, one of the things that will be high profile from a number of the organizations that will approach the committee will be discussing apprenticeship ratios and what we would consider to be an unfair system as opposed to other provinces. Now, if the other provinces are somehow made—by federal legislation or whatever it may be—to change, then okay, that would put us on equal ground, but we all know that won't happen.

The reality is that we have a job to do here, and if this is going to go forward, we want to make sure that the bill is right and it's transparent and that all Ontario citizens are welcome to be on that board.

Now, the other thing I didn't hear mentioned was geography, the makeup of the board and how it's affected by the geography of the province. We want people from the north on the board. We want people from all over, all parts of the province of Ontario.

The bill gets fairly specific in some areas about the makeup of the board etc., but I don't see why we can't have those types of things like geographical, the makeup of the board as far as visible minorities, women etc. right in the legislation so that everyone would understand upfront, and who will actually choose these people in the long run.

If we have our first one or two choices as we move forward with the selection of the board, maybe it could be done by a committee of this Legislature, where you have input from three political parties and they have the opportunity. Maybe that's the type of thing we could do to make it even more transparent. So I look forward to those kinds of comments as well.

Finally, I just want to say to people—and I see there's a lot of young people in the audience today; they're probably wondering what they're all going to do with their careers—you know what? Don't be afraid to take up a trade. I know it's nice to go on to college and university, but if you have the opportunity to work in the trades, there's an amazing number of people.

I was working in the trades for 25 years before I came to Parliament 10 years ago. One of my favourite things to do in the city of Toronto today is to go to those construction sites and look down where they're digging the huge holes and excavating deep into the ground. They build parking lots down there. It's just an amazing thing, the quality of the tradespeople we have here in Ontario.

I should also point out there's kind of a bonding of people in the trades as well. No matter what the trade may be, I would say that it's a really good opportunity, and I would highly recommend that you look at that as a potential career as well.

Finally, I look forward to this legislation being, again, at the committee level. I think there are some wonderful

opportunities for improvement, but I do want to say in the end, I think that the government—in the minister's speech and the parliamentary assistant's speech—may be emphasizing a little too much on the profile that this legislation will raise to the trades. I think it's up to us here. I think the ministries have to do the job, they have to promote the trades, and it goes right back to all of the different levels of education, whether it be post-secondary or elementary, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, all the different ministries. They can do a better job than this college can.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to say a few words today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I will be speaking in approximately 12 minutes, and I will try to cover as much as I can, because there are a number of issues that need to be addressed.

There were two comments the member from Simcoe North made that I wanted to speak to. One is the value for money in terms of how much tradespeople are going to have to be paying to be members of the college of trades. If there is any guide in terms of historical precedence, the teachers started paying \$100 when they established the college of teachers, and they are now paying, I think, \$135 a year.

But I think the new college of trades and the government are going to have to explain what it is that they're getting out of that fee. I think the member from Simcoe North makes the point. I don't have any problem with people paying a fee for the college, except they'll have to be convinced that what they're getting is useful and/or efficacious in some way or another for their trade. They're going to have to persuade us as to why that is the case. We don't know how much they'll be paying just yet. I think the government members know, but they don't want to tell us. But that's okay; we'll find out soon enough.

The other issue I wanted to speak to briefly—and if I have time I'll speak to it when I have my hour, in about 10 minutes—is the whole issue of the ratio between journeypersons and apprentices. I know the Conservatives are very fond of this. That's one of the issues that they speak of frequently. But the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that one of the main challenges faced by young business in providing apprenticeship training, and the issue that the Conservatives bring to the table in terms of the real problem being the ratio, is number 4 on their list in terms of what other obstacles there are. I will speak to that later, but I wanted to touch on it, to the member of Simcoe North, in the brief two minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Richmond Hill.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I wish to thank members from Simcoe North and Trinity–Spadina, particularly the member from Simcoe North, who brought his own experience as a former tradesperson to this House.

This bill is really about modernizing the apprenticeship system and the legislation in Ontario. As you know very well, now we have two bills, two acts, basically. One is the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998, and the other one is the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act. These are two acts which are governing apprenticeship in this province. One of them is governing part of the trades, the other one is governing the other parts, and there are even some contradictions among them.

For example, in one act the minimum entry qualification is grade 10; in the other act the minimum entry qualification is grade 12. So we want to modernize the act and the legislation on this very important matter for our economy, for our young people. That is the real intent of this act.

On the question of governance, as the member from Simcoe North mentioned, the board of governors of this college is going to be composed of 21 people. Five of them will be lay people, lay persons, and of the remaining 16 people, half of them are going to be drawn from the workers and the other half from the employers. So this is going to be a balanced board of governors, and the members who are going to represent the board are going to come from various industries, as we will have four industry sectors: construction, industry, service and motive power. So these industry groups, both from the employer side and employee side, are going to be represented in the board of governors, and they may come from various geographic parts of the province—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Nepean–Carleton.

1520

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm very pleased to join the debate today and congratulate my colleague Garfield Dunlop for the work that he has done in promoting the idea that we in this chamber need to seriously address the ratios in our apprenticeships across this province.

The one thing the member asked me to do before all these young ladies and young men leave is to ask them to consider a job in the trades if they're not bound for university immediately or at all.

It's very important work that we're confronted with, regardless of where we live across this great province, whether you're in Simcoe county or in Carleton county.

Of course, there are a few members here from Ottawa, and we're very proud of our Algonquin College, which will have its trades school.

There's no question that we need to be focusing on the trades. Improving the apprenticeship ratios is, of course, a primary concern.

I want to congratulate the Ontario Electrical League for the great work they have been doing in bringing this issue to this chamber for as long as I have been elected and, of course, probably long before I was, and they will continue to speak for the folks they represent long after many of us here have left.

There is no doubt that we have concerns with this legislation. I think my colleague aptly pointed out that we

are concerned with the composition of the board. Our critic, Jim Wilson, a former minister of the crown himself, was concerned about this bill, and he said, "The driving force behind this legislation comes from members of the Working Families Coalition, who are intimate friends of this government and who have worked with the Liberals to carefully craft rules and programs to exclude anyone who is not in their club."

The onus is now on the McGuinty Liberals to prove to us that that is not the case with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina for his infinite wisdom; the member for Simcoe North, as a fellow tradesman; and the member for Richmond Hill for his scholastic background.

I stand here and I listen to this. I am in favour of a college to oversee the trades, because it's long overdue. It has been a horror story out there for many years, where non-union, union, vice versa—people who weren't skilled and certified in their trades were working on buildings and there were problems. There were fires, there were structural problems. We need a body to oversee that. I don't have a problem with that.

What I have a problem with is, what are you going to do, as I mentioned before, with the people who were in an industrial setting, which was separate from a construction setting under its mandate? You're now going to take the tradesmen from the industrial section and put them into the construction section, or vice versa, because they can't get jobs in their fields and they're going to go there. Are you going to grandfather their skilled multi-trades, or are you going to say that their initial trade was okay but the ones they had gathered over the years, which were certified by the government, are not good enough now? In some of the reading here, I'm seeing that they're feeling they may be weak in their successive trades rather than their original trade because they hadn't been exposed to as much training in those other trades, but they still are guaranteed under the law and certified to work in those trades.

What they did under multi-crafting a few years ago—the companies pushed that so they could send a group of four guys out. Instead of sending four carpenters, they could send a welder, a rigger, an ironworker and a carpenter, and they could get the best bang for their buck because the guy in that discipline would lead that party in that particular trade when they were doing a certain job. So they could all function and help in other trades, and they picked up a lot.

What is this body going to do about those things? Are they going to grandfather all the information those people have gained over the years?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank the parliamentary assistant from Richmond Hill and my colleagues from Nepean–Carleton, Trinity–Spadina and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for their comments today.

The final thing I wanted to bring to this bill is that I'm interested in hearing, during the debate, about the whole world of inspections. We've got these colleges of engineers; we've got colleges of doctors, physicians and surgeons; we've got colleges of nurses and teachers. They all have this body that oversees and helps with their particular careers. But the tradespeople, particularly in the construction and manufacturing trades, are required on a day-to-day basis to be working under inspections of building construction or engineering construction, those types of things. I'm curious when there will be more trust given to the trades. For example, if you're doing an electrical job, you're taking on a contract for electrical, you have to go and get an inspection. Someone from the Electrical Safety Authority comes and inspects it, and they carry on and do their work. So there's almost like a lack of trust. Here's a professional tradesperson, able to do his job, out there doing his job, but he has to have an inspection. Other areas don't; for example, nurses, teachers and doctors. I'm curious where the government will go with that when those kinds of questions come up. Will the college of apprenticeships be able to manoeuvre so they will make it easier for job sites, so that we may not need as many inspections when there should be a trust factor with these very highly skilled tradespeople? That's just something I want to throw out there because I think it's important to look at these sorts of things as we move forward with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, that has been introduced by this government. I'm going to refute as best as I can some of the comments made by the member from Richmond Hill. I'll quote him, because the member from Richmond Hill said, "Our record on apprenticeship is impressive." It's actually not impressive at all, and I want to speak to that. The member from Richmond Hill also said, "We have made a serious commitment to investing in this field." I just don't see it, and I'll speak to that. He also said, on the issue of completion rates, that they have not been idle, but they have, and I will speak to that. He also said, "We will draw more Ontarians to the trades." I don't think they've done a good job of that in the past, so I'm not quite sure how they're going to do that, except it's possible that the college of trades may succeed where the government failed. But I'm not persuaded.

I welcome the citizens of Ontario to this program, to this political forum. We're on live, it's 3:25 and it's Monday. We welcome you because this, as with so many other issues, is so important. I'm sure there a lot of people, tradespeople, watching this program right at this moment. Hopefully they're working, but if they're not, they're probably interested in watching this program, because they want ideas, suggestions as to how they can get back into the employment sector.

I want to start first of all by talking about what the member from Simcoe North said about why the trades

are important, and they are. I wish I had a trade other than having been a teacher in the past and being a politician. I wish I had a trade where I could actually use my hands in some skilful way. I always wanted to be a carpenter: fine work, not rough. Fine-work carpentry, versus rough carpentry. This is not a criticism of those who do rough carpentry, but rather what I would have liked to be. I have to tell you that the trades ought not to be for those who are dropping out and ought not to be for those who simply are not making it academically in the school system, but that's what it turns out to be all of the time, including the stereotypes around some racial and linguistic communities. I always make fun of the fact that when the Italians came in the late 1950s and early 1960s, so many young Italians were streamed into the trades. I call it streaming. It's not just me calling it streaming but many calling it streaming. It's been studied in terms of class issues. Those who were not born into professional classes and into a moneyed class were streamed nicely into vocational schools on the basis that we were good with their hands. People say that. If you speak to some of the Italians who went through the high school system, who were driven, streamed into the vocational schools, they were told by guidance teachers that they might want to pursue a trade because they were good with their hands.

1530

You can see why so many of us became averse to the whole issue of trades and why so many of our fathers and mothers wanted us to go into academics versus the trades? It wasn't seen well to be going into the trades by the very people who were streaming into them. In fact, the very people who were in the trades didn't want their children to be in the trades. I'm not saying it was good that mothers and fathers wanted us to go into different fields, and I'm not saying it was good for guidance counsellors to stream us into the trades rather than into academics. I thought it was terrible.

Does it still go on? I suspect it does, but they use much better euphemisms today. Nobody is going to say, "You're good with your hands." As a whole ethnic community, nobody would say that. Teachers are better trained today than they were in the past. In the past they would have said it and it would have simply been accepted; you know how it was. Everybody would have said, "Yeah, they're good with their hands." Mercifully, they don't do that anymore, thank the Lord.

So I had an allergy toward the trades when I was a school trustee. I fought streaming because I felt that everyone has the ability to go where they want if given adequate resources and supports in the educational system. The point is that if you don't give them the support, you quite naturally separate people into streams. So the wealthy go into academics, by and large, even if they're not very smart; the kids of the professional classes automatically go into the academic class, because they're given certain privileges by the mere nature of where they come from; and the others are streamed into the vocational schools.

In Toronto we almost eliminated the vocational schools. It started with Portuguese-Canadian parents discovering that when their kids went into vocational schools, they probably would never end up in university. That's why you went to vocational schools; it meant you had a couple of years of high school life and then you dropped out. The majority of them would not likely go to community colleges either, or would end up in a college but never a university. When they discovered that going to vocational school didn't lead to university, they were angry as hell. In their mobilization against it, they eventually closed down some of the vocational schools.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm sure it's okay to say that. I'm sure, unless you think otherwise.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Actually it's not. I would ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They were angry as heck, I guess. I withdraw the "hell" part.

They were angry, and justifiably so. Because of their anger and the mobilization of the entire Portuguese community, they helped to close down Bickford and Brockton. Was it good? Well, for the parents it was. It might not have been a good thing to have done, had we changed Bickford and Brockton in terms of what we could have done. But to use them as high school grounds for a whole Portuguese community and black kids who ended up largely in Bickford and Brockton, it was the wrong thing to do. So I fought it. I fought streaming for that very reason when I was a school trustee.

