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Monday 14 September 2009

Lundi 14 septembre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 September 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 septembre 2009

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members, I beg to inform the House that Mr. Hudak, member for the electoral district of Niagara West–Glanbrook, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's a great honour to introduce to the members of the assembly today my beautiful wife, Debbie, and lovely daughter, Miller Olive.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I too am very privileged to introduce my wife, Maureen, who is in the gallery, along with three relatives from Ireland. There's Joe, Kathleen and Patricia Reilly. After their 13 days in Ontario, they describe Ontario as "brilliant."

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'd like to recognize a woman who is here from the riding of Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Teresa Osterback. Welcome, Teresa.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm delighted to recognize a guest visiting us from Lisbon, Hugo Patrocinio.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome Xerina Fortson as my guest today, in the members' gallery. She is visiting here from Atlanta, Georgia.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the Minister of Culture and page Jacquelyn McLaurin, we'd like to welcome her mother, Joanne McLaurin, her sister Grace McLaurin, and an exchange student staying with them, Adé Dewavrin, sitting in the east members' gallery. Welcome today.

On behalf of the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and page Mauricie Summers, we'd like to welcome her mother, Anita Whyte, and her father, Brian Summers, sitting in the members' gallery today.

I'd also like to recognize, in the Speaker's gallery, some friends of mine visiting from St. Thomas, Mark Cosens and Brigitte Cosens, and, I would say to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Aubrey Cosens, who is named after a cousin of his who won a Victoria

Cross in the Second World War. Welcome, Mark, Brigitte and Aubrey.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'd like to ask the Premier a question about his summer of scandal. Let's begin where it all began, at eHealth Ontario. On June 2 of this year, the Premier assured members of this House that PricewaterhouseCoopers was "retained to look at expenditures to ensure that management practice and financial controls are in place." Those are the Premier's words, but as the Canadian Press reported on August 11, a senior vice-president with eHealth was quoted as saying, "There is no contract in place." In the same report, a company spokesperson also said that PricewaterhouseCoopers was actually never engaged. Why did the Premier tell the House that PricewaterhouseCoopers was retained when in fact they were not?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I'm pleased to receive the question, and I want to take this opportunity to personally congratulate the honourable colleague opposite on the assumption of his new responsibilities.

Speaker, I ask that you not allow these brief comments to detract from my time to respond. I say to my honourable colleague that I enjoyed the special privilege of serving as leader of the official opposition for seven long years, and I wish him at least the very same privilege that I enjoyed. It is also a distinct honour for all of us that the honourable member is joined by his wife and his daughter, and we wish him and his family very, very well.

With respect to the matter at hand, my honourable colleague knows that we did receive advice from the auditor that it would be superfluous for us to engage in both an internal audit and an audit conducted by the Auditor General. We have correspondingly placed all of our auditing in the hands of the Auditor General. We believe that we should give him the time to complete his work. When he has done so, that will be made public, and we are eager to act on any recommendations that he puts forward.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank the Premier for the very kind words and for his personal call just after our leadership concluded.

Premier, I asked a specific question. This has to do with your word, your honesty, what you told the

Legislative Assembly of Ontario and members sitting here today and what the facts were. For weeks, we saw you and your health minister dodge, deflect and dismiss opposition questions about the eHealth scandal, and when you finally could not ignore this scandal any more, you yourself said that you retained PricewaterhouseCoopers to investigate. The fact we found out this summer: PricewaterhouseCoopers was never retained, despite the fact that the Premier told this very House that they were. Premier, exactly who told you that PricewaterhouseCoopers was retained?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It was certainly my understanding that PWC had been retained. There is no nefarious plot afoot, as my friend might intimate. We think that what we owe Ontarians is a full and thorough review of what has taken place at eHealth. We've asked the Auditor General to conduct that. We think the appropriate thing to do in the circumstance is to give him the necessary time to conduct that review. That's what we're doing, and that's what I would ask my honourable colleague to do as well.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: But Premier, if you were given the impression that PricewaterhouseCoopers had been retained when in fact they were not, what are the repercussions of that? We are talking about a very serious scandal that saw millions of dollars of untendered contracts go to Liberal-friendly consultants. We're talking about an extraordinary abuse of taxpayer dollars. And the Premier ducked serious questions here in the House by hiding behind that PWC contract, a contract that never existed. So, Premier, if it was the Minister of Health who told you that they had been retained, if it was the board at eHealth that told you PWC was retained, then why the heck do they still have jobs?

1040

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think what we owe Ontarians—and I think that's the dominant question behind everything that we struggle to do here—is a full and thorough review of what happened at eHealth. I think the best authority to conduct that kind of review is to be found in the office of the Auditor General. We have called upon the Auditor General to conduct exactly that kind of a review. He is taking the necessary steps to obtain the necessary information. His full intention is to make all that information public. That will be accompanied by both findings and recommendations, and we look forward to both. But in particular we look forward to acting on any recommendations he might offer.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I think what we owe Ontario is creditability of a Premier, who told this assembly for weeks a matter that was actually not in keeping with the facts, and a Premier who will get to the bottom and tell us exactly who told him information that was not true.

I have further questions about the summer of scandal for Dalton McGuinty. Over the summer, the Globe and Mail reported that on October 23 of last year the Premier met with Sarah Kramer before she was appointed CEO of eHealth. There was no open competition for this important post. There was no open competition despite the troubled history of this agency. So, Premier, we're left to wonder if hiring Sarah Kramer is the Premier's personal untendered contract. Premier, did you direct the hiring of Sarah Kramer?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: No, I did not. I anticipated that my honourable colleague might raise this. What I learned was that the contract discussions concluded on October 22, 2008. I met with Ms. Kramer—as is in fact my habit when it comes to the appointment of important officials doing work on behalf of the government, to impress upon them the importance of that work and the value that I attach to their responsibilities—on the subsequent day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think as the Premier knows, from the beginning serious red flags were raised about Sarah Kramer. Before meeting with Sarah Kramer, senior ministry officials, we understand, including the deputy minister and an assistant deputy minister, were saying Kramer was not up to the task. The Premier was being told that Kramer lacked experience running a multi-million dollar organization. After only nine months on the job, she was severed, at a cost to taxpayers of some \$315,000. Premier, why did you ignore the advice and warnings and personally shepherd Kramer through cabinet and into this job?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I want to make it clear to my honourable colleague—I know that there have been musings about this in the media—not once from any quarter did I ever receive any information or advice that would lead me to believe that Ms. Kramer would be less than competent at assuming her new responsibilities. I want to make that perfectly clear. There was a process. That process was followed. My involvement was to thank Ms. Kramer for taking on the responsibilities, to encourage her to assume those quickly and effectively, and that's what I did. In hindsight, obviously we wish things might have been done differently. But given the circumstances as they unfolded, I did not receive any information or advice to the contrary, and I met with Ms. Kramer after she was hired.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, it is clear that Sarah Kramer was the Premier's personal untendered contract, and shortly after that meeting your hand-picked CEO of eHealth followed your lead and went on an untendered contract spending spree all her own. And who were some of the recipients? A consultant whose record was heavily criticized by Alberta's auditor; John Ronson of the Liberal-connected Courtyard Group and chair of the 1995 Liberal election campaign—millions of dollars of untendered contracts to Liberal-friendly consultants. No

doubt, Premier, your culture of entitlement set in fast and deep at eHealth Ontario.

Premier, the auditor will report on contract mismanagement, but who will shine the light on your involvement? Will the Premier commit to sending this to a committee of the Legislature to get to the bottom of it today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I've made it pretty clear in terms of my involvement in this. I met with Ms. Kramer after she'd been hired. One of the things that we have done, and I know that Ontarians will be interested in this, is we have eliminated the practice of sole-source contracts for our consultants. That was a practice that had been in place for a number of years in the Ontario government. It is one that had been accepted and utilized by my friend opposite when the Conservative Party formed the government. We decided that it was no longer in keeping with public expectations and we've made that change. There can no longer be sole-source contracts for consultants. We think that's the appropriate thing to do and we think that's what Ontarians expect of us.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. All over this province, people are telling this Premier to stop his HST scheme, but he refuses to listen. In this recession, people want a government that makes life more affordable. Instead, the Premier is raising the cost of gasoline, hydro and so much more. People are looking for practical solutions to job loss, yet Ontario's chamber of commerce, tax harmonization's biggest supporter, says this: "sales tax reform [will] slow employment growth by between 10,000 and 40,000 jobs."

Why is this Premier ignoring the people of this province and ploughing ahead with a plan that will hurt families and kill up to 40,000 jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question from my honourable colleague, the leader of the NDP, but I cannot agree with the information that she put forward here. I think Ontarians understand in their heart of hearts that we need to do something together to strengthen our economy. What they may not know and what we will do more to convey to them is that the overwhelming consensus among economists and businesses is that the single most important thing that we can do to improve our economy, to strengthen the economy and create more jobs, is to move ahead with a single sales tax.

By the way, the very package that we put forward as part of tax reform in Ontario was supported by Ontario's food banks. I think at a time that you can put a package forward that's got the support of the food banks and the support of the chamber of commerce, you've got to be moving, broadly speaking, in the right direction. This is the right package at the right time. It lives up to the responsibility of our generation to do something that is not easy, but it's the right thing to do for our economy and to support our public services.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's not my information; it's information from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce that says there are going to be job losses as a result of the harmonized sales tax, and I can give the Premier the information if he hasn't read it.

Ontarians I've met over the summer, like Anne and Milton Marion in Thunder Bay, are worried about the impact of the HST. They're worried that it's going to increase the cost of their already sky-high hydro and heating bills. The Premier chooses to ignore them. The Premier's own caucus tells him that they cannot sell this. In fact, insiders say that the caucus is freaking out. He ignores them too.

Higher prices, 40,000 jobs lost—when will this Premier stop ignoring the people of this province and back away from this reckless scheme?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not clear as to where my honourable colleague is getting the information about the jobs she is talking about, but I will quote again from the head of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, who said, "It's a very bold step ... it's smart for the time because it is going to take the shackles off business." That sounds to me like a positive endorsement and not a negative criticism.

In terms of the support for our families, my honourable colleague knows that we're exempting a number of items that are important to our families, like children's clothes and shoes and car seats and booster seats. She also knows that we're going to put in place an Ontario sales tax credit of \$260 each for adults and children. That's the most generous in the country. That means that for a family of four, they will get, on a permanent basis, additional support of \$1,040.