Do we need a rethink on this? Absolutely. I believe the trades ought to be promoted, and should be promoted by everyone. They should be promoted by governments, by the trades and by business. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that governments should be promoting the trades. I say, why don't they promote the trades as well? Why is it left to me and to government members and to the government in particular, which I endorse, to promote the trades? Why can't we all be doing this together, as opposed to simply government, as if it automatically has the only obligation to promote the trades? It shouldn't be, but it is, and I can tell you that governments have done a poor job of promoting the trades. This is one of the criticisms of this government and of previous ones to boot. But the Liberals have done absolutely nothing in this regard—absolutely nothing.

Will the college of trades change that? I quite frankly don't know. I really don't. The government would be very happy to say, "The college of trades will do it," and simply absolve themselves from the responsibility to do so, but the college of trades will not have the money to be able to promote them. I know they will—and to the extent that they can, they will—but governments should help out in terms of promoting the trades.

How are they not promoting the trades by their actions, in addition to what I said? Well, they virtually eliminated industrial arts, the Liberals have. I mean, the Tories began their work, but the Liberals completed it, literally completed it.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, they started, and you helped to complete, the decimation of those programs.

Mr. Dave Levac: They're coming back.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, they're not coming back.

Interjection: Yes, they are.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No. Home economics, tech—

Mr. Dave Levac: Industrial arts.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —industrial arts, I said. Home economics; tech and home economics, different terms that have been used over the ages. They have literally disappeared from our elementary system.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Liberals will have a couple of minutes, if not 20. You will have 20 minutes to tell me how you've done that. Will you call Mike and tell him Dave Levac wants to speak to this bill? He needs 20 minutes to help me out.

I am assuring you citizens that the Liberals have not given any funding whatsoever to keep an interest in this field, both for young men and women. This isn't a program just for men. It's a program that belongs to women and men, and this isn't just a program for the poor and for those who don't do well; it's for everyone. Wouldn't it be nice if lawyers could work with their hands and do some carpentry and electrical work? Most of them can't. I can't, and I know most academics, most professionals can't. Wouldn't it be nice if we said to all of our student body, "You should all be learning how to do a bit of electrical, plumbing, carpentry"? It would be great for us all. We would be, in my mind, better human beings. But we don't promote it.

How does it help to rid ourselves of these programs that give a little incentive to the students to get to know some of these programs in the elementary grades? Once you Liberals have eliminated, virtually decimated, all these programs from our elementary school curriculum, how do we give incentives to students to know—how do they learn, how do they begin to think there is something more than just reading and writing, that we could actually do a couple of things with our hands and enjoy it?

I am saying to the government that they have failed us utterly in so many aspects of what they are doing. I look forward to the Liberals correcting me, to tell me what they've done and what they're doing, because I've got to tell you, when they close Timothy Eaton—the Toronto Board of Education is closing Timothy Eaton, a state-of-the-art high school in the technical area of things. This is where you want to be able to say, "Send the kids there." This is where the government, through Kathleen Wynne, the minister, should say, "We're not closing that school down. We're going to give all the support to the Toronto board to make sure it stays." State-of-the-art technology, and it's going to close because the enrolment is only about 23%, 26% of capacity. How do you shut down a high school like that? And not a word from Kathleen Wynne, the minister, or any other Liberal member that I'm aware of; not a word.

Do you understand? I raise these issues as a way of saying that the Liberals have no commitment to this issue—none. Timothy Eaton—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've got 20 minutes, some of you. Use it up. Go talk to Mike Colle, the whip, and tell him you want to speak, because you've got a lot to say on this, right?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Don't speak just for 10, speak for 20 and speak to these issues that I'm addressing here, because I want to hear from you, and if you only take 10, ask some other member to speak to some of the issues I'm raising. You want to defend yourselves; if you don't defend yourself and you allow me to criticize you, it's not good for you. You know that. So address some of the issues that I have raised and tell me how the government is going to say to the Toronto board, "We're going to save Timothy Eaton because we believe in the trades, we believe in keeping it open and we believe that once you spend the millions of dollars to put it there, we want to keep it open. We're going to promote it and make sure that kids and students end up there."

1540

Stand up and speak a little bit about some of these things. Don't just shy away. Don't just be told by the whip and the House leader, "No; we're not going to say very much. Keep it low-key, and talk about the college; it's really great," and blah, blah, blah; speak about the real issues. Speak about what you're doing that actually promotes the trades, so that once the college is set up, you've got a base from which to work.

I am saying that what the member from Richmond Hill speaks of in terms of our record on apprenticeship as being impressive is totally, totally wrong. It's just blah, blah, blah that the government members use to be able to inflate themselves without deserving it. I have to tell you, it enrages me a little bit because when it's disconnected from reality, then I say to myself: "They're making it up; they're manufacturing something that isn't real." And if you're manufacturing something that isn't real, it ticks me off, you understand. I suspect—"ticked me off" is okay, right?—that the citizens of Ontario would be ticked off too if they knew.

Let me tell you a little bit about what the Auditor General says about some of these inflated remarks made by the member from Richmond Hill—nothing against the member; he's a nice man. That's not the issue. The issue is not whether he's nice or not; the issue is the language that has been given to him by the ministry to articulate, to make it appear like they're actually doing something—and they're not. The Auditor General says many things. I have to—for the pleasure of the citizens—put this on the record. I will summarize the points and then one by one give a little meat to it, and then I will have a few other things to say.

The main audit point—and I've got to say I really appreciate the auditor, and the previous one and the current one; they do an amazing job. They really do. We

need to have them because they unearth so much that is good, not just for the opposition but for the government members too, if they actually did what he said. If they actually did what the auditor said, they should be happy as well, but because the Auditor General presents a report in a way that criticizes the government, they feel they have to skulk under the carpet. The reason why they skulk under the carpet is because they never act on the recommendations made by the auditor. If they did, they would be proud to say, "By the way, on number one issue and number two and number three, we've done the following." They hardly ever do. They always do something just before we go to committee when we are actually dealing with these issues. Have you ever noticed? That's what I am noticing. Every time we deal with these issues that the Auditor General has dealt with, all of a sudden, lo and behold, God bless, the ministry comes up with recommendations to actually respond to it. Then they make it appear as if somehow they are leading on that particular issue as opposed to being told by the Auditor General, "You didn't do this; you didn't do that." So they make it appear like they actually did it themselves. It's a very neat little trick, but anyway.

The auditor says, in terms of the main points, that on apprenticeship training, the ministry increased apprenticeship opportunities and registration but was less successful in ensuring that apprentices complete the training. You remember: The member from Richmond Hill says, "We have not been idle." The Auditor General says they've been idle for quite some time. Expenditures increased 25% since 2002. The number of registered apprentices more than doubled to 109,000, but the ministry lacked "information on completion and employment rates and on the reasons why a high percentage of apprentices fail to complete the training"—and, by the way, fewer than half completed the training—"and become certified." So I'll speak to that in a little while.

Another highlight: Staff say that too much emphasis is on registration over certification. You understand what that means? It means that the government is busy saying, "Oh my God, we have thousands of people registering," as a way of inflating the number of people who register, but only half of them complete the program. So you always get from the government all the high numbers about how many people register, and they never talk about completion. Have they been idle? Yes, siree.

Lack of "strategies to increase registrations in high-demand skilled trades." I like this one, and I'm going to get to this very shortly: Most registration increase "has been in the expanding services sector, including call-centre and customer service trades."

You remember, Madam Speaker, when I raised questions in this House about the call centres. They got \$5,000 a pop in Ottawa. I asked the minister, "What kind of training do you do?" Well, what kind of training do they get for \$5,000 a pop?

Interjection: "Hello."

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Pretty well: "Hello, how are you doing?" You call so-and-so, and presumably that's it,

and it's classified as a trade. That company got \$5,000 a pop for I think 1,000 workers. Six months later or a year later, they left: Sayonara with our money and sayonara with all that great training that they provided. The government is quite happy to say, "Oh, so many registrants in these new trades." Call centre: "Hello." It's really bizarre.

Lack of coordination in safety enforcement efforts. Some trades "restricted for workplace and public safety reasons" must be monitored and enforced to prevent "uncertified individuals from working in" those trades.

Those are some of the highlights, and then I'll have a little comment on the skills development and self-employment program. But I really want to get to the comments of the member for Richmond Hill on this, because he elaborates nicely and speaks to, "Our record on apprenticeship is really impressive."

The next page, audit observations and conclusions from the auditor:

"The apprenticeship program is governed by two acts. The Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act (1990) ... and the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998....

"Apprenticeship is a work-based training model that combines on-the-job training (approximately 90%) with classroom training (approximately 10%). The length of an apprenticeship can range from two to five years, during which time the apprentice must typically complete at least three in-school training sessions."

The training agreements or contracts are signed by apprentices and employers "and filed with the ministry" before registration. A journey person is someone who has "completed all the requirements and acquired a certificate of qualification or certificate of apprenticeship (or both)" for the training. The ministry has "100 training consultants ... in 26 field offices" providing "services such as registering apprentices and consulting with the training providers and ... employers." There are about 34,600 employers.

Understand that there are 100 training consultants in 26 field offices that provide "services such as registering apprentices and consulting with the training providers and ... employers." How can they do that? How can 100 consultants do this work involving 35,000 employers all over 26 field offices across Ontario? Remember, Ontario is two times bigger than Italy. It's a pretty big place. A hundred consultants—it's totally inadequate, and that's what we've had for a long, long time.

Developments in the apprenticeship program since the auditor's last audit: Since 2002, when the Tories were in power, "ministry expenditures ... have increased ... from \$81 million to \$101 million." It's a 25% increase. "As of June 2008, the number of active trades has increased ... from 136 ... to 153" trades—which is a 12% increase—"and the number of registered apprentices has more than doubled ... to 109,000. The government" plans "to increase annual registrations ... to 32,500 by 2011." That's a 25% increase. "The ministry has ... revised" many "training standards, curricula, and examinations" as recommended by the auditor.

You see how the registrants increase yearly? Not completed very much, but increase yearly? A hundred consultants to go and provide services to help out: not adequate.

1550

We've been increasing these trades, and the worry that we have is that we used to have a whole trade, where you trained in one field, and it was a very complete trade; what they're doing now is fragmenting the existing trades, so instead of having one full trade, they break it up into two, three or four pieces. They're fragmenting the trades. What they're doing, in my view, is de-skilling the trades, and it's a serious worry. These trades increase, but they are increasing through further fragmentation of the trades. I'm worried about what they're doing in that regard, and I know the trades are worried about that as well, but nobody seems to know what they're doing because nobody gets into the details of these issues except the unions that are actively involved in these particular areas, particularly where they're certified.

Tracking completion rates: The ministry needs "information on apprenticeship completion and employment rates in relation to labour market demand," says the auditor. It agreed to implement outcome-based measures by 2004 and report after this. "To date the Ministry has publicly reported only on the number of annual apprenticeship registrations," which is what I said earlier. So when the government members say, "We've done a lot on this area since 2002"—very little; I would almost say nada, but you can't completely say that, because they must have done something. But since 2002, very little data on completion rates, but they're very happy to report how many have registered.

Here's another fact: The Centre for the Study of Living Standards reported in 2005 that Ontario had the third-lowest apprenticeship program completion rate—32%—among the 10 provinces. The construction and food and service trades sectors had the lowest completion rates in Canada. Industrial electrician, ironworker, industrial mechanic and mobile crane operator had the highest completion rates. But do you see, in the other areas, how low we are on the completion rates? And we've done so little to deal with that.

The ministry last surveyed why apprentices and journeypersons left apprenticeship—oh, I've got another stat, sorry, before I get to that. Stats Canada studies, which use a different method of determining completion rates, released in 2007 and 2008 completion rates for apprentices in New Brunswick, Alberta and Ontario who registered in 1992 and 1993, and found that "completion rates were 59% in Alberta, 50% in Ontario, and 47% in New Brunswick," and the construction trades had the lowest completion rates. We don't have a great record to speak of. We don't have a great record to be proud of.

The ministry last surveyed why apprentices and journeypersons left apprentice programs before completion in 1997, when the Tories were in. The three most common reasons were "limited employment opportunities or employment instability, dislike of the work or trade

followed by finding another job, and unsuitable training." These were the five categories identified a long time ago.

"In 2005, the minister's action table on apprenticeship was formed," and the committee suggested strategies for improving completion rates, including the following:

—"ensuring that in-school training is relevant, current, and of appropriate duration;

—"ensuring that examinations are appropriate;

—"improving the tracking and monitoring of apprentices as they progress through their programs, and providing supports such as counselling...; and

—"implementing a program to help employers be good trainers and to improve the connections between workplace and in-school training content."

This recommendation was made in 2005, and we have little to show by way of what has happened since. So much for the stellar record of the government.