Again, if it's supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Ontario's food banks, I think we're moving in the right direction.

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What this plan is going to do is shackle the people of this province with even more job losses at a time when we can least afford it. This Premier's tax scheme is going to leave people paying billions and billions of dollars in new taxes every year, and it's going to kill up to 40,000 jobs.

Even the Premier's own federal leader, Mr. Ignatieff, says he's opposed to what he calls the "Harper sales tax." The people of Ontario don't want this, and neither does the Premier's own party.

Isn't it time just to take a step back now and consider some measures that will actually create jobs and leave money in people's pockets instead of ignoring the needs and wishes of Ontarians and kicking them when they're down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it's important to remember the truth when it comes to this. The overwhelming consensus among economists is that this is the single most important thing that we can do to strengthen our economy and create jobs; 130 other countries are

already there. Every single OECD country is there except the United States of America. Four provinces are already there. BC, when they learned of what we were doing with respect to the single sales tax, said, "We need to get there, because we don't want to allow Ontario to get ahead."

These are inconvenient truths for my honourable colleague, but they are the truths, and it's important that we find a way to move ahead with this.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier should worry about what's inconvenient for the people of this province when it comes to their affordability.

My next question is to the Premier. The people of Ontario need to trust their government with public money. A few short months ago, the Premier claimed that the board at OLG was "moving in the right direction." That's a direct quote. Now he has suddenly fired them all, amidst yet a new scandal. A few short months ago, this government claimed that they had hired PricewaterhouseCoopers to look at spending at eHealth. Now, we learn that they were never hired. Does the Premier expect the people of Ontario to believe he's serious when he only acts once he's caught?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think that what we owe Ontarians is, when these matters come to light, to move as quickly as we can, in as transparent a manner as we can, to bring all the facts to the light of day. That's why we brought in the Auditor General.

But more than just that, we've done a number of things of late to increase accountability and transparency. We have banned sole-source contracts to consultants. We are now going to make the Integrity Commissioner ultimately responsible for the approval of expenses from our 22 biggest agencies, boards and commissions. Announced today, we're now going to have—and the private sector has been doing this for some time, and it's a good practice for us to adopt—mandatory training for the OPS and our big agencies, boards and commissions when it comes to the matter of expenses.

Finally, we are going to post online, for the first time in the history of the province, expenses from senior-level servants in the OPS, our ABCs and our ministers as well. We think that's progress for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: First it was eHealth; then it was the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation. More recently, we've heard of more questionable expenses at MPAC. Ontarians want to know all of the facts, Premier. Instead, they see Liberal members shut down committee investigations and ministers claim that third party auditors are looking into an eHealth scandal, even though they haven't even been hired. Why is it that everyone is held accountable for this mess but the Premier and his cabinet?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think what Ontarians want is for us to take responsibility to ensure that these kinds of things, when they are brought to the light

of day, are dealt with, and that we take steps to ensure that they cannot be repeated. That's what we're doing.

The opposition has, I must say, brought certain important facts to the light of day. We are acting on those facts. The media is also contributing in this regard. I think it's fair to say that, over time, governments of all political stripes have done much to enhance accountability and transparency for governments themselves. Now we're reaching further than that, to over 615 agencies, boards and commissions that operate at arm's length from government. We're putting in place new rules, new educational opportunities, new transparency so that we have heightened accountability. I think that's what Ontarians want us to do.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What Ontarians tell me that they want is full transparency, and they want someone in this government held accountable for these scandals. We've seen well-connected insiders make out like bandits with millions in untendered contracts, and it's hard-working Ontarians who are left holding the bag.

We need to clear the air, and I have just the way to do that. In the name of transparency, will the Premier release today a complete list of all untendered contracts awarded by government agencies in the last two years?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What my colleague needs to know, when it comes to the matter of sole-source contracts, is that we are prohibiting those from now on. Those were rules that were deemed to be acceptable under the Conservative government and under the NDP government; we're now saying no to that practice.

We're also saying yes to something that is brand new for Ontario. We are going to take it a step further from what my colleague is requesting. We're going to post expenses online so that they will be available to all Ontarians. We're going to replicate a practice that is taking place in the federal government, but we're taking it a step further by including expenses for the senior execs at our agencies, boards and commissions. We think it brings the Ontario standard to a new level when it comes to transparency and accountability.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Premier. There continue to be unanswered questions about his scandal-plagued agency. Earlier this summer, an all-party subcommittee agreed it was in the public interest to bring the board of eHealth before a legislative committee that would get to the bottom of the scandal. Last week, the Liberal members on the committee blocked our effort to get eHealth in before committee.

Did the Premier tell the Liberal members of the committee to block a legislative probe by the government agencies committee?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We have an impartial, arm's-length, objective office which has agreed to take responsibility for reviewing the facts there. I think we should

give that office, the Auditor General's office in particular, the necessary time and leeway to conduct their business. I understand that my colleague is impatient when it comes to the completion of this work. I think we should remain patient, and as I've said several times, we look forward to receiving both the findings and the recommendations so that we might act on those.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: With respect, what we're impatient with in the opposition benches is the continued mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer dollars in this province. The eHealth scandal is clearly a matter of public interest. The government has repeatedly said that it needed a second layer of review. Who better to do a review than a legislative watchdog committee? If the Liberal members weren't standing in the way, we could have had the second layer of oversight that the Premier wants.

When the media asked the Liberals why they wouldn't let eHealth executives appear before the government agencies committee, the minister clammed up and refused to give an explanation. So I'm going to ask the Premier one more time, is it because the Premier and the minister have something to hide?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think the question always comes back to, what do we owe Ontarians here? And I like to think what we owe them is an objective, dispassionate, thorough review of the circumstances. That will be best completed by the Office of the Auditor General.

I want to remind my honourable colleague as well that the public accounts committee will be reviewing the auditor's report on eHealth. This will be coming before the committee. There will be an opportunity to look at that report to ask questions of the Auditor General. I think that's the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. The Arrowsmith program for children with disabilities offers an imaginative, innovative program for students. Your supervisor at the Toronto Catholic District School Board, Mr. Hartmann, decided, against the wishes of trustees and parents, to cancel this valuable program, a program that works, a program that parents and students know works—and 60 of these students who were making significant progress now, one week after the start of school, still find themselves without a program.

You are now running this school board, so you, in my mind, have a choice: Are you going to restore a program that works or are you going to challenge these parents in court?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I welcome everyone back to our first day of school, although the kids have been in for a while.

I wanted to share with the member opposite a letter that he would not have had an opportunity to see. It went

out today from the new supervisor—we have a new supervisor at the Toronto Catholic District School Board. He says, to the parents of the students who are in the Arrowsmith program:

“I am writing to you today in my capacity as supervisor of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

“The purpose of my letter is to inform you that, after careful review of the issue surrounding the provision of the Arrowsmith program to students in seven classes in the TCDSB, I have decided, in consultation with the director of education, Ann Perron, to continue the provision of the program for those students currently participating until June 2012.”

This action on behalf of the new supervisor will, in effect, grandfather the delivery of the program to the students who have been in the program.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I am pleased that this decision has been made, quite clearly. I will sit down very shortly—because I went to that school board meeting. I heard the parents and I heard the students saying, “This program works. It works for me as a parent and it works for those kids.” So we were puzzled that Mr. Hartmann obviously decided that he wanted to save some money at the cost of those students. So whatever your involvement, Minister—and I'm assuming you intervened. I do assume you intervened, and if you did, thank you for doing so.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to be clear that the new supervisor, Dr. Richard Alway, who was in the Toronto Catholic District School Board, took responsibility to review all of the decisions that had been made. He looked at this one and he made a decision to grandfather these students. I have every faith that, going forward, he will be able to make the right decisions for the students of the board.

TOURISM

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: This question is for the Hon. Monique Smith, Minister of Tourism.

First, of course, I'd like to tell this House that it's great to be back after the summer break. While I was in my riding of Etobicoke North, I was of course pleased to have the opportunity to work and meet with a great many of my constituents. Ontarians such as these recognize that tourism is one of the most important economic generators of the GTA and, given the challenges the province and the area have been facing—such as the fluctuating dollar, the economic downturn and of course, the confusion over passport requirements for entry and exit to the US—they emphasize they are concerned that fewer visitors are travelling to the GTA.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Tourism: What is our government doing in the GTA to help stimulate tourism and visiting to our area?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to wish everybody a good “welcome back” as the House resumes.

The McGuinty government recognizes that tourism is incredibly important to the Toronto area. This summer

I've had the privilege of attending a number of festivals and events across the region, including desiFEST, Caribana, Just for Laughs, the Honda Indy—and last week I had one of the thrills of my lifetime in opening the Toronto International Film Festival. I have been attending the festival for 24 years and I've got to say, it was a pretty exciting night. I know some of my colleagues from the other side were there on Friday night as well, and we've had lots of fun celebrating the festival with festival organizers. They have really focused the spotlight of the world on Toronto and I am so excited that my ministry has supported this festival to the tune of about \$500,000.

It goes without saying that bringing over 1,000 international media to our community is an important driver for tourism and attracts so many investors and visitors to our community. I want to thank all of the volunteers and organizers at the Toronto International Film Festival for doing such a great job—

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: My question is again to the Minister of Tourism. This weekend, thousands of visitors from around the world flooded to Toronto to participate in the 34th annual Toronto International Film Festival. Since the film festival's humble beginnings in 1976, it has grown in reputation and stature as the largest public film festival in the world and an important hub for the film industry.

Earlier this month, the minister announced that the McGuinty government is investing \$10 million to support the completion of the Toronto International Film Festival Bell Lightbox. Once complete, the Bell Lightbox will serve as the new permanent home of the Toronto International Film Festival. Can the minister please inform this House why the government is investing \$10 million to help the film festival complete this new home?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I share my love of the festival with the Minister of Culture.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: The McGuinty government's \$10-million investment in the TIFF Bell Lightbox is an important recognition indeed of the value of Ontario's film industry and the cultural sector as major economic drivers in this province.

As a result of our investment, about 1,300 construction jobs will be created, and when completed there will be in excess of 150 full-time jobs at the facility next year. Within five years of its opening, it's anticipated that the TIFF Bell Lightbox will host over 4,000 events, attract two million visitors annually and generate \$200 million in economic activity. I can't think of a better investment. I'm sure this House would join me in that opinion.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Premier. Both opposition parties have given notice to the Speaker that we intend to raise a very serious matter with him. It has to do with representations the Premier and the Minister of Health made to members when they were scrambling to get a handle on the scandal at eHealth.