On-the-job training, with respect to monitoring program quality and compliance: The ministry still has not developed policies on monitoring in-school or workplace training consultants. The auditor recommended this be done in the 2002 audit, a while ago, seven years ago. Although consultants are required to monitor compliance with training agreements and regulations, consultants feel that their priority is "meeting the apprenticeship registration targets, and that there is too much emphasis on quantity and not quality." You understand? These are the consultants saying this, according to the auditor. They say that their priority is meeting the apprenticeship registration targets, suggesting to me in the language, member from Richmond Hill, that the target is not how many of the programs the students complete but rather how many register, because you, government, want to look good about how many are applying to get in. And it's not me saying it; it's the Auditor General, who has much more credibility than those of us whose job it is to be critical of the government.

Consultants are also concerned that the increase in caseloads has eliminated time to work with existing apprentices or employers. The number of consultants, the 100 of them, remember, has remained constant since the 2002 audit, while the caseloads have nearly doubled, averaging 900 to 1,000 apprentices per consultant. Consultants listed several implications, including lack of monitoring of employer training and their belief that apprentices lack sufficient contact with consultants necessary to motivate apprentices to complete programs. So I say this as a way of saying to the government that you've done a really poor job. As we move to the college of trades, I say to myself, will all this improve, and will the college of trades find success where the government has failed? I don't know. One can only hope and be optimistic, because what other choice do we have? The reason why the government promotes the college is because of their abject failure, on the hope that the college of trades will do what they didn't, couldn't and did not want to do. We'll see.

In-school training and support for exams: What does the auditor have to say? "The ministry funds 65 training

providers (24 colleges and 41 union- or employer-sponsored training centres) to deliver the in-school portion of the apprenticeship program.” Training consultants must “monitor the quality of classroom training relative to industry standards for each trade.” Remember, the consultants don’t have the time; they’re too busy meeting their targets on registration. There have been so many more that have come in registering, they don’t have the time to monitor the classroom training.

Over the past three fiscal years, the overall pass rate for in-school programs was approximately 90%. So the in-school program works well. But over the last five years, the pass rate on examinations for certification of qualification was approximately 50%. So something is wrong. They do well in their training, but when they write their exams they can’t do it. There is a problem there that has not been solved by the government over the many years that this has been identified as a problem. The minister’s action table on apprenticeship questioned whether the right things are being examined and whether the in-school programs are long enough to ensure success. Much material tested on the examination is based on training provided on the job.

Addressing skill shortages: The ministry has increased annual apprenticeship registrations by 64% since the 2002 audit. So they do well there. They promote that, and they’ve got targets, evidently. The ministry has added 20 new apprenticeship trades over the past five years, to bring the total to 153 in four sectors: construction, industrial, service, and motive power. “The largest increase in registrations has been in the service trades,” says the auditor, like the call centres. The results of expanding into new trades such as call centres have been mixed. And he says, in brackets, that many call centre trades apprentices quit during the first six months of employment. This expansion “has helped meet labour market needs in some areas, but has not addressed the skilled worker shortage” for plumbers, industrial and construction electricians, steamfitters and others.

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So I say to myself, what has the government done to make sure that we are training people for those trades that pay well, that are unionized, that we want, where there is a shortage and will be a future shortage in the next 10 years as some of the skilled tradespeople retire? What is the government doing about that? Très, très peu, je dis.

Hon. James J. Bradley: What does that mean?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You’ve got to put your earpiece in, Jim.

So what they’ve done is expand the service sector, like the call centres, where they pay little, and give a whole lot of money to employers who close shop and depart to another jurisdiction. That’s the extent of what this government is doing.

Did you know that of the highest 10 trades in terms of registrations, number 3 is hairstylists? I’m not knocking hairstylists, because I think we need them—although my hairstylist can’t do much with me, so a haircut will do

just fine. A whole lot of people need hairstyling, to be sure. We need them. But of the 10 highest trades in which people register, hairstyling is number 3. Yikes. There must be a demand, and that’s fine, but the government must promote those trades where we know by the studies that there is a shortage today and there’s going to be a shortage 10 years from now.

So as this economy recovers, will the college of trades solve what the government has not been able to do since they got elected in 2003? All I can say is, I hope so. But to date, their record is not stellar.

On the enforcement of legislation on restricted trades, the auditor noted that “21 trades in the construction, motive power, and service sectors” are “designated as restricted to certified tradespersons.... Restricted trades include such occupations as automotive technician and construction electrician....”

“In August 2007, the minister appointed Tim Armstrong”—a former deputy minister—“to conduct a review of expanding compulsory certification for trades.” His 2008 report said that “requirements for compulsory certification will not be fully effective unless there are comprehensive enforcement mechanisms, accompanied by meaningful sanctions, to deter widespread contravention....” On site visits “to motive power shops, training consultants have found ... unlicensed workers ... doing restricted work illegally.”

That is the record of the government. Will the college of trades solve a problem this government has not been able to deal with and has been unwilling to deal with for all these years? All I can say is, I hope so. If we left it to this government, we’d have the same problems that were identified by the auditor in 2002, that he identified again in 2007 and that he will do again in who knows how many years from now, except that the intervention of the establishment of the college of trades might settle this problem for the government, because they can now say, “Go to the college of trades,” I imagine.

There’s another little problemo, the apprenticeship training tax credit. The government introduced this tax credit in 2004 “to encourage employers to hire apprentices in certain skilled trades. An employer is eligible for a maximum tax credit of \$5,000 per year to a maximum of \$15,000 for the first 36 months....”

Remember me telling you—hello?—about the call centres? Five thousand apiece, to a maximum of \$15,000 for the first 36 months. Not bad, if you can get money just to be trained to answer the phone. “In the 2008 budget, the government extended the ATTC by four additional years to 2015.”

Most eligible trades—the final approval rests with the Ministry of Finance—“are in the motive power, construction and industrial sectors....”

“The ministry has not yet obtained any current information” from the Ministry of Finance “on the level of activity in each trade or trade sector.”

I mention this because when I questioned Mike Colle, who was then the minister, and his deputy—both new at the time; it wasn’t his fault and it wasn’t the

deputy's fault—they didn't have a clue. I said, "Do you have this information?" They said, "No, the Minister of Finance does." I said, "You're the minister. How come you don't have this information?" They said, "Well, it's the Minister of Finance who deals with that." I said, "Shouldn't you be asking for and collecting this information?" I asked them to get it, right? Of course, I never got anything. I'm not sure whether the then-minister got anything.

Then, interestingly enough, when we dealt with this auditor's report but a short couple of weeks ago, we had a new deputy with, yes, a new minister, and a new minister many years before these other two and a new deputy then—they all seem to be new. Every year or two, everybody is new and none of them has a handle on what to do with these trades. No wonder they have such a poor record in this particular ministry.

So I asked the same questions of the deputy minister: "Do you have this information? Are you connecting to this other ministry, as the Auditor General said?" As of a couple weeks ago when I asked this question, they didn't have any information from the Minister of Finance. So you've got two silos—the Minister of Finance and the Minister Colleges and Universities—not having a sense of what this entails because the information is with the Minister of Finance. It's pitiful, in my view. It really is. And I have to put it on record to reinforce what I said: "The ministry has not yet obtained current information" from the Ministry of Finance "on the level of activity in each trade or trade sector."

You would think that the Minister of Finance would send that information to Minister Milloy. I'm sure he wants it. And if Minister Milloy wants it, I say to myself, why isn't he asking? Why isn't it coming? You'd think it would be automatic, but nothing appears to be automatic. I've been doing this for a couple of years, and nobody seems to be doing anything in this regard. It's getting exhausting. It tires you out.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's very complicated.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It appears to be complicated, but I don't believe it is. I don't think it is.

Interjections: It's a failure to communicate.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We've got a failure here to communicate. This is indeed true.

I hope I have covered enough background to tell you that the record of this government is bad, poor—not stellar. They shouldn't use any of those words, based on what I said and what the Auditor General said. If you do so, you'll look bad, in my eyes at least, and in the eyes of all the citizens watching. It's in Hansard, so they will know. Whatever you say, versus what I said and what the auditor said, is on the record, so you've got to be a bit careful.

I want to refer a bit to the lack of what governments are doing and what the private sector is doing, because I promoted it through a motion in this Legislature. What Quebec has been doing in the whole area of training and apprentices has been a very positive development. Quebec has borrowed from Ireland—really France, to

begin with, although Ireland does more or less similar things. What Quebec has been doing for the last seven, eight, nine years is that they require of big employers, at least, and they did require it of small employers, that 1% of their payroll be devoted to training and apprenticeship programs.

I think it's an amazing thing, because what it says is, "We are all involved." The government plays a role and the corporations play a role, as indeed the unions play a role. These are the three bodies we ought to be strongly involving, which is what Ireland does, which is what France does, which is what Germany does. If we did that, we would have a stronger apprenticeship program.

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The Liberals don't know much about this so they can't say anything about it. I understand that. But this is what these other countries are doing. This is what Quebec is doing, and they're just around the corner from us. You could go by train; you don't have to—you could even call. You don't have to go far; you don't have to fly. You can go by train. You don't even have to go by car. You could speak to Monsieur Marc Lalonde, mon ami, because he's very close. They're close with Quebec.

So if Quebec can do this and employers are obliged to put some money into training—what a beautiful thing it was. When I introduced my motion, the Tories opposed it, which I understand, but so did the Liberals. Not one Liberal stood up to support my motion—not one; not even you, Mike. If you're an employer and you earn over \$1 million in terms of your earnings, 1% would be devoted to training. I thought to myself: "How could any left-leaning Liberal oppose that?" Time and time again, every left-leaning Liberal in this place—if they can be called such—opposed anything progressive such as what I proposed.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's better to make it a tax credit rather than a charge.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no. What my motion says is, rather than a tax credit, they have an obligation to train their workers too. That's the point of it. The point isn't just for government to give away money to call centres so the employer can get money and take off in a couple of years and have no skills left to make it portable, so you move from one to the other.

Mr. Paul Miller: They can answer a phone.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They can answer a phone, but it's not a portable skill—not a trade. It's not a trade. So I say to the Liberals: This isn't about giving them a tax credit, although there's a role for tax credits if you do it well. It's about the employer taking responsibility as well, saying, "We have a job to do as well," and not just leave it to the government to do it. Because every time there's a problem, they go to the government and say, "You should do this, you should do that." And every time they're broke, and the bankers and the insurance companies, whatever it is—the government should bail them out. Let's rent a banker; that's what we should do. Rent a banker these days. The corporations, when they're in trouble, run to the government, genuflecting, saying,

“We need you,” and as soon as we give them the money and they’re standing up again, they say, “We don’t need you anymore.” That’s what the corporate sector does when they’re healthy, and when they’re not healthy they beg and they come to the taxpayers through governments to say, “Give me some more.” So there’s a role for the business sector.

Let me tell you what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says, because I find it useful.

Is the Azorean event over? Is it over?

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Very good. I had to speak to this issue. What could I do, Madam Speaker?

Here’s what they say. They’ve done some consulting with their own members and they say, “What are the main challenges faced by your business in providing apprenticeship training?” This is business. The first one is, “Investment in training apprentices might be lost to other firms.” You understand that business is saying that for 57% of them, the biggest obstacle is that, “If I train them, they’ll be poached by somebody else”—57%. That’s sometimes a lot.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Of course, but that’s why they should all be training.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, it’s okay, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Could I ask the member to take his seat. If you could speak through the Speaker, I would appreciate it. Thank you, member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I was. I was looking at you in all my hour speech. All I do is look at you, except when I turn my head away.

So 57% say that their investment in training apprentices might be lost to other firms. So you’ve got to deal with the issue of poaching. What has this government done about this? Zero. In any word you can think of in different languages, it’s zero.

But I say this in relation to the Tories, who often speak about one of the other elements in this particular survey, and I’ll get to it. “Releasing apprentices for in-class training disrupts business.” It’s a reasonable point. If you release them for training, it disrupts business. I understand that. I still believe that it’s good for them in the long haul to train their own employees. If they can’t do it themselves, they should be sent somewhere else. Yes, it’s disruptive, but 34% say that that is one of the obstacles.

The other is, costs to supervise and train apprentices are too burdensome. I understand that, but if you don’t have the trained people, you’re going to pay down the line. If it’s too burdensome today, you can’t get your tradesperson tomorrow. You wait and see how burdensome the costs will be down the line. Twenty-seven per cent said that.

Twenty-four per cent say what the Tories always say—the Tories only have one issue, which is this one: Rules on journeyperson-apprentices ratios are too restrictive. If you listen to the Tories, the problem with

apprenticeship programs is that the ratio is just too high, and if we’d solve that, we’d solve all the issues around apprenticeships. I say this critically of the Tories, because they’re like a one-trick pony on some issues, and they’re a one-trick pony on this one. They say that there should be one journeyperson to one apprentice. The point is that in some cases, in some trades, it is 1 to 1; in some cases, it’s 2 to 1; in some, 3 to 1. These are the rules. In some cases, you need three to one to be able to supervise the different kinds of work that the tradesperson does, I argue, and I defend it. But to say that the ratio is the single biggest problem facing the trades, as to why we’re not getting more trades, is utterly, utterly wrong and it’s unfounded, and even the survey by business people tells you that that is wrong. I tell you that that’s fourth on their list—and I even disagree with that. Even though it’s number four, I disagree that that is the problem. That is not the problem, in my view. There are other solutions to the apprenticeship program.

Let me go to page 12 of their survey. What do they say here? Seventy-six per cent of them say, in relation to another survey question, “What key strategies should the Ontario government adopt to address the shortage of qualified tradespersons?”—the biggest one: Increase efforts to promote trades among youth. This is where I pointed out to the government members, including the parliamentary assistant today, that they have failed us in this regard. I have to tell you, in my view, the employers have failed us too, because I haven’t seen big employers, medium-sized employers, doing ads in the papers on a regular basis in the last 10, 15 years saying, “We want you. The trades are amazing. They’re well paid. Don’t worry, you’re going to be very happy in the trades, more so than some other professions. Join the ranks. It’s good for you.” I haven’t seen too much of that. When was the last time you saw government ads promoting the trades? I haven’t seen it.

The second one, in terms of what strategies the Ontario government should adopt to address the shortage of qualified tradespersons: Encourage apprentices to stay at the same firm upon training. Fifty-seven per cent said that. So the question to employers is, what are you doing about that to make sure that you keep your workers in your workplace? Are you promoting your work staff? Are you giving them the appropriate direction? Are you giving them the appropriate incentives? Are they well-paid enough to stay? Are you, as an employer, doing that? If you’re not doing that, you’re failing them as well; not just the government.

The third issue they say to address is the shortage of qualified tradespersons: Address barriers that make apprenticeship training costly. And it is costly. Fifty-three per cent say that’s the problem. I say, as I’ve said earlier, that it will be more costly if you don’t invest today, yes, you as a government, and yes, you as an employer.

The fourth is, create efficient ways to match apprentices and employers. That’s another issue they bring to the floor that I agree with.

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We look at what employers are saying, we look at what the Auditor General said, we look at what I said vis-à-vis what the government does, including, by the way, what they're not doing in the high school system, and that is, we've got co-op programs in our high school system, which I support, but unless you as a student find an employer, you're not going to be able to get into a co-op program. The burden is on the student to find a co-op program; it's not on the school system or the government. If we put a little more emphasis and responsibility on the guidance counsellors to help to direct a student to an employer, wouldn't that be better? What happens now is, if my uncle is a plumber, the only option I've got is to go to my uncle to be able to get a co-op program. It's limited to the people that the student knows in terms of what co-op program you get into.

Wouldn't it be lovely to be able to expand the options for students and tell them there's a world of opportunities that they can get into? But we don't do that. Guidance counsellors don't do that. We don't have enough counsellors to do that. The government doesn't think about how the high school system could be more helpful. And as a result you've got kids going to programs who may or may not like what they're doing, but that's the extent and the limit of what they can do, because it's based on who they know versus getting the high school to open up the field and allow students to get the richest experiences from a multitude of employers that could be possible to match the interest and the skills of that particular student.

So today, as we speak about the college of trades, do I hope that the college of trades will be able to do something that the government has not been able to do? I hope so; I really do. The government has created an incredible number of bodies. There is the appointments council, comprised of eight members and a chair, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It's in place to make appointments of all the members of the various elements of the college's governing structure, which include the board of governors, divisional boards and trade boards. It's responsible for appointing individuals who can be neutral and impartial to a roster of adjudicators. There's a whole lot of levels that we have created with this bill: the college board of governors, the divisional boards—which will be set up from the construction, motive power, industrial and service sectors. Advising the divisional board for each sector is a trade board made up of two employee reps and two employer reps from the sector, appointed by the appointments council. I don't want to read it all, but there are so many different committees that are set up and boards that are set up, all I can hope is that they're going to be useful, that they will be effective, that they will co-operate and that they will be able to do the job that we expect them to do, that the government has not done today.

I know that CUPE, in their submission on a proposed college of trades, doesn't support a college of trades. I know that they would prefer a system such as the one in Germany, the vocational education training, which

involves government heavily, which involves the trade union sector heavily and which involves employers heavily. That's the tripartite group of people that get together to solve all the questions of apprenticeship. I am a big supporter of the German system. I believe it works well. I don't know whether that is something that the government would ever consider. The problem is that the government has said the college of trades is the body that will solve our apprenticeship programs, and because of that, this is all that we can deal with. We are not open for other options. I would have been happy with other options, such as the one that CUPE proposes, not only the one from Ireland but of Germany as well. I would have been happy if the government had proposed even the Quebec proposal, which goes a little further than what this government is doing, but we have to deal with what the government gives us. We want to make it work.

As a result of what we have before us, we are going to be calling for hearings because we want to hear from all of the trades, including the additional ones the government has pulled together, the ones I probably don't agree with. They're 153 all together. We want to hear from as many people as possible. We want this board to work and we want to be able to get the best possible advice. So I look forward to the hearings, because I believe that if we haven't had all the advice that Whitaker has put together, we will be able to get it in the coming months and, as such, make it as effective as we possibly can.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: At the outset, I wish to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and Trinity–Spadina. I thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his appreciation of the need for this college. He said that he's in favour of the establishment of this college of trades.

The member from Trinity–Spadina mentioned a number of points. In one instance he said, "The government is manufacturing the numbers." This is absolutely baseless. We are not manufacturing numbers. The reality is, the facts are there to speak for themselves.

I'll just bring the attention of the House to these facts. There are now 700,000 journeypersons working in our industries and serving our economy, and 120,000 active apprentices are working in our province. We have actually doubled the number of apprentices since we first came into office in 2003; we have doubled, from 60,000 to 120,000. There are 66 training provider services in this province; 24 of them are community colleges and the remaining 44 are unions and others.

In terms of funding, in contrast to what the honourable member from Trinity–Spadina mentioned, this government pays lots of attention to education, to skills development, to training and so forth. The numbers speak for themselves. Our \$6.4-billion investment in the Reaching Higher plan is the highest investment in our post-secondary education in the past 40 years. At every university campus, every college campus you go to today, you see careers in operation. Our \$2-billion skills-to-jobs

action plan speaks for itself. This is for training. This is for apprentice people.

There are lots of numbers. I can go on and on; for example, \$1.2 million to our labour market agreement. The Ontario summer jobs program: \$90 million. Our Ontario youth apprenticeship program, which is a \$190-million investment—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from York–Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to comment on the comments we've heard from the member from Trinity–Spadina. But I just wanted to ask rhetorically, in terms of my concerns with regard to the college of trades—because when I think back on the kinds of things that the government has done in the past few years, they have taken steps which have not served the issue of increasing the number of people involved in the trades. Particularly I'm concerned about things like the apprenticeship ratios, where now, looking at the possibility of greater mobility in the country, you have people who could find those apprenticeship opportunities outside the province and then come back to the province or emigrate to the province, so to speak. So the question of apprenticeship ratios seems to me to be a huge stumbling block that needs to be addressed by the government.

Of course at the same time, this is the government, through Bill 144, that took away the right to a secret ballot in reinstating card certification. So there are some structural issues that I believe the government has, in its responsibility, neglected to be able to ensure that we do in fact have a vigorous, energetic and innovative trade sector within the province, with which, by the way, I'm entirely in agreement.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and make some comment on Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act. We're talking about a college of trades, and I'd like to just reverse that, trades in our college, just for a moment.

Members would know that in Windsor there is the St. Clair College—a rather large campus, actually—but few may know that there is a satellite campus in Chatham. Just on Friday, the federal member and myself announced some funding for that particular part of St. Clair College, the Chatham campus, some \$4.4 million shared equally; \$2.2 million between each level of government, federal and provincial. The focus was on a new technology and trade addition. So clearly both levels of government, federal and provincial, recognize the need for technology and trade.

This addition to St. Clair College will be some 18,000 square feet: a new facility, brand new. It is what they call flexible training, which will allow for technology and trades to be provided to their students on an ongoing basis with flexibility to ensure that they learn. Then after that, some of these folks naturally will want to seek jobs, and no doubt come under this new Bill 183, should it be

passed, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, which will provide for all of those students.

All of us here in this Legislature who speak particularly to high school students talk about various kinds of jobs. I'm sure that we all talk about the skilled trades. There's a great demand for it in Chatham–Kent–Essex and, I'm certain, throughout the southwest and other areas of Ontario. So I was pleased to put those comments forward on how we're working hard to promote that, certainly in Chatham–Kent–Essex.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments? The member for Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: To the member from—oh.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Sorry. The member for Brant.

Mr. Dave Levac: The reason I wanted to talk about this is that the member for Trinity–Spadina brought up some challenging comments about the elementary school, and hence, going on to secondary school, leading up to the need for the colleges. I want to comment quickly on it.

It's a patchwork right now, and that's the problem. I want to share with the member that it's not disappearing. It's not kind of, "Going, it's going, it's gone." That's not what's happening. We tried to reverse the trend because the funding was removed previously, and the capacity for those elementary schools to provide that hands-on activity for, as it was called in the old days, home ec, tech, industrial arts and family studies—the students were not exposed to it for quite a few years. Then, when the amalgamations of the boards took place, some of the boards that had the programs had to mix with some that didn't have the programs, and then they had some discussions and debates on whether or not they would extend it back into the boards that actually had to leave that provision.

So it's a patchwork at this time. Quite frankly, I like what the member is talking about in terms of exposure of the kids at an earlier age to that. There is some encouragement going on at the Ministry of Education level to actually continue to move down that road. I think we're going to see a turning around of the Queen Mary a little bit. Hopefully we'll get to have our students exposed to both home ec and tech, at the same time for all of our students. That would address some of the concerns he's talking about.

The second part of some of his discussion was based on whether or not this is a holistic approach, and whether or not the college will maintain or have the capacity to deliver on some of the issues that concerns are being raised about. With the Ontario College of Teachers, for example, he talked about the raise. I'm still a voluntary member and offer my dues. They went up about \$30 over the first installation. I think they originally started at \$90 and then moved up to \$100. Now they're up to about \$125 or \$130.

I think we're going to see the same kind of response, in that there are going to be some good things happening.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you, and now the member for Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: To the member for Brant, I just want to tell him that it isn't just patchwork, it's the disappearance of, and it isn't just me saying it; it's People For Ed saying it in their own studies. That is the reality that is being studied by groups like People for Ed, and I deplore it, as you do, and I think it's a shame.

To the member from Richmond Hill about my comment about their manufacturing and/or inflating certain numbers that are not as real as they claim, I get this information from the background that we were given: employment and training division, background material for hearings, the Auditor General's 2008 annual report, S.3.08. Those of you who are interested in getting hold of this report, call me if you want. That might be the easiest way to get it, unless you can do this on your own, and then you can determine for yourself what is real and/or manufactured. This way, you don't have to take my word or the word of the member from Richmond Hill. Then you'll be able to have the facts.

The point is this: The government has failed us on programs connected to apprenticeships. We desperately need good programs, now and in the future, and they've failed us. I am hoping that the college of trades—which has the following duties: review of compulsory trade applications, review of apprenticeship ratios, enforcement of apprenticeship standards and discipline—will be able to do a better job than the government has been able to do so far, and the hearings should help to tell us whether they're on the right track or whether there's more to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this legislation.

After quite an exciting one hour, I will try to do my best to reflect on this very important piece of legislation and offer some thoughts on Bill 183.

There are a few things that I do want to talk about in the course of my time, address the issues which my friend from Trinity–Spadina raised, but of course I'm not going to go into all the issues they raised, perhaps for the simple reason that I may not have as in-depth knowledge as he does. But I do want to bring a perspective on this legislation from the point of view of what is going on today in our economy.

Every single day, we see massive changes coming about—news just today with the creation of a new GM and that kind of intervention, the kind of engagement governments are being involved in now to make sure that the restructuring that is taking place is sustainable and creates jobs in the long term. We are going through a significant economic reorder—perhaps is what we can say. It is creating a new order as to how we do business, and it's going to have an impact not just today, but for at least a generation to come.

So when we are debating laws, when we are looking at things in this Legislature, I believe strongly that we need

to look from that perspective—we need to have our lenses on—not as to what was happening yesterday, but what's going to happen tomorrow. That very much is our role as legislators, to be forecasting for the future years to come and not get too tainted by what has happened in the past, because things have changed dramatically between yesterday and today, and they continue to change; they continue to evolve every single day. I really want to emphasize to all the members in this Legislature that when we're looking at this legislation or other bills, we keep that in mind as things are progressing.