On June 2, the Premier and the minister told this House four times that PricewaterhouseCoopers was retained to do a review. On June 3 and 4, the minister repeated the claim nine more times. Premier, this wasn't a mistake, a slip of the tongue; it was repeated, repeated and repeated. Why would you and your minister provide this House with misleading information?

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I withdraw—totally inaccurate information.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I indicated before, and I'm pleased to do it again, that it was certainly my understanding. I thought that technically there had been a retainer and this was prepared to go in that. But I think what's really important here is the advice that we received from the Auditor General, who thought that there would be an overlap between the work done by PWC and the auditor's office itself. So we've acted on the basis of that advice and we've turned the work exclusively over to the auditor.

I know this is an important point for my colleagues opposite, but I think, from an Ontario perspective, what they really want to know is whether we're going to get to the bottom of this and to do so in the most objective way, and that's exactly what the Auditor General's going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Well, I think the Premier said earlier, "What we owe Ontarians," and as my leader said, we owe Ontarians the straight goods, the real facts. Between June 1 and June 4, the Premier and the Minister of Health said 28 separate times that the eHealth board was directed to engage an external reviewer. However, in the middle of the summer, the eHealth board announced that no such review was taking place; there never was a contract. We don't know if this is a figment of someone's imagination, but Premier, the public and these government ministers who give this House accurate information, words they can trust—clearly, your minister can't be trusted. He's lost all credibility. When will you demand Minister Caplan's resignation?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think what is important in the circumstances is for us to ensure that there is a thorough, comprehensive review of all matters at eHealth, including the very issues, should the Auditor General so choose, that my honourable colleague is raising at this particular point in time. He's certainly free to look at that as well. I think he is the holder of the office of which we can all continue to have confidence. What we owe him now is our patience, our support in any way possible, and then, when he does provide us with both his findings and his recommendations, we will have an obligation to act on those recommendations. We look forward to receiving them.

TAXI OPERATORS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In the last Parliament, there was all-party agreement to pass laws to come to the

aid of limousine drivers at Pearson airport, particularly in the provisions of anti-scooping. This was contingent, though, upon the city of Toronto having the authority to license cab drivers within its jurisdiction, and that was given by all-party agreement with the City of Toronto Act. The minister has now seen fit to revoke unilaterally the city's authority without consultation and without explanation.

My question: Can the minister explain to Torontonians and especially to the hard-working cab drivers, who will be demonstrating at the Legislature today, why he did this?

1110

Hon. Jim Watson: We did this because this was the fair thing to do to be equitable to both taxi drivers and limousine drivers from the airport. Nothing has changed, because in fact the city of Toronto did not enact the particular bylaw the member is referring to.

I quote from the Toronto Star editorial that said:

“Queen’s Park is right to quash a Toronto bylaw banning airport limousines from picking up fares on their return trips....

“The province has opted to give Torontonians continued access to choice. That is a greater good, and the minister is right to defend it.”

We did the right thing and, regrettably, perhaps some of the city of Toronto and some cab drivers are not pleased with it, but we think it was unfair to allow an empty vehicle to come downtown at a prearranged call and then go back empty to the airport. It was both an environmental issue and an economic issue and a matter of choice.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: There are 10,000 cab drivers in Toronto who drive to the airport and can never—never, ever—bring a cab fare back, because that's what you want to happen. I want to know, Mr. Minister, where's the choice there?

This is not acceptable, because for you to unilaterally act, you have to explain why it was necessary or desirable in the provincial interest to take away rights and privileges that your government itself gave at the passage of the bill. Many of the cab drivers in Toronto live below the poverty line and they work long, hard hours to see you act in such a unilateral and unfair way. How is your revocation going to help them?

Hon. Jim Watson: The honourable member is incorrect. An individual cab can go and pick up a prearranged fare at the Toronto airport in Mississauga, so the honourable member should get his facts straight.

Secondly, this is all about giving consumers choice. If an individual in downtown Toronto wishes to have a prearranged limousine pickup, they should have the right to do that. They've had the right to do that, in essence, for close to 15 years, so nothing is changing for those consumers. So we're looking out for the interests of the consumers.

We also admire and respect the hard work that cab drivers are engaged in, but they do in fact have the right

to go to the Toronto airport for a prearranged pickup by paying the fee and picking up people at the Toronto airport. Nothing has changed. We're giving consumers the kind of choice that we believe they deserve to have and that they've had for close to two decades.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is also for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and it's a question about affordable housing. Minister, as you're well aware, many vulnerable Ontarians are in need of a safe, clean and affordable place to call home. It's a topic we read about in the papers, and we discuss with friends the need for action. But we often forget that they are our neighbours, members of our community and people who have a contribution to make. They just need that extra help up to get their lives on the right track.

This August, I convened an affordable housing consultation in my riding of Ottawa Centre, where a large and diverse group discussed our community's affordable housing needs candidly and productively. I know that your ministry, including you personally, Minister, have been travelling across the province consulting community members, housing providers and other interested advocates to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy. Can you tell the House how many consultations the ministry will be undertaking and what we are learning from them?

Hon. Jim Watson: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We've had the opportunity to have close to 12 consultations throughout the province of Ontario, from Lindsay to Windsor to Ottawa to Toronto—we are going to Thunder Bay—and the turnout has been exceptional. We've had hundreds of people turn out at these events and they've brought forward goodwill, good ideas and good suggestions that we want to feed into a long-term affordable housing strategy. The mood has been—

Mr. Paul Miller: We've got to crash the party. We can't get invited.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's nice. The reference was made to the students having returned to school, and I would just remind the honourable members to remember those days when they were in a classroom and having respect for one another when they were speaking.

Ten seconds.

Hon. Jim Watson: I want thank the honourable member from Hamilton East because he's been the only member of the NDP that has actually shown up to the public consultations on affordable housing.

We look forward to bringing forward a thoughtful document, making it more accessible for people to get affordable housing in the province—

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Minister. I think you would acknowledge yourself that as productive as these

consultations are, they are not building homes today. The economic situation we have found ourselves in for the last year has made those problems more pronounced. More Ontarians are in need of support from all levels of government, whether it is employment insurance, Ontario Works or other forms of social assistance. Ontarians have needed our help and support in greater numbers. In economic circumstances such as these, it makes the need for affordable housing even more pronounced and necessary. While it is great to develop plans for the long term, Minister, how are we dealing with these problems in the short term?

Hon. Jim Watson: The honourable member is quite correct. While we're looking at the long-term affordable housing strategy, we're not waiting. We actually have committed close to \$622 million in Minister Duncan's budget, which is matching the federal contribution for affordable housing. That \$1.2 billion, which is the single largest amount of money put into an affordable housing program in such a short period of time in Ontario's history, will see 4,500 new housing units built over the next two years and 50,000 existing housing units repaired or renovated—because some of these units are in deplorable shape. We want to make sure that we get the money to the housing providers, such as, the honourable member is well aware, in his own riding, on Caldwell Avenue. A unit is going to be retrofitted and repaired—receive \$5.4 million to help some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

I thank the people who have attended those public consultations. I look forward to drafting the report over the course of the next several months.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. On June 1, Minister, you told the members in this chamber that you had met with the now former chair of the eHealth board, Alan Hudson. You stated that you directed the board to undertake a third party review of eHealth and that they were moving in that fashion. But we now know they weren't moving in that fashion at all. Minister, what evidence did the board provide to give you the confidence that they were actually acting in that fashion?

Hon. David Caplan: I also want to congratulate my colleague on her new critic position.

In fact, I did meet with Dr. Hudson in regard to this matter. I said to him that related to financial controls and management practices, I wanted a third party review. The board then met with PWC to go over the scope and the estimate of cost for that audit. In that period of time, the Auditor General took the step of contacting the board and in writing informed the board that he had expanded the scope of his audit, that he was concerned about duplication, and it was his recommendation that it stand down. The board contacted me in writing with this information from the Auditor General—an independent officer of this Legislature—and I directed them similarly in writing to follow the direction of the Auditor General.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: You did say on June 3 in this House, "It's important not just for eHealth, but for all of us who have the privilege of serving Ontarians, including, I would say to the member, every member of this Legislature. That's why I directed the board to undertake a third party review, and in fact, the board has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers...."

It's clear that the minister has no idea what's going on in his troubled ministry. Why did you scrap this review when it was clear that they were going to be running on both tracks?

Hon. David Caplan: I have here a letter from Rita Burak, the chair of eHealth, where she says, "The board immediately engaged with our external auditors and your appointee, to establish the terms of reference for the review. Staff of the provincial Auditor General's office and eHealth Ontario has met to ensure that the conduct of the Auditor General's review and the board's review were not duplicative and that the process could be handled smoothly." In fact, that's exactly what I said to this House: that there was that engagement of the board and of PricewaterhouseCoopers that did take place.

Of course, as the member is now aware, or, I hope, was aware previously, the Auditor General took the step to inform the board that he was concerned about duplication of work between the external auditor and himself. He in turn asked the board to stand down because of that duplication. I directed the board to follow the direction of an independent officer of this Legislature.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. As I have been knocking on doors in St. Paul's, I've heard a lot of concern about this government's harmonized sales tax grab. Tenants are especially worried about the HST's impact on rents. The Federation of Rental-housing Providers says rents will rise between 2.5% and 3% with the HST. The Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations says the tax on renovations and utilities will put upward pressure on rents. Why is this Premier bringing in a tax that will make housing less affordable in the province of Ontario?

1120

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just want to reassure my colleague, and Ontarians generally, that the single sales tax would not apply to rents, and she knows that.

There are a number of important issues that have been raised in the by-election in St. Paul's, including the Wychwood Barns, which is an important community meeting place, and the Winona public school pool. Voters are pleased that we made a contribution to the Toronto board so that they can invest in their pools.

Tenants want to know that we will continue to do everything that we can to keep the rents low. I think they have been fairly, to state, impressed that we've had some of the lowest rent guidelines ever. There are issues regarding schools and hospitals, the OCB, public transit,

so it's more than just a single sales tax, I think, in fairness to voters in that riding.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the Premier would be interested to know that when I was at the Wychwood Barns on Saturday morning, people were not happy about the harmonized sales tax. Even the Liberal candidate in St. Paul's realizes that the HST is bad for tenants. He's written to the government asking for protection for tenants from rent increases. I noticed that there has been no reply as yet.