One of the things we are seeing in today's economic order, and it seems to be a consensus around the world in terms of developed countries, developing economies and transition-economy countries, is that one of the things we need to restart this economy is through stimulus packages to invest in our infrastructure, and that's something we are seeing all across the board, both at national and sub-national levels of government. In fact, even at municipal levels of government we are watching that. Of course, the focus is on construction jobs, to make sure that bricks and mortar are being put in place, roads are being improved, bridges are being built, university buildings are being built. All that has a very important impact on skilled trades, the kind of thing we're talking about. All of a sudden we're putting a lot of dollars, a lot of real money in place to create jobs which will be significant in the area of trades.

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That's the underlying theme, the factor, in Bill 183: as we are bringing more people into trades, what kind of regulatory system we're creating to make sure that we maintain the safety of the workers, that we make sure there's a diversity of those workers, that we make sure that we bring in more young people to skilled trades, that we make sure that continuing work is being done to modernize skilled trades. All these things are extremely important and that is why the creation of a college, as proposed under Bill 183, is significant, because it will allow for the professionalization of skilled trades.

Why is it—and this is a point to ponder—that in our economy, in our society, the only professional regulatory bodies that exist are lawyers, doctors, engineers and chartered accountants? What is it about those professions that require a professional body or a self-regulatory body? What is special about that, because these people—and I belong to the Law Society of Upper Canada, so can I say that, because I had certain years of a university degree, somehow I have an extra feather in my cap and thus I should belong to a particular professional body? Why not skilled trades? Why not make sure that they have the same profile, that they have the same mechanisms of regulation present to say that this is a profession worthy of being part of, this is a profession where people should be joining in and making sure—because there are prescribed rules, there are mechanisms, there is self-governance around this particular profession.

I think for us to do that through this piece of legislation—by creating a college of trades, we are moving in

that direction and saying to our young people who may be considering their next career opportunities that being a tradesperson, getting the skills for a particular trade, is a good thing, is a noble thing to do in our society, and they have, as a professional, the same rights and privileges as any other profession may have. I think that's something we need to really consider.

About two weekends ago I had breakfast with two of my constituents, Bob Peters and Mary Peters. Bob and Mary own an auto garage, Bob Peter's Garage. Both of them are immigrants to Canada. Bob came in the late 1950s, I believe, he was telling me, and Mary came about 20 years ago to Canada. They worked very, very hard in building a very successful life. They've been living in Ottawa for some time. Their garage is located on Scott Street in my riding. We were having a conversation over breakfast at Donna's and we were talking about exactly this issue. Bob was talking about how not too many young people are interested in skilled trades and what we as a government need to do. He was talking about the kind of things we need to promote trades more in schools. We need to raise the profile of trades and make young people in particular take pride in becoming an auto mechanic, for instance, as Bob and his son are. They're running a successful business in Ottawa Centre.

To that conversation—I think this college is trying to do the same thing. One of the college's mandates is to promote the professions, to provide that sense of dignity, that this is good work. Even though you're working with your hands, that's good work. These are good-paying jobs; young people should consider becoming tradespeople. There is proper regulation to do that. That's a very important aspect of this legislation that we need to remember and keep in mind.

One of the great examples in Ottawa is the trades building that is being built at Algonquin College. Seventy million dollars has been invested—\$35 million from the provincial government and another \$35 million from the federal government—exactly for the reason that there is a demand in the economy and we need to provide the necessary training to make sure these tradespeople have the skill sets. The college will help in making sure it provides for that standard regulatory function, in terms of giving licences, certificates and apprenticeships, which are important for the viability of the profession.

Here's the point where I differ with the member from Trinity-Spadina—he was talking about call centre jobs, which kind of hit me. That's close to my heart, coming from Ottawa, because we had a lot of call centre jobs created at Dell. Those are real jobs that real people were involved in. These are jobs where the apprentice requires approximately 4,000 hours to do both in-school and on-the-job training, similar to, for example, automotive glass technicians, hoisting engineers, mobile and tower crane operators, roofers, chefs, construction craft workers, heavy equipment operators and automotive accessory technicians.

I don't think we should be saying, "This is a noteworthy trade, and that is not a noteworthy trade." Be-

cause somebody has chosen to be involved in the call centre trade, they deserve the same respect. That is a trade, and they should have all the resources available. We should not dismiss them: "Oh, it's simply a matter of picking up the phone and saying, 'Hi. Can I help you?'" If that is all it is, then we should feel comfortable letting those jobs go to India or some other part of the world. Of course not. We want those jobs to be maintained here, and we want to make sure Ontarians are properly trained for those jobs. Otherwise, we fall into the same trap as before, that somehow lawyers are better than auto mechanics.

Of course not. These are equal jobs, and they should have proper regulations and make sure these people are working in safe conditions and have available all the resources to do the job they're trained to do. That's why I'm supportive of this legislation. It creates a college, like other regulatory bodies, providing the necessary licensing and regulatory authorities, providing the tools to promote skilled trades among our young people, which is extremely important.

On that note, I urge members to support this legislation; I think it's a move in the right direction. Of course, we can always do more—we can criticize every single bill; that's our job. But I think we should also look at the important elements it will achieve. For me, the sort of quality of professions is a very important point, and that's why I'm very supportive of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

I just want to note here that apparently the clock has broken, so we're going to manually time the two minutes, the clerks have graciously offered. We will give you a 10-second warning, and then time.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I was actually just going to ask for unanimous consent for the member from Ottawa Centre to continue right up till 6 o'clock, but I suspect he's not willing to do that.

That said, it's a pleasure to join the debate. Of course, the member who has just spoken is a great friend of mine. Although he's from a different party, we sit on the same side of the House and live in the same city. He knows full well about the needs we have in Ottawa with our trade school at Algonquin College. Of course, I know he is a big supporter, as I am, of what Bob Gillett and the folks at Algonquin College in Nepean are doing to ensure that we have young men and young women right across Ontario trained to work in the trades.

The challenge, of course, as my party will point out from time to time, is that apprenticeship ratios in this province are not acceptable. We need to lower those apprenticeship ratios.

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Also, I just would like to point out that one of the concerns we have on this side of the House is the closeness that the McGuinty Liberal have with the Working Families Coalition and how that coalition may, from time to time, persuade the government toward policies that they deem acceptable, but not perhaps those who are

actually working as tradespeople across the province. That said, we have—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Five-second warning.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, thank you very much, Madam Chair. I look forward to continuing in debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from Ottawa Centre made a few comments about the call centres. I don't think you would have anybody say that they don't value the work that call centre individuals do.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: It's called annoying.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, that's a different problem. They may call you and you find it annoying, but that's a different problem. The fact that they do that work is a good thing. It's not a negative thing. What Marchese was talking about is something very different. Should they qualify—the call centres—for the kinds of dollars that the government gave out in the millions? Consider what they were trained for as a trade, because that's what the member from Ottawa Centre was saying, that this is a trade. Maybe the member from Ottawa Centre can explain to me what aspect of a call centre is a trade, and secondly, what the training consisted of that allows it to be called a trade? What of that training was the skill that was portable to another trade? What did they learn in that call centre training that was valuable that they couldn't get in any other form? Because it required the 4,000 hours of apprenticeship. I really am puzzled by the extent to which the member from Ottawa Centre—and I know he's from there because that's where the call centre was, and it's the same city the Premier is from. I know they need to defend it, but I am telling you I was heavily critical at the time, am still critical today and still argue there was nothing in it that should be called a trade.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: This bill which is before the House is about modernizing the apprenticeship business in this province, but before making more comments on that point, I want to just say that I'm so glad to hear that the honourable member for Trinity-Spadina modified his expression about the workers in call centres. For us on this side of the House and for the Liberal Party, the people who work in call centres are professionals and the job they do—I can't do their job. They are professionals in their job, we have great respect for them, and they are making enormous contributions to our economy and to our province.

I'm just going to quote from Patrick Dillon, who is the business manager and secretary-treasurer for the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council. He says, "Today's announcement marks the start of a new era for the skilled trades in Ontario. The college of trades will allow industry experts greater input over all aspects of skills training in this province. This is something that

the construction industry has been seeking for a long time."

I want to quote the Ontario Home Builders' Association, which said, "We think the apprenticeship system can better reflect the reality of our industry and recognize the opportunities we [the industry] create. If the college can support our work in attracting students to our industry, or assist a mature worker making a career change, then the college will have a positive impact on our industry, and help us deal with our skilled ... shortages." These are quotes from two sides of the work; one is industry and the other one is labour—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak about this. I do have some concerns about this. First of all, it's the portability of a lot of jobs. We create the college of trades to address certain aspects of trades that are out there. I said on the public accounts committee, which discussed this—we had some insight that this was coming forward and what would be discussed, and one of the concerns is the ability to take the courses locally. I can recall that a friend of mine was a carpenter, and he had to drive to Peterborough in order to take courses. As well, some of the auto mechanics had to go to Toronto in order to take their courses, when we had Durham College locally. It was very inconvenient at that time. During peak seasons when construction was on, these individuals were not working and bringing in income; they were in courses. That was some of the difficulty: to make sure that those courses reflect the needs of those workers who are out there.

Not only that, but some of the courses have not matured enough. For example I can recall, having worked in the auto sector when first coming out of school, that they were specialized. When a person went into auto mechanics, they took—transmission experts, for example, did nothing on any other aspects of the vehicles, but worked solely on transmissions, and yet there is nothing to reflect that specific trade that's identified as being a whole and complete mechanic or a transmission repair mechanic, or that sort of aspect.

Some of the specifics are necessary, and we need to make sure that the focus is on those needs in the local community that are identified, because quite frankly, that was the main reason that colleges were established in the first place. When they were first established and brought in, they were to recognize and identify the local needs and bring that independent ability at a local level to ensure that the service they were providing was eventually going to serve the communities that are out there. I certainly hope that this will reflect that in ensuring that the local needs, and the ability to supply flexibility on times as well as locations, are met.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Ottawa Centre has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It seems like the clock is working; otherwise, I'm sure we can call a skilled tradesperson to come and fix it who will benefit from this legislation.

I want to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton—she is a good friend—and the member from Trinity–Spadina, the member from Richmond Hill and the member from Oshawa for their comments.

Just a note to the member from Trinity–Spadina: I don't want to get into a debate about which skilled trade is worthy and which is not, and look into all those different factors he was talking about, because I don't think we should be in that business. I don't think we should be differentiating, because different people have different skill sets and they're appropriate for different types of trades, and we should not be making a general, broad statement that somehow one person who's doing a call centre job would not have any other skills because maybe that's what their skills are that they can rely on. I think that's a very, very important point.

The other point I wanted to raise is that the government is not just passing this legislation and saying, "That's it. This is what we'll do for the trades." In the 2009 budget, there's about \$700 million that has been allocated and passed by this legislation, which the members opposite did not vote for, for skills training, literacy training, apprenticeship programs etc. These are important investments. I mentioned Algonquin College and the kind of work that's going on in my riding at Carleton University. We just announced \$52.5 million for a new building where skilled tradespeople will be working. These investments are important. We are in a new economy. We need to make sure that our tradespeople are well qualified, well represented and that they have a means to regulate themselves so that we can continue to grow this economy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to have a few moments to speak on Bill 183, An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades. I think that's the really important thing to realize: What's the intent of the bill?

I want to start by making it perfectly clear that on this side of the House we have the highest regard for skills and trades, and skilled trades specifically. That being said, we could easily say—I think we'd find unanimity here—that these are the people, the tradespeople, who came to this country or this province, or our communities, and indeed built those communities. The infrastructure that we're all talking about all the time has been built by people often new to Canada who brought with them skill sets. Now we're renewing a lot of that infrastructure, but the very buildings we're in and the tradesmen and craftsmen who built this place, whether stonemasons or whatever, and the carvings done here—these are all crafts and trades and skills. We have the highest regard and resolve to make sure that these improvements strengthen and modernize these respected trades and the persons who perform them, from wherever they come from, as long as they bring them to Canada and to Ontario. It's very clear.

1700

As most members have said, in my riding of Durham, I'm very pleased, along with my colleague Mr. Ouellette, to work with Durham College and Don Lovisa, the board and the students there, and to celebrate with them the fact that at colleges, quite often they come away with skills and skill sets, many of them referred to as trades. That could include everything from a journalist to someone working in television arts, or someone working in media or in technology, animation etc. These are the emerging trades that I see. There's perhaps some lack of vision: We're looking backwards at envisioning the trades as opposed to looking forward and modernizing them, as the name of the bill implies.

I want to say that there's an important reference point that has been mentioned by a few of the speakers: What we're saying, as if we were speaking directly to our young students here today who are working as pages, is that the future and the skills of the future are going to be completely different than the skills of the past. They will build on the foundation of those skills, but, for instance, let's take a tool and die maker of many years ago. Today you'd have to be very comfortable with computers and numeric control devices and PLCs, programmable logic controllers. So the evolution of the trades themselves and the skill sets that are required—it's absolutely critical to be consulting with young people, the young people in our schools today, the young professors and teachers in our schools today, who are more attuned to the technology that they will end up working in.

I believe that a lot of that advanced manufacturing is indeed being taught at Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I want to mention, out of respect, not just the leadership there, Don Lovisa as well as Ronald Bordessa, the president—their job is to reach out and modernize their facilities. I'm very pleased to say that Mr. Ouellette and I were at the college and the university recently; indeed, we were there celebrating at a community event on Friday, and they were all so pleased with the recent announcements of a huge amount of money from the federal government, and there was some money by the provincial government as well. What is it focusing on? What they were focusing on was preparing the facilities to have the infrastructure, the equipment as well as devices, to train young tradespersons, or tradespersons of any age, really—second career opportunities being one of the things the government is talking about—and they are modernizing it to deal with energy.

Everyone in this House would agree and also understand that Durham region is the energy capital of Canada. That is a pretty broad statement, but we are about a third of the population of Canada, about 13 million-plus, and we generate 30%, 40% of the energy for Ontario, certainly the baseload with the nuclear plants for Ontario and the skilled people who work in that, and the new renewable energies, whether it's ground source, geothermal, solar, wind power—you name it; those courses and those trades, those new skills and development are

being taught at the university. It's the first nuclear engineering program in Canada. We're also going to have the most modern and advanced renewable energy platform, I believe, at the Durham College campus in Whitby.

I'm trying to link this bill and what it's actually doing to where the future is moving. The last reference point I really want to make, and I think it's important—not in a partisan way—is to look at the vision of the future that has been outlined in several recent textbook-type novels. One of them that is the most impressive to me is Friedman's book *The World is Flat*. Now, the very first chapter of his book outlines a glimpse of the future, and this is directed primarily at young people. What Friedman says in his book is, "What are the jobs of the future?"

In manufacturing, 400,000 jobs have been eliminated in the last two or three years, and I'm not sure they're going to come back. These are good-paying, skilled jobs in the assembly plants. I myself worked in those plants for 30 years. It provokes the question, "What are the jobs of the future?" The government has committed, I think, \$3 billion to the Second Career program. Much of it is federal money, which I fully agree with. I'm not sure if they have a clear vision.

If I go back to Friedman's book, what it says in the first chapter is, "What will be done here is what's actually done here." When you look at trades like radiology and the digital world, that's a skill. It's a profession. They're all kind of interrelated. Engineers are skilled, but some tradespeople are just as skilled in the actual development and working with tools. But here's the point. Some trades—architecture is a good example, where there are architectural technologists and architects—highly skilled, university educated, graduate school, maybe 12 years to become fully certified in the trade: Much of that stuff can be done in India. They put the concepts and the building code for the requirements of the lead project that they're going to build, and they send it to India. They have engineers. They have universities and colleges there—highly skilled, developed, integrated. They do all these drawings and technical stuff and send it back to us by satellite. The book is about globalization. There's nothing in this report that addresses how we move forward in a modern, competitive, efficient manner—nothing in here at all. Actually, it's looking backwards. Most of it is looking at how we can manage the electricians and the plumbers—history.

The best remarks I've heard in the discussion today were by the member from the NDP who spoke earlier today, Mr. Miller from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, a tradesman himself. I wrote his remark down. He said that when he was working at, I believe, Stelco or one of the steel companies, and he was a tradesperson, they had a program called multi-skilling or multi-craft. He posed the question to the minister who was here at the time was here. In multi-crafting, what he was saying is he had the basic skills and infrastructure of knowledge to become a proficient tool and die maker or whatever his trade was,

and by learning another skill set, he could become a welder.

Now, that's progressive. Progressivity is what I think is important. That means in certain working environments, like a steel plant, Mr. Miller was able to know the electrical codes and know the lockout procedures and other procedures of his craft, but at the same time he could over time, maybe another year or two of study and work and practice with the tools, become a welder and he'd be multi-skilled. That's the future.

For instance, if he was a tool and die maker trained without computers and the PLCs, he could take an additional course and become a tool and die maker and tool repairer, which would allow him or her to actually shut the machine down, lock it out, diagnose the problems through the computer, as well as fix the machine that did the press or the mould or the injection or whatever it did. That's progressivity. That's modernization. None of it's in here. They're looking backwards at trying to tell one trade working on their own what to do. That's not how it works anymore. They work as teams of professionals, really.

Now, there's a glimmer in this particular Bill 183 that I do support, and Mr. Miller said that as well. I presented this argument earlier and some people scoffed at it, but I'm presenting it this way. I'm suspicious that they're actually hiding the real potential outcome by calling it—I'm going to slow down a bit, Madam Speaker. To get these complex topics across you need to have more time—an hour, if I could get the indulgence, but here it is. The issue here is, quite honestly, when you're looking at skilled tradespeople and their mobility in the economy and at what this bill is doing, you're concerned.

1710

They've got the college. It's a good idea conceptually. A profession is defined, in any theoretical model, as a self-regulating body. Doctors are a profession. What does that mean? They're self-regulating. What does that mean? They're self-disciplining. Doctors don't go to court if they have a problem on the operating table or a needle makes your arm swell up or something. They're immune to the law. They're disciplined internally and professionally, the same as all professions. By definition, a profession is a self-regulating organization. That's the business 101 course.

Now, in that course I learned that nurses, dentists, doctors, accountants—I'm going to just give you a little example here; I'm going to diverge a bit. The governance of the college is fundamental to this whole bill: "Part XI establishes the appointments council which will be responsible for appointing the members of the board and other key bodies in the college's governance structure." I'm almost heartbroken. The idea is good to have an objective, qualified, independent special body, called a college, which determines whether or not disciplinary action is necessary. The problem is that there's an inherent conflict.

This is what they did to the college of teachers. You had these independent people. Stay-at-home moms, stay-

at-home pops, accountants, dentists—whoever—sat on the college of teachers. They reviewed intelligently, objectively and dispassionately a breach of something in the college code. They delivered it, consulted with experts to find out what they should do to resolve the issue: maybe more retraining, maybe a bit of an apology or something for some error made.

Here's the real issue why I can't support it the way it is, unless I get some clarity on it. The function of a union is to protect its members from discipline. So you have a college that is looking at administering the decisions of the college—the code of conduct, etc.—and you have a union that has a conflict. Now, if the college and the union are the same thing, let's call it what it is. I think there should be no political appointments to these colleges; I think they should be picked. Here's the issue: If it's unionized or non-unionized, management, small business, big business, owners, shareholders and everything else should be represented on these boards and make decisions. But if I see this thing taken over by and run by Pat Dillon and the friends of the Liberal Party, called the Family Coalition, I am disappointed, disenchanted and with no vision for the young people I am trying to address here today. It's purely politics, and that's why I'm saying I'm disappointed at this point in time. I still have an open mind and retain some hope that they might do the right thing. But experience proves to me that they won't. They simply won't.

I have raised a couple of points here. The member from Brant, who was a high school teacher and spoke earlier today, said he remembers the old days of home economics and tech shops. Well, I think we have to realize that the economy of education today and the kind of education people get involves a lot more choice in the curriculum.

I'm a parent of five children. My wife is now a retired teacher, and one of my daughters is a high school teacher. I have the greatest respect for teaching, but there's a predisposition that everybody has to go to university, and if you don't, or don't qualify, somehow you've missed the boat. We've got to somehow get around that concept.

People with skills today have value. Value isn't based on how much money you make or how fancy your car is; it's about your ability to contribute to your family, your community, your country, and we all have different roles. I think that if you look at this thing and it's to protect who can do what, what if—let's go back to Mr. Miller's example of the multi-skilled person, the multi-crafts person, who could actually fix a computer as well as the computer that's operating some tool. Do you understand? It's a machine that's going up and down or making, pressing things. There's not enough modernization in this thing, and it comes back to the governance model. That section 11 level of the bill is absolutely critical.

I want to mention one thing that will show me the reasons for a bit of disillusionment about this bill. I'm going to refer to one of the government's bills. It's a Ministry of Labour bill, Bill 175, and it's called the Ontario Labour Mobility Act. It's a very good idea,

actually. Interprovincially, if the jobs are in Alberta or Saskatchewan or Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador, with gas and oil and all these things, then I think individuals should have some way—and there's the red seal program, which recognizes trades and trades standards between provinces. I agree with all of that, because individuals should have the right, in a free country, to move about within the economy.

Here's a little example worth reading from this morning's Globe and Mail. It says, "Labour Mobility at Heart of Accounting Battle." Here's what it is: It's protectionism. Bingo, simple as that. Here's the argument. The two programs are called LMC, labour mobility code, and AIT, the Agreement on Internal Trade. What it means is, an individual who is a certified general accountant—that's what this article is about—who is able to do an audit in Alberta is not able to do an audit in Ontario. They say that only CAs, chartered accountants, can do these audits. I think this is a good example of how government and certain organizations create red tape and barriers to mobility and individual autonomy, and I think that this college should address some of these dysfunctional things. I know for a fact that for the last 10 years, they've been arguing with Quebec about labour mobility, interprovincial trade and labour, and they create artificial barriers from time to time. But there's a bill that they're working on, and they're accused in the paper today of already breaking it.

I'll just keep the thing on-focus here. Bill 179 is the Regulated Health Professions Statute Law Amendment Act. There's a little section in this bill that's in non-compliance. In Ontario, for an optician—these are the people who make the glasses, who carve the lenses and that, for the particular persuasion of changing how things look. In Ontario, it's two years or four years: two years full-time at Sheridan or one of the colleges. In Alberta, they can do it in six months. Now we're going to allow the people from Alberta to come to Ontario, but the people from Alberta have six months' training. Students like you may spend two years of tuition and board and all the expenses—it would probably cost you \$100,000, really—loss of income and the skills costs of the application.

This bill doesn't come nearly close enough to address the future skills and skill sets and how they're delivered in this province. This is about payback to the family coalition group that supported—

Interjection: Working Families.

Mr. John O'Toole: —Working Families Coalition that paid off Dalton McGuinty's third party advertisement, and I think it's shameful, if that's really what has motivated this change. It does nothing except tax labour. Now they have to pay to belong to the college when they're working in the shop, or more—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I appreciate the comments made by the member from Durham, and agree with some comments and disagree with some others.

One of the things I agree with is the point he and other Conservatives have made, and that is that we should be promoting and supporting the trades, but I don't think you can find any member in this Legislature who would say any differently. The problem for me is what our government is doing about it. Part of the criticism is that if we all believe in that and we agree, what has this government done?

1720

In my hour, I talked about how the government is failing us at the elementary level and the high school level. Timothy Eaton is shutting down. It's a state-of-the-art high school, a beautiful place for the trades. It's shutting down: not enough enrolment. At the elementary level, we've shut down family studies programs, home economics—the different terminology we use—that would give young men and women access to programs that involve mind and body activities. It's not just academic work—and they're disappearing.

Dave Levac talks about how it's a patchwork of programs, and I argue it's not just a patchwork; it's the gradual elimination of these programs, which I find very sad. So I wanted to agree with him in this regard and to also point something else out. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says, "What are the biggest challenges for apprentices? One of them is no available information about apprenticeship training." It's difficult to find. We've got to do something about that. The second thing is, to get the tax credit takes anywhere from 12 months to 18 months. Why? I'm sure the member from Durham wants to comment on that as well.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I thank the member from Durham and also the member from Trinity–Spadina for their comments. It's a pleasure to continue discussion on Bill 183.

The member from Trinity–Spadina just indicated what this government has done, and says this government hasn't done much. I am just going to remind the member that when his party was in government, I believe he was the minister of universities and colleges. What they did was they cut the funding for post-secondary education, they cut the funding for student aid by nearly 50%, they increased tuition fees by 50% and they eliminated up-front grants. That is the record of the member's party when they were in government in relation to post-secondary education, in contrast to ours. We are investing \$6.2 billion in our universities and colleges, which is the biggest investment in our post-secondary education in over 40 years.

I do agree with the member from Durham, talking about the change in technology. Being a former business executive myself in the manufacturing industry, I witnessed, for example, the change in tool making and die making, from the people who used to work with hands, and then it became all computerized with largely programmable controls. This is what's happening, and they were trades and technologies and professions which didn't exist. For example, radiology, which was just mentioned: 107 years ago there was no such profession called

radiology, and now we have radiology, we have radiographers, we have MRIs—we have so many new technologies coming, and that's why this college of trades is needed; that's why we need to have a college of trades: to promote professions, to promote the knowledge and skills of our young people and to help our economy. That's all about this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: By the time that an individual gets to into a college level, most of the programming is done by then. What we need to do is get back to the days that the member from Brant mentioned, being in grade 7 and 8, when they had shops and everything else there to instill that desire to get involved, to participate in all of that.

But some of the questions that I have, I would hope they'd be able to address here. What's going to happen with college propaners, or those kids who aren't licensed apprentices who are out there working on summer jobs? What's going to happen with all those drive-through oil change places? They're not licensed mechanics; how are you going to be able to drive through and get your oil changed without a licensed mechanic or a certified individual? What's going to happen to these locations? What's going to happen to the region-of-Durham workers who provide plumbing services by doing drain cleanouts, although they're not licensed plumbers?