The harmonized sales tax will make renting more expensive in this province. How can this government say that the HST will have no impact on rent when the people who own rental units and the people who rent them say it will, and your own candidate in St. Paul's says that it will?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Jim Watson: This is dangerous territory that the honourable member from the NDP is going down, because when the NDP were in office, rent increases consistently went up higher than the rate of inflation: rates like 3%, 2.6%, 2.9%. This year's guideline under the McGuinty government is 1.8%. The previous year's was 1.4%. So the good people of St. Paul's should know very clearly, under the NDP, rate increases went up substantially above the rate of inflation. We have now, as a result of change to the Residential Tenancies Act, tied rent increases to the rate of inflation. It's transparent. It's simple to understand.

The renters of St. Paul's should stand up for the Liberal candidate because he's going to stand up for them and protect them from excessive rent increases that were the hallmark of the NDP.

CONTAMINATED PROPERTY

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. As you know, the CIP wet lagoon is highly polluted in the area of the town of Hawkesbury. The Canadian International Paper Co. left behind a waste water pond when it closed its doors in 1985. My constituents are understandably concerned about the threat to the environment that this sludge-filled lagoon presents.

There have been many rumours and much misinformation about what will be done to rehabilitate the site. I held a press conference in my riding on September 4 to address the concerns of my constituents.

Will the minister state for the record what plans are in place to get the restoration project off the ground and the cleanup started?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm pleased to be able to respond to the member. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell asked me to go to his riding back in 2008 to look at this wet lagoon, which in fact was left by Canadian International Paper, a wet lagoon that has a safety hazard issue—and remember, this was a time

when there was no legal obligation on behalf of companies to take up their responsibilities to deal with the environmental impact.

What we've done is invested about \$1 million. We've fenced the area. We've ensured that there's a safety concern—and an eyesore, obviously. But also we're working very closely with the Ministry of the Environment, with Mayor Charlebois of Hawkesbury, who has been superb, her and her council, as to how we move forward to ensure that we take responsibility and clean up this wet lagoon. That is exactly what we're going to do. We have a process that's been put in place. It's public, it's open, it's accountable. We're going to ensure that in fact the lagoon is cleaned up so that the people of Hawkesbury can have a—

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

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: The cleanup of the CIP lagoon has been one of my top priorities for a long time now and I am anxious to see the project progress. Hawkesbury has one of the most beautiful downtown areas in eastern Ontario, and not only is the lagoon an eyesore, it is also stopping the development of Main Street.

Can the minister be more specific as to what the next steps of this project will be, as well as what possible future uses are envisioned for this site?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: The ministry has been working, as I indicated, with the mayor of Hawkesbury, the town of Hawkesbury and the Ministry of the Environment. Earlier this year, we did an environmental assessment, and that's completed. A closure plan was developed in conjunction with MOE. We're currently in the process of tendering for the detailed engineering design.

In terms of next steps intended, there's a pilot test work that will be conducted this summer and fall of 2010. That also includes testing for the best way to handle the organic materials currently found in the lagoon. We're also going to put in detailed environmental monitoring and we're going to do full closure work that's scheduled to commence in 2011.

We're going to find the most efficient way, as well as the most economical way, to clean up this site so, ultimately, it can be the site for the people of Hawkesbury, where they can use the land for recreation and where they can have a chance to actually get to the river. They'll end up with a cleaner site and a better place for the city.

LAND TRANSFER TAX

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Minister, you will recall that during estimates this summer, I asked for you to review your ministry's decision to retroactively apply a land transfer tax to fractional ownership units. Have you undertaken that review and have you reconsidered your position on this tax grab?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. Many members in the House have raised this with me.

We want to let people understand that fractional ownership has been something that's been around in this province since the late 1990s, and land transfer is applied to fractional ownership. Normally, people pay it because they register at the land registry office, and some people have not been doing that. So in the province of Ontario, some people have been correctly paying their land transfer tax and others have not. We've been working with the associations involved to ensure that there is a fair and equitable application of the tax to all. It would be unfair for some to pay and others not to, and some have indeed followed the letter of the law and paid that.

That said, I'm more than happy to work with the organizations that are involved with—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: What is clear is you're going back seven years and you're reinterpreting the rules.

At a meeting this summer with ministry officials, it was clear that staff were not familiar with fractional ownership. Fractional ownership is closer to time share; it's closer to a club membership. Fractional-ownership owners face many restrictions. They can't vote, for example, in a municipal election.

Minister, will you commit today that you won't retroactively tax fractional-ownership units and that you won't bring in any more retroactive taxes?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Let's be very clear: On this side of the House, we expect people to pay the taxes that are owing under the law. In this case, the law is very, very clear as to the application.

My understanding is that the definition that is currently being used was something that was brought in when the member was in government. It is very, very important that we apply taxation fairly and equitably. Some people in this province with the fractional ownership have correctly paid that tax. It would be unfair to them if we were not to apply it equally.

That said, I'd be more than happy to work with the member and other members who are involved in this situation to ensure that that tax is applied fairly and in an equitable way. I'd be more than happy to meet with the member and to discuss this issue further to find a fair and equitable resolution of this situation.

1130

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Earlier this year, the Sudbury Regional Hospital was forced by your ministry into the difficult position of looking at cuts to its budget, staff and services. The hospital told the ministry that the only way they can balance their budget is if your ministry helped solve the alternate-level-of-care crisis. The Sudbury alternate-level-of-care community steering

group studied the issue and presented their recommendations, and since June we have been waiting for your response.

Minister, your decision is overdue. My question is simple: When can the Sudbury Regional Hospital and all of its partners expect a decision from this minister?

Hon. David Caplan: I thank the member for the question. I want to assure the member that the hospital, the North East Local Health Integration Network and the ministry are working together to finalize a solution that is in the best interests of the people of Sudbury and the people of northeastern Ontario. All of the parties are making decisions to ensure the sustainability of Sudbury Regional Hospital.

I can assure you that my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has ensured that I'm aware that Sudbury does face unique ALC pressures. That's why we've recently invested more than \$10.5 million to the North East LHIN for the aging-at-home program. The program ensures that more seniors can get the care they need at home, which helps reduce the number of alternate-level-of-care patients and beds.

I'm going to share with you in supplementary some of the other steps that we've taken in order to partner with and to invest in this—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: The people of Sudbury have been waiting 15 years for a new hospital. The transition needs to be carefully planned so that this extremely long and tumultuous journey becomes a success we can all be proud of. The Sudbury Regional Hospital will finally be on a single site. The hospital is planning to use the soon-to-be-empty memorial hospital site as a temporary long-term-care home for ALC patients, but planning is seriously compromised by the delay in this minister's decision. Will the minister do the right thing, help solve the ALC crisis, make the transition to the one hospital site a success, and fund the memorial site solution for the ALC crisis?

Hon. David Caplan: I thank the member for the question. I did mention I would highlight some of the investments, but I want to assure this member and all members that I will not do what happened 15 years ago, which was a 3.6% cut to hospital funding. I believe that this member was on the district health council that advised the NDP Minister of Health at the time. In fact, it was this government which got the construction of the new Sudbury Regional Hospital going. It was because of the member from Sudbury, my colleague the minister, that that advocacy was done.

I want to assure the member that I'm aware and working on a plan to ensure that patient care is not disrupted during the transition time. We're on track with the Sudbury redevelopment—

Interjection.

Hon. David Caplan: Well, The member doesn't want a history lesson, but that's the context, my friend, about what's happened.

This plan will include the use of the memorial site as a transitional facility for ALC patients as the new long-term-care beds come online.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Ontario welcomes more than 114,000 newcomers each year. These newcomers have the skills and expertise that our businesses need to compete at home and abroad, and helping these newcomers enter the workforce should be a priority now more than ever. Investing in our newcomers is also an investment in Ontario and its economy. We need to make sure they have the opportunities to get the training they need to find the jobs in their chosen field.

We're fortunate to attract so many skilled newcomers, and providing these individuals with the right opportunities to put their skills and knowledge to use leads to personal success, but it also gives Ontario an edge on the national and international stage.

Minister, what are we doing to ensure that Ontario's newcomers are going to come out of this economic recovery stronger than ever?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. Supporting newcomers entering the workforce is a key priority of this government. Successful entry into appropriate fields for newcomers undoubtedly strengthens Ontario's workforce and our economy. We are committed to doing just that: strengthening our workforce, strengthening our economy while investing in our newcomers.

Our government recognizes the potential skills that workers bring to Ontario. Since 2003, our government has invested more than \$120 million in over 180 bridge-training programs, helping 30,000 newcomers get licensed and get jobs.

We are proud of our record when it comes to supporting newcomers, because we know that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Introduction of visitors? Seeing none, the member for Leeds–Grenville, on a point of order or a point of privilege?

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: It is a point of privilege. I'm rising on this point for a matter on which the member for Welland and I gave you written notice earlier this morning. It relates to the statements the Premier and the Minister of Health made in this House about the steps they had taken to get to the bottom of the egregious misuse of public funds at eHealth Ontario, an agency of this government.

Speaker, as you will recall, the scandal at eHealth dominated question period during the last week of the spring session; that is, Monday, June 1, through Thursday, June 4. During those four days, the Minister of Health made repeated statements that he had ordered the board at eHealth to conduct a third party review of eHealth Ontario's management practices.

On June 2, the minister reported to members that PricewaterhouseCoopers had been retained to conduct that third party review. On the same day, the Premier also made it clear to this House and to Ontarians that PricewaterhouseCoopers was retained and that we should wait—referring, I guess, to the opposition—for the PricewaterhouseCoopers report before his government takes action.

In July, information came forward to show that PricewaterhouseCoopers was not retained, as both the Premier and the Minister of Health had earlier advised this House.

On August 11, Deanna Allen, a senior vice-president at eHealth, was quoted in a Canadian Press article as saying, "There was no contract in place, the board never reached the point where it signed a contract with PWC for the specific audit." The same article goes on to quote a spokesperson from PricewaterhouseCoopers stating that PWC "wasn't engaged with them (eHealth) whatsoever."

Speaker, the discrepancy between what the Premier and the minister told this House and the facts reported by PricewaterhouseCoopers and eHealth cannot be reconciled.

Earlier today, in question period, the Minister of Health outlined reasons why the eHealth board never proceeded with a third party review, but regrettably, he failed to address the issue he was asked about and the issue we're speaking to today: his assertions, supported by the Premier, that PricewaterhouseCoopers had been retained to conduct such a review—no equivocation.