We don't have answers to these questions. I brought them up to the ministry when it came forward. I'm still waiting for the response. There is no response to these things. We need some clear-cut answers as to how these individuals are going to be able to adapt their current systems. Are there going to be exemptions for the road workers who work on the roads or the sewer and water workers in the municipalities? I don't know. They haven't got an answer for it yet. We need some of those clear, defined answers.

One of the concerns that I do have is, as it says on page 5 here, under part II, prohibitions: "No individual shall engage in the practice of a compulsory trade or hold himself or herself out as able to do so unless the individual holds a certificate of qualification in that trade."

On Sunday we had some problems with the low-flush toilet in the house and I fixed that. Am I now exempt from taking care of that legally? I'm guilty? What's the answer there? Some of the problems are that some of these things need to be addressed. And how is it going to unfold? Who's going to fix the hole in the wall when the kids let the wind blow it open and it tore a big hole in there? Do I have to get a plasterer or a taper in to do that work? I'm not sure. I don't think the intent is there to do those things, but I certainly hope there would be some exemptions or allowances for individuals to do their own things.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The member from Oshawa brings up some legitimate questions but, quite frankly, I won't

squeal on him for doing unlicensed work in his house because I think he knows the answer to that question as to whether or not he would be in breach of the law. My instinct tells me that you're okay. You don't have to worry about it.

The member from Durham offers us some insight on a few issues that have been accepted by the NDP. I think that some of the points he made are very fair in terms of this House. I want to repeat them, and that is, there isn't anybody I've heard in this House, at any time since I've been here, say anything less than respectful of the trades, and by doing so, the communication that we're trying to establish and the consultation that we've established in the parliamentary assistant's meetings, the minister's meetings and the staff meetings is to continue to ensure that the dialogue continues while this is being debated. That's the first point that I would say that the member from Durham is on. The rest of the points that he made toward the end of his dissertation were somewhat disingenuous at best when he starts to talk about having people put money in pockets and all of that kind of stuff. My suggestion would—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Yes, thank you, the member from Nepean–Carleton. I would ask the member to withdraw “disingenuous.” Thank you.

Mr. Dave Levac: Is it not a word to be used? I withdraw.

Somewhat unadvisedly, I would suggest to the member from Durham that the problem lies in the same old, same old hack politic that basically says, “Scratch them up, mark them up, make accusations, but let's not talk about whether or not we've engaged in a conversation with the trades,” which we have. So let's bring some clarity to it. The people who are having the discussions presently on this bill are going to continue to do so and try to bring us the best piece of legislation that we can design, and I thank the member—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Durham has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. John O'Toole: Again, the member from Trinity–Spadina—all the people, I thank them for their comments—posed a question of whether or not the CFIB is happier or whatever. I think the main measurement there is, of all the numbers they've put out there on the number of people registered in trades or apprenticeship training, only 48% or less than 50% actually graduate. There's a bigger structural problem.

The member from Richmond Hill talked about his time—I worked 31 years at General Motors in computers and other things and management in the plant latterly. I am very familiar with the complexities of getting work done in an industrial setting, and I compliment him on talking about PLCs and the changing trade natures. It's an appropriate comment.

The member from Oshawa, I thought, brought most of the reality to it. How is this implemented? In fact, if you look at the very first section, part II of the bill, he's right.

It says it, “prohibits a person from engaging in the practice of a trade designated under the act, employing journeypersons in those trades or sponsoring or employing apprentices unless the person is a member of the college.” Now, this is mandatory preparation, and it's also a kind of monopolization. So he raises a very important point.

The member from Brant, I think, is fair in his comments. I tried to stay on the high side of the debate and pose questions about modernization for young people and the changing nature, as the member from Richmond Hill said. I think it's important that if this bill is going to actually do something about raising trades up to a new level and recognizing former training or prior learning experience, as has been done in other countries, let's try and accommodate new Canadians. Let's not build barriers. If they come here as an electrical engineer, they should be able to pass certain qualifications for languages and skills and be moved into the workplace. This looks to me like it's kind of an old boys' network thing, and I don't think it's appropriate for the modernization of labour mobility itself.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to commend the member from Durham. Once again, he has enlightened us with a few ideas that I may agree with and some I don't. The member from Oshawa had a couple of good points himself.

Speaking from the history of trades, when I started in the early 1970s, we served a three-year apprenticeship to become what they call an ironworker. That went on for a few years. The company decided they wanted to improve the situation. Instead of having to wait for a welder to come to help the ironworker and a carpenter to build the scaffold, they decided, “Maybe we should train the ironworkers, through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, to be welders.” They got us to take welding courses and we became certified welders under the CWB, the Canadian Welding Bureau.

A few years later, they decided that maybe we could use these gentlemen as industrial mechanics, so they sent us to school for hydraulics and they sent us to school for other millwrighting expertise. We got a few more job classes, and now we were called multi-crafters. In other words, we had two, three trades that we could go out on. The reason for that was that they could send a crew, like the member from Durham spoke about, of four people out, and the three others could help that person in their discipline. If you were building a scaffold, the welder and the rigger would help the certified carpenter build the scaffold under his direction, and then when we had to weld the brackets, I would take over and they would help me hold the brackets while I welded the brackets as a certified welder, and then when they placed the scaffold into position, they had a certified rigger and we would assist him.

That was done to improve the efficiencies of the companies, and they've done that all over Ontario. Mind

you, it wasn't too popular at the time because the construction trades stuck to their own trade. An electrician was an electrician, a welder was a welder and an ironworker was an ironworker, and they did not dare cross paths or there would be a major war. They are still like that today. A boilermaker is a boilermaker, and an ironworker is different. If a boilermaker does the ironworker's job, they have a work stoppage and a big fight about what the limits of their trade are.

Here's the government saying, "We want to go back to individual trades." That's fine in the construction industry, but what are you going to do with the multi-crafter who has been certified by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to do these other disciplines? Are they going to cut his wages now because when he goes to work in construction, he doesn't qualify under their certification program because he only did certain disciplines to become a multi-crafter? Where is he going to be? I don't see any mention of that in here.

I'll tell you right now: There will be a lot of angry people in Ontario if a guy who has been in a trade for 30 years doing several disciplines goes out in construction and they say, "Sorry, you don't meet our criteria in that particular trade. You need it in your original trade, but the other three trades you've been doing for the last 30 years, you don't meet it," and he probably forgot more than the apprentice who's doing it and maybe some of the journeymen who are doing it. That's a question that has not been addressed by this government.

The key message from the NDP: We support an arm's-length body to streamline approvals of industry recommendations. Why I say that is because I can think back to the 1960s and 1970s, when a building in Hamilton was being built by non-union, uncertified people called Century 21. Well, 25 years later, there were electrical problems, drywall problems and plumbing problems. That building cost a fortune when it was built and it was 10 times as much to fix because they hadn't done it right the first time.

So, yes, I believe in certification for all trades in their particular discipline. I believe that these people—now, Mr. Ouellette from Oshawa made a very good point: "What does the guy do who's in his own house?" I don't think he's going to have to worry either because I do my own repairs and drywall and everything myself, too, so I don't think they're going to touch the little guy. If he was going to put in an electrical panel and he's not a certified electrician, I'd have a problem with that because I'd want an inspector to come in and look at that, like they do now, but he'd have to be certified to put that electrical panel in. If he's going to run the wires under the direction of an electrician as a helper and the electrician did the fine points at the end, that might be acceptable because—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: He can work as your apprentice electrician, obviously. He can run wires and then the electrician does the final on the panel. He's certified for that. The apprentice can run the wires. That's not a problem.

Anyway, there are certain things that they're not looking at in detail because maybe they didn't talk to all the trades. A lot of the small business people who aren't certified are going to have a problem with this. They're going to say, "Now I've got to go back to school. I'm 45 or 50 years old. I've been running a little business on the side here as a plumber—whatever I've been doing on the side—and I'm not certified, but I am capable. But now I have to get certified because I've been running my company, starting now, illegally because I'm not certified." Maybe it will protect him; maybe that's good. Maybe it'll protect the consumer; that's good. I agree with that. It may cause some aggravation for the small company that hasn't got all these certified people, and it will cost them more to get a certified guy to go out and do these things, because he's going to command top buck.

The member from my party, Mr. Rosario Marchese, was talking about streamlining. I really think that streamlining was true in those days, but I'll tell you, right now there are a lot of young people out there who would love to be streamlined, because the trades have caught up to the professions. They're becoming like gold. You get a certified tradesman, I know for a fact—in Calgary, my sister did an addition to her house and renovations, and she had to wait three months to get it done. It should have taken maybe a month at the most, and she did not dare complain. If you dared to complain, he or she wouldn't come back to complete it because they're in such demand. So it ended up being five months before she got what she should have had done in one month, but she didn't complain because she was lucky to get a tradesperson there. So the trades are definitely catching up. If I am ever no longer here, I think I would be able to get a job like that, no problem, in a trade. So that's good.

However, it's not clear that the new structure will be truly industry-driven, or whether the new college will be a cumbersome structure which merely substitutes one barrier—one bureaucratic barrier for the other. I'm having trouble today. I should have some water.

It is also not clear what the province's apprentices and journeypersons will get from the membership fee they're paying to the college. I know for a fact that there are a lot of memberships—the teachers, for instance. They complain about the teachers' college, about having to pay fees, and sometimes they make decisions that these teachers feel they're fully qualified to do and the college decides, "Well no, we're going to go this route," when some of them haven't agreed to it.

I guess one of the key issues of this whole bill is the completion rates. Other than the still rather limited number of mandatory certified trades, the single biggest concern remains that the increasing number of registered apprentices will not meet the demand for skilled workers unless apprentices complete their programs and acquire the training and skills needed by the labour market. In 2005, a study by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards reported that apprentices' registrations had increased substantially over the past 25 years, but the

number of apprentices completing their programs had not grown proportionately; in fact, it had declined. That's a pretty scary insight, that it actually had declined. So you can get a lot of people signing up for the program, but if they don't finish the program, then what good is it?

The centre reported that the completion rate across Canada in 2005 was 39%, down from 63% in 1982. It has also reported that Ontario's 32% completion rate was the third lowest among the 10 provinces. In comparison, Manitoba's completion rate, the highest among the provinces, was 61%.

I must tell you, I think we as a society are guilty of leading our kids toward where everyone had to be a computer expert, a doctor or a lawyer. But then it got to a point where there were too many doctors and lawyers and nobody was working with their hands anymore. I know for a fact that in the company I was in, I had three apprentices in 30 years because kids were moving away from that. They didn't want to work hard. They didn't want to do physical jobs. They wanted to stay in front of a computer. That's our fault as parents. That's where it all started.

I'll tell you, there are high schools in my city that were trade schools that have been shut down. There are no shop teachers. These are the guys who taught you the basics so you could go into the trades, and going into the trades by no means—I disagree. You may think that maybe the person wasn't intelligent and couldn't go to college. That's a lot of baloney. Frankly, a lot of those kids are sharp. Some of them have three and four trades, as Mr. Ouellette pointed out. These trades have become very valuable. You're almost like a dentist now: "Dr. Miller, could you perform a welding thing for us? We'll pay you \$35 an hour to come and do it." That's because we're short apprentices in this country. So I encourage young people in this province to move toward trades. It's a good-paying, solid job and frankly, you'll never be out of work unless there's a major, major downplay in this whole economy. And if you can't get a job in Ontario, you certainly can get one out in Alberta, because most of our people who were trained here ended up in the tar sands. You can train all the people you want, but if they don't have jobs—we need manufacturing jobs back in this province so that our apprentices, tradespeople and journeymen have a place to go to practise their skills.

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"While it is important to track the completion rates, it is just as important to determine why apprentices fail to complete their training program and at what stage in their training they drop out. However, the last ministry survey of apprentices and journeypersons to determine why they had left the apprentice program before completing it was in 1997." That was the last time they checked—1997. "The three most common reasons given were limited employment opportunities"—that's no surprise; look at our economy—"or employment instability"—take a look around—and "dislike of the work." That's our fault as parents. It got a little dirty, a little heavy, they didn't like it; they'd rather sit in front of a computer. Not all kids are

like that, but a good portion of them are. "I don't want to do that. That's too hard. I don't want to work in a steel plant. That's dirty. It's pollution. I don't want to do that." Well, you might have to because there aren't a lot of jobs out there.

"In 2005, the minister's action table on apprenticeship was formed to bring together various stakeholders from across the apprenticeship system. The committee suggested several strategies for improving completion rates, including ensuring that in-school training is relevant, current and of appropriate duration." A lot of these courses you go to as a tradesperson are really long. They could probably teach it to you two weeks before that. You write a test. You go on a field trip. You do all these things. There are some things that could be cut out to expedite the process so that you would be a qualified, good tradesperson out there. You don't want to rush the situation, but you definitely want to get out in a reasonable amount of time. If a kid looks at it and says, "Look, I can go to university for four years or I can do an apprenticeship for four or six years, because I can only work half-time"—it's like a co-op program; you work a little, you go to school a little. If you can't get it, then it ends up being a six-year ordeal and you're probably better off going to university.