Those totally inaccurate responses were, in our view, used to avoid responding to serious questions dealing with extensive abuse of tax dollars.

I think it's important to note that neither the Premier nor the minister ever once suggested the PricewaterhouseCoopers review as a possibility to be merely explored. Their language in the House shows consistently that not only was PricewaterhouseCoopers the firm selected to do the work, but also that the task of retaining them was a fait accompli. I'll explain with a few brief examples taken directly from Hansard:

On June 1, Minister Caplan said in this House, "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."

On June 2, Minister Caplan said, again in the House, "That's why in fact PricewaterhouseCoopers has been retained...."

On June 2, the Premier said in this House, "I think we need to wait for the report coming from PricewaterhouseCoopers." On June 2, the Premier also said in the House,

“But we need to get the best advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers....”

On June 3, Minister Caplan said in this House, “... and in fact, the board has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers....” On June 3, Minister Caplan also said in this House, “In this case they have taken on PricewaterhouseCoopers....”

On June 3, Minister Caplan further said, in this House, “That’s why in fact PricewaterhouseCoopers has been retained....”

And if that wasn’t enough, on June 4 the minister said the following in this House: “Of course, the member raises concerns, and both the Premier and I have said we neither condone nor defend the actions, which is why we moved quite swiftly to bring in and to order a third party review, under the auspices of an internal government auditor, in conjunction with PricewaterhouseCoopers, to be able to conduct that investigation.”

At this point you have to ask yourself: How could two people so highly placed in this government get their facts so wrong? It’s highly probable that a Premier responsible for a \$108-billion budget and a minister responsible for \$42 billion of that total would have checked their facts at some time between June 1 and June 4.

Let’s fast-forward to July, when we were told that the PricewaterhouseCoopers review was being cancelled. We didn’t hear this from Minister Caplan. There was no statement or press release. Once again, eHealth was operating by e-stealth.

And it gets worse. On August 11, in a Canadian Press article, Deanna Allen said the following: “There was no contract in place, the board never reached the point where it signed a contract with [PricewaterhouseCoopers] for the specific audit.” Deanna Allen is a senior vice-president at eHealth.

The article also includes another quote, this one from a PricewaterhouseCoopers spokesperson, who stated that their company “wasn’t engaged with” eHealth “whatsoever.”

As I mentioned earlier, we initially learned the review was being cancelled, but in fact the situation was much more damning. PricewaterhouseCoopers had never been retained for the purpose of conducting the eHealth Ontario review, so it’s fair to say the idea never even got off the ground. I will repeat here that neither the Premier nor the minister ever once suggested that the PricewaterhouseCoopers review was just an idea up for discussion.

I hope everyone here gets the point I’m trying to make, Mr. Speaker: Hansard speaks for itself. Both the Premier and Minister Caplan clearly gave misleading responses to members on several occasions on the same issue. And I hope you feel that my arguments, based on the balance of probabilities, are strong enough to raise concerns related to motive.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he made, please.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I withdraw.

I will repeat that, Speaker, in case you were otherwise engaged: I hope you feel my arguments, based on the balance of probabilities, are strong enough to raise concerns related to motive. If not, I would respectfully remind the Speaker that he is empowered to exercise options that a civil court judge would likely envy. One of those options, based on precedent, would be to allow a committee of peers to further investigate this important matter.

Mr. Speaker, I refer you to a ruling in the House of Commons dated February 1, 2002. In this particular case, MP Brian Pallister argued that former National Defence Minister Art Eggleton should be held in contempt for misleading the House on precisely when he had been informed about the involvement of Canadian troops in taking prisoners in Afghanistan.

In his ruling, the Speaker stated that while he was prepared to accept the minister’s claim that he had no intention of misleading the House, the minister’s contradictory statements in the House deserved further consideration by an appropriate committee. The Speaker invited Mr. Pallister to move a motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. That’s the equivalent to our Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. Since standing order 108(g) authorizes our Speaker to refer matters directly to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, such a motion would not be required in this case.

The rules don’t allow me or my colleague in the NDP to call witnesses before the House to substantiate our position, but witnesses can be called before a committee. We would all have more time in committee to find answers to the concerns that we and I have raised here today.

1310

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that you have a difficult decision ahead of you. However, your ruling on this matter can play a pivotal role in helping to maintain the integrity of this chamber and the members who come here to serve the public. I respectfully submit that a prima facie case of contempt of this House has been made.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Welland on the same point of privilege.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I’ll not be lengthy. I’m going to make it very clear: The facts are very simple, and there’s nothing equivocal about them. The New Democrats join with the official opposition in this point of privilege and this appeal to the Speaker.

Look, we’re not talking about a neophyte back-bencher, newly elected, who may have misused language inadvertently with no goal in mind. And indeed, there have been many occasions where honourable members have stood up in this House gladly to correct their record when they’ve been told by staff, when they discover via other means, that something they’ve said here is less than accurate. That’s a highly respected response when one discovers that they’ve said something that may not have reflected the truth in all of its glory. The language is very

clear, and again, it's a Premier and, at this point, a long-serving cabinet minister, both of whom have a great deal of political skills.

Let's put this in context: The heat was on the government. Problems were just erupting. Freedom-of-information requests were giving results on a daily basis. The press were running wild with it, with a whole lot more to come. Nobody envies a government in that position, even though they may be the authors of their own misfortune. Everybody here who's been in various governments understands how uncomfortable that is. Governments appropriately and instinctively try to spin their way out of these problems, and although not a particularly creative response, in this case the government said, "We will fix it. We'll instruct the board to hire an arm's-length firm to examine the matter and give a report back."

Let's understand what the purpose was. I'm not imputing motive; I'm saying what the purpose is in doing this. It's a response to political heat that's become somewhat unbearable, but, ah, you're blessed with the prospect of a summer break—this is not the first government to have done it; I've seen a few other governments do it in the course of my years here—and you hire the outside consultant.

As the Premier says, "I think we need to wait for the report coming from PricewaterhouseCoopers." The Premier doesn't say, "The report that may come, should in fact their retainer be completed." Minister Caplan: "We've engaged"; "we've taken on"; "we've retained." "Retained" means, as everybody here knows, to secure, to engage in. They used language over and over again that makes it very clear that they're not merely contemplating PWC or some other third party, but that they're doing it, that they've done it, and now everybody should just calm down until PWC delivers the report.

I've got two problems here. One is privilege. I'm mindful—and I just read it again—and I know you are and other members here are of the October 1989 Speaker Fraser ruling from the Canadian House of Commons, where he said that "all breaches of privilege are contempts ... but not all contempts are ... breaches...."

With respect, I think we have two things here: We have a breach of privilege and a contempt. The mere fact of stating an inaccuracy in such a highly sensitive political context and leaving the opposition with a serious misimpression, as well as the public of Ontario—that mere fact, in my respectful submission to you, is a contempt. It could have been addressed promptly. Surely—look behind you, Speaker. You've got minions and staff listening to the minister's responses and listening to the Premier's responses on a daily basis, who should have been—and, one can only fairly infer, indeed were—prepared to tell their boss that no, he wasn't quite right. They didn't say it just once; they said it over and over again, and they relied upon it. They relied upon it in here and out there: one, contempt; two, privilege.

We rely upon the, albeit meagre, responses. It's pretty thin gruel many a question period. But we rely upon their say-so to understand what the facts are. There's a

reason—several reasons—why you can't accuse somebody of misleading the House, because one is presumed to be stating accurate facts, and, more so if one, being presumed to state accurate facts, misstates a fact, the honourable, conventional thing for that person is to correct their record promptly.

So we've got an interference here with the ability of other members of the House to do their jobs—quite frankly, even the ability of government backbenchers, because I'm sure they believed their Premier and their minister colleague when their Premier and Minister Caplan sent them home on the weekend saying, "Tell folks this is the response." Come on. We've all been around here a while. These are the lines. "If everybody sticks to the same line, we'll be okay." Your response is, "We've retained PricewaterhouseCoopers. They're going to do a full audit. Let's wait for them to determine what the real facts were" in this godawful expenditure abuse.

There may be some who would try to trivialize this, who say, "Well, in the end, in the total scheme of things, it really didn't make a difference because, after all, the Provincial Auditor got involved." That's not the point, Speaker. That's not the point.

I took a look at Griffith and Ryle on Parliament: Functions, Practice and Procedures—that's the Australian authority—a very valuable bit of information on contempt at page 137. "Here we list the main types of contempt, and give a few examples of actions (by members and others) which have been found to be contempts, with emphasis placed on those still significant today"—bear with me, Speaker; I want to create context here. "(1) Misconduct by members or officers as such, e.g. deliberately misleading the House...." That's boldface type. The authors are saying this is still very, very relevant.

You don't have to make any determination of deliberate misleading, Speaker. We're prepared to live with the fact that, in the first instance, neither the Minister of Health nor the Premier had full possession of all of the accurate facts. What we're not prepared to live with is that they didn't correct the record at the earliest opportunity. Only when they got burnt by staff people outside of government did they even have to confront it, and then they avoided it.

That, Speaker, is the serious element of this incredible series of events. You don't have to make a finding of deliberately misleading, and we're not asking you to do that. But I'm suggesting to you, sir, that if you find that that Premier and his minister misstated the facts, clearly with the goal of providing a panel of political asbestos, and repeated it hoping to merely cruise through this, knowing or, quite frankly, at this point, ought to be knowing that there was no taking on, there was no retainer, there was no engaging and there was nothing being done that would give us any confidence that there would be a report to be read, as the Premier told us to wait for, it's not fair to the people of this Legislature. It's not fair to the people of Ontario either, Speaker.

We need you. Obviously, our efforts in question period are not particularly fruitful. We need you to ensure that

no member of this Parliament, least all of the Premier, be permitted to distort the facts in a self-serving way and then persist in maintaining their version only until they get caught. The people of Ontario and we expect more, sir.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The government House leader on the same point of privilege.

1320

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Yes, the facts are quite simple in this case, I would agree, from the member from Welland. There is no case of contempt and there is no breach of privilege. In fact, I would suggest that the members opposite should be quite careful in their request for your ruling on this, in that alleging that a member has misled the House is, in fact, out of order.

The place for this question to be dealt with would be question period. It was dealt with in question period today. I refer the members opposite to Minister Caplan's answer in today's question period. This is what he said: "The board immediately engaged with our external auditors and your appointee, to establish the terms of reference for the review. Staff of the provincial Auditor General's office and eHealth Ontario have met to ensure that the conduct of the Auditor General's review and the board's review was not duplicative and that the process could be handled smoothly." In fact, that's exactly what I said to this House, that there was that engagement of the board and of PricewaterhouseCoopers that did take place. Of course, as the member is now aware—or I hope was aware previously—the Auditor General took the step to inform the board that he was concerned about duplication of work between the external auditor and himself. He in turn asked the board to stand down—he being the Auditor General—"because of that duplication. I directed the board to follow the direction of an independent officer of the Legislature." That's a draft of Hansard from this morning.

On the question of point of privilege, I would like to refer to a couple of precedents for your reference as you make a ruling on this, Mr. Speaker. The first point of privilege was raised by Mr. Kormos himself in June 2002. Speaker Carr ruled against his point of privilege on June 17, 2002. I'm surprised that the member from Welland didn't refer to his own precedent, perhaps because Speaker Carr at that time was quite clear in setting out in his ruling exactly what the threshold was when dealing with a question of privilege.

I will quote from his ruling from Hansard dated June 17, 2002:

"On Monday, June 10, the member for Niagara Centre, Mr. Kormos, raised a point of privilege concerning statements made to the press by the Premier and to the press in this House regarding the Minister of Energy relating to executive compensation.

"The member contended that apparent contradictions between statements on this subject by the Premier and the minister and other apparent contradictions between statements made by the minister on different occasions left room for one to draw the conclusion that the minister had

exhibited a lack of forthrightness when addressing the House. As a result, the member invited me to find the minister to be, *prima facie*—

Interjection.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this side of the House was quite respectful in their submissions, and I would ask the same indulgence from the members opposite.

"The Minister of Energy also briefly addressed the point of privilege and discounted the validity of the member's contentions."

This is Speaker Carr: "I have reviewed the material supplied by the member for Niagara Centre, together with the relevant authorities and precedents. As the member for Niagara Centre pointed out, Erskine May on page 111 of the 22nd edition, under 'Misconduct of Members or Officers,' states: 'The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as contempt.'" He then goes on to address a precedent from the Profumo affair, noting that "an essential component of this case is that Profumo deliberately set out in a prepared statement to purposely mislead the House and then did so."

Speaker Carr then goes on to say: "The threshold for finding a *prima facie* case of contempt against a member of the Legislature on the basis of deliberately misleading the House is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon. It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable member would engage in such behaviour, or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake."

I'm going to jump forward a little bit in his ruling to just address the precedent that was raised by my colleague, the House leader for the official opposition, in dealing with Speaker Milliken's ruling on national defence minister, Art Eggleton. In that case, Mr. Eggleton concurred that contradictory statements had been made and that clarification of the reasons for this in a suitable forum was required. Secondly—and this is Speaker Milliken's ruling. Sorry; this is Speaker Carr's ruling. "Secondly, I see no precedential value to Speaker Milliken's ruling—within the ambit of parliamentary privilege—since, if the ruling is carefully read, it becomes apparent that a *prima facie* case of privilege was not explicitly found."

Now, in the conclusion of Speaker Carr's ruling: "I would generally be hesitant to appropriate for myself such an original, informal approach since the precedents, traditions and customs of this House around questions of privilege reveal a more definitive tendency. In my view, there are no shades of grey when it comes to parliamentary privilege, and I would not like to promote such a view by delivering a ruling that failed to address, squarely and solely on its procedural merits, the question raised.

“In the case at hand raised by the member for Niagara Centre, I can only find that I am left with what amounts to a genuine disagreement between two honourable members. As a result, I am unable to find that a prima facie case of contempt has been made out.”

I would suggest that that is the precedent on which you should rely in making your ruling in this case. I would also direct you to the ruling of Speaker Cass on May 10, 1969, where there was another instance of allegations of a member having misled the House.

In this case, it is very clear that there is no point of privilege, there is no contempt and there is no breach of privilege in this matter.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville, the member from Welland and the government House leader for their comments. I would ask that any of you who quoted information—certainly, those rulings dealing with previous decisions in this chamber we will have access to. But any information that you can provide to me would be appreciated. I trust that the honourable members understand that there have been a number of points that have been raised here today and references to rulings not only made within this chamber but rulings within other Houses as well, and numerous references made to Hansard. So I ask that the House give me the opportunity to defer my ruling at this time to ensure that we undertake a comprehensive review of the points that have been raised and the opportunity to review the Hansard. I will deliver a ruling at the earliest opportunity.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAXATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: In just over nine months, the citizens of Ontario will be subjected to the largest tax increase in the history of our province. The DST, as we call it, will start on July 1, 2010.

Over the past few months, with the summer recess, I've had a number of opportunities to talk to tourism operators in different areas about how it will impact tourism in our particular province. I think of things like an economy that has already been shattered and where people are having a very, very difficult time in that tourism business. Outfitters etc. in the far north are having a very difficult time. I can tell you that things like golf courses—someone playing a round of golf on an average of \$50 will pay another \$4 in taxes on that. If you're going to take a ski pass with your family, it's a \$50 ski pass and another \$4. If you tie up your boat, whether it's a 12-foot runabout or a 50-foot yacht, you'll pay another 8% on top of that. It goes on and on and on. And already the tourism operators of the province of Ontario are suffering badly.

Without a question, all of the tourism operators I talked to said one thing: “It will cost jobs”—jobs for

young people, and already we're looking at an almost 20% unemployment rate amongst our young people and our students. I can tell you, they cannot afford to go through with this. In the end, it will cost jobs. The reality is, we have to stop this Dalton sales tax once and for all. It's a mistake and it will cost jobs for the citizens of the province of Ontario.

1330

RIDING OF GLENGARRY–PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

CIRCONSCRIPTION DE GLENGARRY–PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: On September 1, I had the pleasure to tour my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell with 34 ambassadors and high commissioners from the four corners of the world. The purpose of the tour was to introduce the group to what Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has to offer to the world. The ambassadors were treated to a day-long tour of our riding. Stops included the high-tech Cloverhurst dairy farm in Cumberland, owned by the Edwards family; the St-Albert cheese factory; and Montebello Packaging in Hawkesbury, which recently won an award for its first-class toothpaste tube. The group also toured the Alexandria Moulding facility in Alexandria, and Potvin Construction cabinetmakers in Rockland.

Les gens de tous les continents ont constaté l'ampleur du futur parc aquatique Calypso.

Ils ont aussi reçu des visites guidées de Tulmar Safety Systems, Inc. et d'Alltech, deux entreprises dont les produits sont exportés à travers le monde entier.

Enfin, le groupe a reçu un tour privé de l'église Très-Sainte-Trinité de Rockland, la seule église catholique française désignée sous la loi du patrimoine.

Je voudrais offrir mes plus sincères remerciements aux ambassadeurs pour leur participation à cette tournée de Glengarry, Prescott et Russell.

WALK OF HOPE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Today I rise to recognize the eighth annual Walk of Hope, which took place on September 13 and was hosted by Ovarian Cancer Canada in Windsor, Toronto, Ottawa and 11 other Canadian cities. I would like to congratulate all the organizers, the sponsors and the participants.

The purpose of the Walk of Hope is to raise vital funds for ovarian cancer research and to raise awareness about ovarian cancer, including the fact that if it is found early and treated, it has a survival rate which can be as high as 90%.

Each year, 2,500 Canadian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and 1,700 will die this year. These women are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters and our granddaughters.

Yes, cancer continues to impact the lives of people of all ages. An estimated 63,000 cases of cancer were diagnosed in Ontario during 2007. Thirty-nine per cent of women have a probability of developing cancer in their lifetime. Although cancer mortality rates are expected to decline over the next decade, there will be a 40% increase in the number of people living with cancer, mostly due to our aging population. And so this walk was important. It helps to raise money for research and our awareness.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: Just recently, Greyhound bus lines announced that they were about to abandon bus service in northwestern Ontario. Now, as bad as that announcement is, the response of the McGuinty government was even worse. The Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Northern Development were heard to say, "Oh, this is not a problem. There will be local providers who will step in and provide the service."

Once again, the McGuinty Liberals are missing in action when it comes to vital and important services in northwestern Ontario. The fact of the matter is, Greyhound has been abandoning services in northwestern Ontario for about the last five years. There has been little replacement of service by local providers, and where local providers have stepped in, in many cases, the service that is being provided is inadequate or impractical.

Imagine being a senior citizen living in the village of Rainy River and having to drive 100 kilometres to access the bus, or living in a First Nation community and not having a car and being told you have to drive 130 kilometres to catch the bus.

We're not talking here about frills. We're talking about people who need access to the bus to get to medical appointments in Winnipeg or Thunder Bay. We're talking about basic transportation services. The McGuinty government needs to act.

RIDING OF STORMONT-DUNDAS-SOUTH GLENGARRY

Mr. Jim Brownell: First I would like to welcome all members back to the Legislature today. After an eventful summer, it is once again my pleasure to represent the constituents of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry as their member in this House.

It certainly has been a very eventful season in my riding. I am pleased to say that through the work of this government, my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry has benefited from numerous funding commitments that will improve the quality of life of the citizens of my region and stimulate the local economy. Through programs like Rinc, Building Canada, the eastern Ontario development fund and many others, this government has committed over \$45 million in new infrastructure and social funding to just SD&SG alone.

Just last week in Winchester Springs, with the assistance of a \$1.85-million investment many from this government, the sod was turned on the first of four new salt storage sheds being built by the united counties of Stormont-Dundas and Glengarry.

There used to be a saying in my riding: "Ontario stops at Kingston." Not anymore.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Brownell: That's right, Mr. Minister.

This phenomenal amount of funding demonstrates this government's commitment to eastern Ontario and to the entire province. It shows that we believe that all our citizens, regardless of where we live in the province, deserve the same opportunities, the same quality of infrastructure and the same level of service. It shows we will accept nothing but the best.

I would like to thank this government for the support they are giving to my riding and to the province of Ontario.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

Mr. John O'Toole: I rise today because of concerns over the service hours of access to Ontario's provincial archives. The Ontario archives are located in a new \$400-million home on the campus of York University. However, access to Ontario's collective memory is more than a matter of bricks and mortar; it is a matter of service accessibility and convenience. I am advised that the new building is only accessible during government hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. In the past, the minister would know that the archives offered some weekend and evening hours, and a reading room. This helped clients who worked 9 to 5 or researchers who had to travel to the archives from distant parts of Ontario.