"Ensuring that examinations are appropriate": In other words, don't be using 1940 technology in the classroom to explain—so when the kid goes to that panel or he goes to that house he says, "Well, they showed me something, but this doesn't even look like it. This is something that I have never seen before." So now the journeyman who's on the job has to take time out from his job to explain to him, "This is the new process, and this is the way it goes." We have to modernize and move with the times in our apprenticeships.

"Improving the tracking and monitoring of apprentices as they progress through their programs and providing supports such as counselling and extra training": Some people take longer to learn certain aspects of a trade, so maybe we should have people after hours who are going to bring them up to the level of the other classmates so that they can graduate at the same time.

"Implementing a program to help employers be good trainers and to improve the connections between work-place and in-school training content: The ministry is not yet ... collecting the information that it needs to increase the effectiveness of the apprenticeship system" in this province, "who is attracted to particular trades; factors that contribute to successful completion of apprenticeship programs; how apprentices fare once they finish their training; and which trades have low completion rates, and why.

"On-the-job training: Effective monitoring of the quality of training provided by both employers and in-school training providers is critical to the program's success in meeting the demand for skilled labour. Timely and ongoing monitoring may also increase the likelihood that apprentices will complete their programs and obtain certification."

The Auditor General has noted that the ministry has not yet “developed a policy on monitoring either in-school or workplace training.” How are you going to run a program when you don’t know what the kids are doing, where they are, when they’ll be done and how many of them there are? “The ministry still has not developed policies to provide direction to the training of consultants, although consultants are required to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements.” The last thing we need is one more bunch of consultants. What we need is journeymen training the kids—that’s what we need. I don’t need any more consultants. This government has more consultants than they ever needed.

“In 2005, the ministry reported that it was moving to improve the quality of apprenticeship training programs and accountability for apprenticeship training. Ministry training consultants were to monitor each training agreement between an employer and an apprentice to ensure that training provided on the job meets the industry standards set for each trade.” That’s not so bad. I like that part. “Field offices were to focus on registration, consulting and counselling apprentices toward accreditation, and scheduling and monitoring on-the-job training. The ministry also intended to measure client satisfaction with training consultants.” That didn’t happen. Good thoughts put on paper—didn’t happen.

“However, training consultants at the field offices we visited were concerned about their inability to conduct more than a few, if any, monitoring visits to employers and in-class training providers to determine compliance with the training contracts and service agreements. All training consultants we interviewed stated that their overwhelming priority was meeting the apprenticeship registration targets”—well, that says it all. All they were worried about was meeting their registration targets so they could look good to the public; not about how the kid was doing, where he was in the course or what the result was going to be—“and that there is too much emphasis on quantity and not quality”—not quality, but the number of people they can sign up for the programs.

“Consultants were also concerned that increasing caseloads eliminated any time to work with existing apprentices or employers. Given that the number of training consultants has remained at 100 since our last audit while registration has risen, client caseloads have nearly doubled over the last few years and averaged about 900 to 1,000 apprentices per consultant.” How could one consultant possibly monitor 1,000 apprentices? Impossible. “Consequently, it was largely up to the apprentices to complete their in-school training and contact their assigned consultant if they are having difficulties.” The guy who’s representing 1,000 apprentices is going to have time for me to phone up and talk about my personal stuff? I don’t think so.

“Many training consultants stated that they need ongoing communication with apprentices to motivate them to complete their programs, and that apprentices often complain of the long interval between visits. Reduced time for monitoring or contact with apprentices may be one reason for low completion rates.

“The training consultants also stated that providing poor service to employers is detrimental to the program, especially in the non-restricted trades, as a result of the lower completion rates in these trades than in the restricted trades. With the reduced employer visits, the apprentices are now solely responsible to get the required training for completion of their training standard.” Can you imagine that? They want a 21-year-old kid to take all this responsibility to get his own training. He shouldn’t have to worry about that. He should be concentrating on what he has to learn to become a good journeyman, not on all this bureaucratic red tape. “Field staff believe that more frequent and more focused monitoring will also allow them to increase registrations by visiting more work sites and more potential apprentices.” Well, let’s get the ones we’ve got there trained properly first before we worry about filling our quota. It’s not like you’re giving out tickets and you’ve got to fill the quota.

“With little monitoring of employers, it is difficult to assess the quality of the training being received by apprentices. Training consultants commented that apprentices registered in trades under the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998 are required to complete the training standard, but the onus is on the employer to ensure that apprentices are able to complete all the training requirements.” Well, the employer should take an interest in his apprentices. That kid is going to be working for him for the next 35 years, hopefully; he should take the onus. “Apprentices generally do not attempt the trade examination until they have received employer approval on all the requirements in the training standard, because a significant amount of content tested in the examination is based on these requirements.” That makes sense. If you’re not trained and you aren’t proficient in the requirements for the testing, obviously you’re not going to take it, but that could delay your graduation.

“In-school training and support for exams: The ministry funds 65 training providers (24 colleges and 41 union- or employer-sponsored training centres) to deliver the in-school portion of the apprenticeship program. The ministry’s training consultants are required to monitor the quality of classroom training relative to industry standards for each trade.

“Although the training consultants review the results of individual apprentices on their client lists and may know anecdotally if there are any problems with a particular program or provider, the ministry does not review the in-school pass rates by program and by training provider. Such a review may identify differences worthy of investigation either as potential problems or best practices.”

I could go on, but it doesn’t look like too many people are paying attention. They’re busy laughing and talking. As usual, in the House, they’re distracted by other things. Speaking from a trades perspective, I had over 30 years in the trades, and I think I could bring a little to the table, but obviously nobody wants to listen, so that’s fine. We’ll continue in the pattern we’re going. I hope that all these people who don’t listen can really talk about trades, because I don’t think they can.

1750

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thanks to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his remarks. The member, in his remarks, mentioned a story in Hamilton where a building was built by uncertified people, and after some years, problems came up and then the people noticed the defects and the problems. He is quite right: That's why we need discipline in our apprenticeship programs, and that's why we have brought up this notion of the college of trades, because our apprentices need to be certified, they need to receive the best quality of education and training so that they can go out and perform their jobs in the best way, in the interests of the consumer, in the interests of our economy and in the interests of our province.

This bill which is before the House, once it is passed, is going to open the path for foreign-trained individuals, people who have certification and licensing from other countries when they immigrate to Canada. Now they don't have the opportunity to get into the system. There will be a lot of assistance to those people, who will be integrated in our economy and in our workforce.

Apart from the college of trades, the government of Ontario is going to keep some of the responsibilities in its own hands, and I'm just going to mention a few of those responsibilities which the government is going to keep. For example, apprenticeship registration will remain within the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Employer contacts, management of school scheduling and the management of apprenticeship programs such as Ontario youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, the co-op diploma, the apprenticeship tax credit—these are the programs which the government is going to keep in its own hands.

This bill, once it's passed, is going to modernize the apprenticeship programs in our province, and that's what we need in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I listened to and want to comment on the member's comments. There's a couple of things, though. The member spoke about the newest trades, but it's important to have some of those old skills as well. I recall that in another house we had, we had a water boiler, and they sent an apprentice over to fix it. It was a water-heated house. I started asking questions. He'd say, "Excuse me. I've got the answer out in the truck," and go out to the truck. I looked around and there he was, phoning and talking to a journeyman.

Finally, an hour, hour and a half later, the journeyman finally came down, and I said, "What's the problem? It's leaking here." He said, "The problem is, that valve is faulty." So I ended up bringing somebody in, changing the valve, and guess what? The journeyman didn't know how to use the technology. It was an expansion tank that was full and the valve was working like it should have.

The point is that we have to make sure that some of the old technologies are still being utilized.

But some of the questions I have for the PA are very effective in that we need some answers on that. For example, I know individuals who work in particular trades, such as automotive trades, who have tried a number of times to pass their final exams, have not passed and are remaining apprentices. How can they remain apprentices? Because that's all they intend to do. They never intend to take the test again. Will this allow them to continue on as an apprentice for the rest of their career working in that field? That's one of the questions I hope they would be able to ask at a later date.

Not only that, but some of the other aspects—I recall when I was, quite a few years ago, still in my early teens. We were building a new house and there was a brick-and-block person. I was mixing mortar and I was carrying blocks. Does that mean that I can't mix mortar and carry blocks, helping out on a site as well, because I don't fall into these classifications?

Lastly, effectively there are a lot of new trades that may be falling into place here. Can the PA actually tell me: What is the qualification to build a log home?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I congratulate my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for reinforcing some of the issues that the Auditor General put in his report; that is, the ministry increased apprenticeship opportunities and registration but was less successful in ensuring that apprentices complete the training; that staff say that too much emphasis is on registration over certification; that there's a lack of strategies to increase registration in high-demand skilled trades—and the lack of coordination in safety enforcement efforts. These things are important to emphasize. So when I hear the member from Richmond Hill talk about modernizing our apprenticeship program, I almost worry because I think, "What is it that they're modernizing? What didn't they do that the college is going to do, and is there something positive about modernizing that the government was not able to do in their structure?" So I'm concerned a little bit.

I also worry when he says that the government is keeping registration. I'm worried that they're keeping registration. I say to myself, "What are they going to do about completion rates?"

I'm worried that they're keeping the youth apprenticeship programs and the co-op program, because I'm not sure how effective it has been in terms of what the government has done and what it should do. I pointed out earlier that the co-op program depends on students having a contact with an employer, and if they don't have a contact with some employer, that's usually a family member, what do they do? The contact is with a family member, meaning it limits the available contacts they have with employers.

So the member from Richmond Hill says that we're keeping these kind of things, and I'm saying to myself, "If it didn't work while they've had it in their hands, how

is it going to work while they keep it for the future?" I'm profoundly worried.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: I thank the members from Oshawa and also Trinity–Spadina for their comments—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Excuse me; sorry. The member from Richmond Hill has already made comments.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: It is a valuable discussion that we've had this afternoon, I think, because in this very high-tech cyber-world, we forget the fact that we have the imperative of having skilled tradespeople. Sometimes in our rush into the cyber-world we don't stop and ensure that we've got highly trained, highly skilled tradespeople. As you know, the tragedy is—I know, for instance, that in the construction trades in Toronto for the last 25 or 30 years there has been a shortage of skilled tradespeople. Subsequently, they've had to go begging for workers from outside of Canada, from eastern Europe, from Portugal, to come and work in our construction trades here in Ontario. Construction, certainly in the GTA, is one of the most important wealth-producing industries, yet there aren't enough young people going into the skilled trades.

I know some of the unions, Local 183, the Carpenters' Union, Local 27, have tried these training centres to attract young people, but frankly it has been very difficult, because I think what they see on television and in the media very rarely has tradespeople as role models; it's always somebody running around in an Escalade singing rap songs or something. Meanwhile, they don't show the electricians, the plumbers, the tool and die people, the cement mixers, the cement finishers, who are critically important. These are critically important trades, and I think they should be role models for those students, like the pages we have here. I hope some of the pages will one day take up a trade. I think you've got a great future in that area. There's a great demand for skilled tradespeople.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Paul Miller: I guess overall the government is moving in the right direction as far as forming a college for trades. I like that. I like the fact that we're going to have certified people. I think this should be equal across the province, across the country, so that tradespeople can leave Ontario and go to work somewhere else and feel very confident that their training is going to be sufficient in those other provinces, and I think that's good, too.

It's going to be hard for the small business man to compete and to be able to afford—because his rates, obviously, are going to go up when he goes on a construction site or to do renovations and things, because he's going to have to be certified. But from a safety perspective, I don't think that's such a bad thing. Sometimes the backyard mechanics, I guess you'd call them, have done jobs that have been questionable at best, and you go in and an inspector almost has a heart attack looking at the workmanship. It could be a hazard; it could be a fire; it could be a flood. There are a lot of things that can happen if the jobs aren't done properly, and there are certain ways things need to be done and certain standards that have to be met as a tradesperson to give the consumer a feeling that he's had a job done well and it will be safe. I think that's what this may provide. This college will be an overseeing body that will make sure that the tradespeople in our province are the best, and the best in the world, and the consumer can feel safe, when a truck pulls up in front of his home, that he's going to get the best bang for his dollar and a safe job.

I think it's the right thing to do. There will be some resistance at first from the smaller people who feel that they are certified, but in the eyes of the government they're not and they should be.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I mentioned that you shouldn't have an Escalade. I'd just mention that one of the pages here said that her family has an Escalade, and she doesn't like rap music; she likes ballads.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): That's not a point of order, but thanks anyway.

We are just about at 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1801.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
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