I trust that this government will recognize the importance of customer-friendly hours and reinstate the service on weekends and evenings. It's similar to the state of the private issuers' networks being eliminated. I would encourage the Minister of Government Services to reinstate the hours that best serve the public and the customer.

RIDING OF NORTHUMBERLAND-QUINTE WEST

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's my pleasure to rise today to talk about the great summer we had in my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. Many exciting things happened there this summer but one day in particular comes to mind: In mid July we had the honour to host the Premier for a day.

We began our day at the Port Hope Community Health Centre. This CHC is a welcome addition to Port Hope, whose hospital was closed by the prior, Harris government. I was excited and proud to show the Premier this new construction that was completed in May of this year and came in under budget. They now have 1,500 clients, with about 40 new registrants each week. The Port Hope CHC boasts two new doctors and three nurse practition-

ers, along with dietitians, counsellors and a diabetes education team.

But that was only the first stop of the day. Off to Brighton we went. It was a privilege to stand beside our Premier to announce \$5.4 million from our Good Places to Learn initiative to fund a new school in my hometown of Brighton. You can imagine the excitement of the youngsters, not to mention their parents, teachers, principals and representatives from the school board. Plans are in place for the groundbreaking opening for September 2011 to accommodate 300 students.

But the day wasn't over yet: It was picnic time. The Premier accepted an invitation to join my wife, Diane, and myself for an afternoon picnic with a couple hundred of my closest friends, colleagues and supporters. What a perfect end to an amazing day.

Thank you, Premier. It was a day we'll never forget.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: As a Toronto member proudly representing the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I know at first hand the vital role that the Toronto International Film Festival plays in and for our city. TIFF has become one of the world's premier film festivals and likewise deserves a premier facility to call home. That is why a \$10-million investment in the TIFF Bell Lightbox underscores our government's commitment to investing in the jobs of today and of the future. It will be a destination for film lovers for years to come and will generate millions in economic activity for the province and the city.

This state-of-the-art facility, scheduled to open next year, has already had a large impact on Ontario's economy by creating 1,300 full-time construction jobs. TIFF's new home will also house its more than 100 full-time employees and provide year-round programming for Ontarians and tourists to learn, celebrate and experience film.

The Toronto International Film Festival expects the Bell Lightbox to generate approximately \$200 million in economic activity within five years of opening, and this is in addition to the estimated \$67 million and countless visitors that TIFF already brings to the province and city each year.

Ontario's film industry plays an important role as a major economic driver in this city and beyond as we continue to make strategic investments to build a strong economy and strong communities right across Ontario.

1340

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Rick Johnson: As September rolls around and the children start back to school—yes, dare I say it—this also means the colder weather is not far behind, and with that colder weather comes another flu season. The McGuinty government wants to prepare all residents for the upcoming flu season, which will be a different flu

season from previous years. With the emergence of the H1N1 virus, two separate vaccines will be made available this fall.

In addition to the vaccines, beginning next week every home in Ontario will be receiving information in the mail on how to prevent the flu and stay healthy. Some of these tips we've all heard before, but they can never be said too often. Proper hand cleaning is one of the important ways to guard against the flu and limit the spread of the flu virus. Hand sanitizers are also effective at limiting its spread. So clean your hands often to protect yourself and others from getting the flu.

We want all Ontarians to be proactive when it comes to their health, and we in the McGuinty government will continue to work hard to ensure quality access to health services to prevent disease and guarantee all Ontarians quality of life.

BY-ELECTION IN ST. PAUL'S

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Michael Bryant as the member of the electoral district of St. Paul's effective June 7, 2009. Accordingly, I issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I further beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the following reports were tabled:

On June 19, 2009, order in council number 1146/2009, dated June 17, 2009, reappointing Ann Cavoukian as the Information and Privacy Commissioner;

On June 23, 2009, the 2008-09 annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario;

On June 25, 2009, the by-election report for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock of the Chief Electoral Officer;

On July 13, 2009, the 2008-09 annual report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario;

On July 14, 2009, a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario respecting Bestech Academy Inc. and enforcement of the Private Career Colleges Act;

On August 5, 2009, from the Office of the Auditor General, the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2009;

On August 10, 2009, the 2007 annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario;

On August 25, 2009, a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario respecting Cambrian College's administration of its health information management program and the oversight provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Mr. Greg Sorbara: Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, June 3, 2009, I beg leave to present a report on modernizing Ontario's electoral legislation from the Select Committee on Elections and move its adoption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sorbara presents the committee's report and moves its adoption. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Greg Sorbara: Yes, Mr. Speaker, just to point out that the all-party Select Committee on Elections was appointed to consider the current effectiveness of the Elections Act, the Election Finances Act and the Representation Act in the preparation, administration and delivery of elections in Ontario. I am pleased to present to the House the committee's opinions, observations and recommendations concerning amendments to these acts.

Might I point out, sir, that this committee had a very high standard of co-operation from the three members who sat on it: the member from Willowdale, the member from Welland and the member from Carleton-Mississauga Mills—

Interjection: Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Greg Sorbara: I'm sorry, Mississippi Mills. Thank you for that. I think I have it now.

The committee heard from many individuals and groups with an eye towards modernizing and updating and consolidating the current legislation and simplifying the language of the acts we have in place. The committee considered ways of improving the voting process, voters' lists, professionalizing service delivery, a process for managing electoral boundaries and modernizing election finance rules, improving access for persons with disabilities, and better enforcement of the elections acts.

Might I say in conclusion, sir, that we received a very high degree of co-operation from an officer of this House; that is, the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, Greg Essensa, and the staff at Elections Ontario. With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Pursuant to the order of the House dated—the same as his—June 3, 2009, I beg leave to present a report on the prevention and control of hospital-acquired infections from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Gélinas presents the committee's report and moves the adoption

of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, the Auditor General released his Special Report: Prevention and Control of Hospital-Acquired Infections, in September 2008. He presented it ahead of the rest of his report because we felt it could have a significant and timely impact on the public health of the people of Ontario.

The committee worked well together. We reviewed the auditor's report and made 12 recommendations.

The first one had to do with accountability for patient care. We wanted to make sure that every board of every hospital in Ontario addressed the auditor's recommendations.

The second had to do with screening, regarding use and cost of universal screening for diseases like MRSA, VRE or febrile respiratory illness, FRI. We also want the report from the Ottawa Hospital, which is doing an evaluation.

The third theme has to do with routine patient practices and infection-specific precautions. There, we want reports back on hand hygiene, on isolation policies for high-risk patients, on making all new hospital rooms in new hospitals private rooms. We also want to hear back about environmental cleaning, that is, cleaning of the rooms, and new technologies for monitoring cleanliness.

The fourth theme was the use of antibiotics. We want a full report on antibiotics used in the hospitals, as well as a report on the new electronic drug dispensing system that is being used in Windsor.

Finally, under theme number five, surveillance, we want Ontario to set targets for hospital-acquired infections, as well as to report back to ensure standardization throughout Ontario.

Those are our 12 recommendations. I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TOBACCO TAX REDUCTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DE LA TAXE SUR LE TABAC

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 199, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act to reduce taxation / Projet de loi 199, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac afin de réduire les taux de taxation.

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: Ontario's world-recognized tobacco control policies are collapsing. The tobacco market is being handed over to criminal organizations that are both unregulated and untaxed. These organizations do not comply with tobacco control measures, including restrictions on advertising, sales to children, labelling, mandatory health warnings and emissions reporting.

It's time for Ontario to reduce its tobacco taxes again, this time by one third, and to encourage the federal government to take action, as it did in 1994, to help put the illegal trade out of business.

1350

BREAST CANCER
SCREENING ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE
DU CANCER DU SEIN

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 200, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening / Projet de loi 200, Loi visant à accroître l'accès aux services de dépistage du cancer du sein.

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. David Oraziotti: The bill requires that the minister ensure that breast screening services are provided free of charge to women aged 40 to 49 who are referred by a physician or nurse practitioner. The breast screening services may be provided through the Ontario breast screening program of Cancer Care Ontario or that program's successor. At present in Ontario, you must be 50 years of age to be referred to the Ontario breast screening program. This would have the effect of lowering that age to 40.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Naqvi and Mr. Zimmer exchange places such that Mr. Naqvi assumes ballot item 27 and Mr. Zimmer assumes ballot item 33; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 27 and 30.

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

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we also have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding presiding officers of the Legislature.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the member for York-Simcoe, Mrs. Munro, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the whole House in place of the member for Wellington-Halton Hills, Mr. Arnott.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Member for Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I wish to take this opportunity to wish the member for York-Simcoe well as she assumes her new responsibilities as a presiding officer in this House. She's an outstanding member and has always demonstrated reverence and respect for the democratic institutions we all hold so dear, as well as the customs and traditions of this House. We all admire and respect Julia Munro, the quality person that she is and the manner in which she does her job.

As I withdraw from my role as First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the whole House, I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well as former Speakers Mike Brown and Alvin Curling, for the privilege of working with them over the past six years, and I especially thank the table staff for their professional advice as well as the personal friendships we've had as we've worked together.

I should close by expressing my thanks to all MPPs who served here in the last two Parliaments for their indulgence, their co-operation and, at times, their patient understanding during the time I've been privileged to serve in the Chair. Thank you all for the trust that you've placed in me.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ted Arnott, the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. Ted has served as First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the whole House since December 8, 2003. I want to thank Ted, his wife, Lisa, and his three boys for their efforts to support me in my role as Speaker, and previous Speakers. On behalf of all members of the Legislature, Ted, thank you very much for a job well done.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I have a petition signed by about 4,000 Ontarians. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontarians who now live in long-term-care homes are increasingly older, frailer and have greater complex care needs;

“Whereas our elder parents, family and friends deserve to live with dignity and respect;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government failed to revolutionize long-term care and broke its promise to seniors to provide \$6,000 in personal care, per resident;

“Whereas five years of Liberal inaction has restricted Ontario’s ability to meet the demands of our aging population;

“Whereas more than 24,000 Ontarians are currently waiting for an LTC bed;

“Whereas Ontario funds significantly less resident care than Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and New Brunswick;

“Whereas dedicated LTC homes are short-staffed and have not been given resources to hire enough front-line workers to provide the level of care residents require;

“Whereas devoted LTC staff are burdened by cumbersome government regulations;

“Whereas some 35,000 seniors are living in LTC beds which do not meet more home-like design standards introduced in 1998 by the former PC government;

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

“That the McGuinty government must enhance long-term care by:

—initiating a sector-wide staffing increase of 4,500 full-time positions within a year;

—expediting the redevelopment of Ontario’s 35,000 oldest long-term-care beds by providing adequate support and funding;

—achieving an average of three worked hours of personal care, per day, within a year;

—simplifying the regulations which govern nursing homes;

—producing a comprehensive plan with benchmarks to reduce wait lists of more than 24,000 people; and

—addressing inflationary pressures by adequately funding the increased operating costs of LTC homes.”

I am very pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m really pleased to present the first 200 names from the people of my riding, Nickel Belt, for equity of access to PET scanning.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making positron emission tomography—PET scanning—a publicly insured health service; and

“Whereas by October 2009, insured PET scans will be performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Gordon.

GARDE D’ENFANTS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J’ai une pétition qui m’a été envoyée par Suzanne Hupé de St-Albert.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Nous, citoyens de la province de l’Ontario, méritons et avons le droit de demander des modifications à la Loi portant réforme du droit de l’enfance, de façon à faire valoir l’importance des relations qu’ont les enfants avec leurs père et mère, ainsi qu’avec leurs grands-parents, comme le prévoit le projet de loi 33, 2008, présenté par le député provincial Kim Craitor.

« Attendu que le paragraphe 20(2.1) de la Loi exige que les père et mère et autres personnes qui ont la garde d’enfants ne doivent pas faire déraisonnablement obstacle aux relations personnelles qui existent entre les enfants et leurs grands-parents;

« Attendu que le paragraphe 24(2) de la Loi énumère les questions dont le tribunal doit tenir compte pour établir l’intérêt véritable d’un enfant. Le projet de loi modifie ce paragraphe de façon à inclure une mention expresse de l’importance du maintien des liens affectifs qui existent entre enfants et grands-parents;...

« Attendu que le paragraphe 24(2.2) de la Loi exige qu’un tribunal qui décide de la garde d’un enfant prenne en compte la volonté de chaque personne qui demande, par requête, la garde de l’enfant de faciliter les contacts entre celui-ci et ses père et mère ainsi que ses grands-parents, compte tenu de l’intérêt véritable de l’enfant;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que les députés de l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario adoptent le projet de loi 33, 2008, qui modifie la Loi portant réforme du droit de l’enfance, de façon à faire valoir l’importance des relations qu’ont les enfants avec leurs père et mère ainsi qu’avec leurs grands-parents. »

J’appuie cette pétition.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the 13% McGuinty sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services; and

“Whereas the 13% McGuinty sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for coffins, coffee, haircuts, gym memberships, newspapers, lawyer and accountant fees and meals under \$4;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I have affixed my signature as well.

1400

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I am pleased to rise in this House today and present a petition signed by 1,000 Canadians in protesting the violation of human rights in Iran. Some of the signatories to this petition are sitting in the gallery. When I talk about "violation of human rights in Iran"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the honourable member, you need to read—the standing orders are clear: You have to read the petition.

Mr. Reza Moridi: The petition reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas millions of Iranians have poured into the streets of Tehran and other cities to protest against the results of the recent presidential election; and

"Whereas unarmed men and women have been confronted by the regime's armed militia and as a result many Iranians have lost their lives; and

"Whereas the government of Iran has repeatedly violated the human rights of its citizens, including the imprisonment of journalists and innocent civilians; and

"Whereas Iranian Canadians have reacted to this tragedy by organizing demonstrations in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver; and

"Whereas the actions currently being undertaken by this regime now face the growing condemnation by numerous countries, Nobel laureates and groups such as Amnesty International and the United Nations;

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

"To request that the government of Canada urge the Iranian regime to end state-sponsored violence against innocent Iranians, release political prisoners and allow freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of the press."

I fully support this petition, sign it and pass it on to page Robert.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

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

"Whereas the McGuinty government is conducting a review of the province's underserved area program (UAP) that may result in numerous communities across rural and small-town Ontario losing financial incentives to recruit and retain much-needed doctors; and

"Whereas financial incentives to attract and keep doctors are essential to providing quality front-line health care services, particularly in small communities; and

"Whereas the people across Ontario have been forced to pay Dalton McGuinty's now-forgotten health tax since

2004, expecting health care services to be improved rather than cut; and

"Whereas taxpayers deserve good value for their hard-earned money that goes into health care, unlike the wasteful and abusive spending under the McGuinty government watch on eHealth Ontario;

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

"That the McGuinty government not reduce or eliminate financial incentives for rural communities and small towns that need to attract and retain doctors."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of constituents like Roger Pierson and present it to one of the new pages, Alyssa.

TAXATION

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

"Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' blended HST will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes; and

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

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' tax 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 consumers."

I'm pleased to present this to page Gordon.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's good to be back. I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'd like to very much thank the members of the Islamic Society of North America and the big ISNA mosque for having collected some of these signatures. It reads as follows:

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

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be better performed in an off-site facility. An ambulatory surgery centre would greatly increase the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, reduce wait times for patients and free up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2009-10 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I'm always pleased to sign and support this petition and ask page Carlos to carry it for me.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition with regard to Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare funding. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas demand for health services is expected to continue to rise with the growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

"Whereas recent funding cuts include the loss of health care services at the Burk's Falls health centre, reductions in acute care beds at both hospitals and cuts to services such as physiotherapy; and

"Whereas the government is providing hospitals with funding increases of roughly 2%, but costs for health care salaries negotiated by the ministry and other fixed costs are increasing at a rate of 4% to 5% each year; and

"Whereas hospitals will face ongoing budget cuts as a result of insufficient funding by the province of Ontario, despite collecting \$12 billion in health taxes from Ontarians;

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

"That the McGuinty government and Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services for the people of Muskoka-East Parry Sound and provide long-term-care beds for Muskoka-East Parry Sound."

I support this petition and give it to Jacob.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have here a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly regarding the western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre.

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

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be better performed in an off-site facility. An ambulatory surgery centre would greatly increase the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, reduce wait times for patients and free up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative

intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2009-10 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I join with the members of the Islamic Society of North America ISNA mosque in supporting this petition and send it to you by way of page Nicole.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: "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?"

1410

"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."

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that on June 5, 2009, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to assent to certain bills.

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

An Act to amend the Coroners Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coroners.

An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of organ donor leave / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé pour don d'organe.

An Act to amend the Education Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

An Act respecting the budget measures and other matters / Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires et d'autres questions.

An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts / Loi visant à promouvoir une réduction de l'utilisation et de la création de substances toxiques et à modifier d'autres lois.

An Act to revive Deep River Management Services Inc.

An Act to revive 1173931 Ontario Limited.

An Act to revive Welechenko Transport Ltd.

An Act to revive a corporation named New Hermes Limited in English and New Hermes Limitée in French.

An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT (GREENHOUSE GAS
EMISSIONS TRADING), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
(ÉCHANGE DE DROITS D'ÉMISSION
DE GAZ À EFFET DE SERRE)

Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 185, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to greenhouse gas emissions trading and other economic and financial instruments and market-based approaches / Projet de loi 185, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement en ce qui concerne l'échange de droits d'émission de gaz à effet de serre ainsi que d'autres instruments économiques et financiers et approches axées sur le marché.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Before beginning my formal text on this, let me just say how good it is to be back in the House again, and to work with members on all sides

of the House to make sure that the environmental protections that we've put into place and intend to put in place over the next little while will benefit all the people of Ontario not only for this generation but for generations to come. I know that all the members in the House will join me in that overall goal.

Let me also welcome Helena Jaczek as the new parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, the member for Oak Ridges–Markham, in that role and capacity. We all know her as a former medical officer of health for the region of York. I know that she is very much committed in that capacity to bettering the environment for all of us as well.

I also want to pay tribute to the individual who served as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of the Environment for the last couple of years, and that's Kevin Flynn, the member from Oakville, whose passion about the environment and improving the environment that we live in and whose hard work and dedication over the last two years are well known as well.

I will be taking some time today because I think the bill is before us is an extremely important one. I'm pleased to rise today to begin second reading debate on Bill 185, the proposed Environmental Protection Amendment Act (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading). What we are proposing is a critical piece of legislation that, if passed, would have lasting benefits for our province and our people not only in this generation but also for generations to come. It would be a fundamental step to building a green economy and creating good green jobs for Ontarians, for cleaner air and for the healthy and sustainable communities we all want to live in.

Speaker, you know that we face a global environmental threat, one that is unlike any that any other generation has known. Just to point that out, I've taken about seven or eight articles that have appeared within the last couple of weeks out of publications here in Canada and elsewhere to show you the kind of problem that we're dealing with in the expansion of the greenhouse gas emissions situation not only in Ontario but in the world.

For example, there was an article back on September 6 of this year from the Canadian Press called "Increasing Arctic Methane Emissions Unknown Climate Threat: Scientists," in which scientists are basically saying—let me just quote you some of this, by Bob Weber.

He said, "You can see them from shore along the Arctic coast or even in some northern lakes—seething domes of water churned up by gas escaping from deep below...."

"Unimaginable quantities of methane—a greenhouse gas 20 to 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide—are stored underground in the Arctic. Some of it is leaking out.

"The consequence of all that seeping methane has become one of the biggest questions in climate science."

What is interesting about this is that this kind of situation wasn't even taken into account by the scientists who received the Nobel Peace Prize at the Bali confer-

ence, you may recall, a couple of years ago, who had done such outstanding work in telling us about the threats that the increase in greenhouse gas emissions throughout the entire world have upon us and how they're affecting us.

This kind of a situation, what's happening right now as a result of the defrosting of the permafrost, as it were, and allowing these methane gases to seep into the atmosphere, thereby increasing to a much greater extent than ever imagined before the greenhouse gas emissions that are out there, is just an example of how critical the threat of these large greenhouse gas emissions and the way it's expanded over the last number of years is to each and every one of us, not only here in Ontario but indeed throughout the world.

There was another article that talks about, "With Arctic Sea Ice Receding, Thousands of Walruses Congregate on Alaska's Shore." That was from the Canadian Press on September 9. They're talking there about the kind of unknown situation with these animals that have never been in this part of Alaska before, that are there now as a result of climate change and the effects that the rising temperatures have.

There was another article just a couple of days later, as a matter of fact on September 11, last Friday, also in the Canadian Press, that talks about, "Scientists Work to Unravel What's Behind Greenland's Mysterious Melt." The ice caps are melting there at a more rapid rate than was even imagined a couple of years ago.

My main purpose for mentioning all this is that we are truly dealing with a phenomenon, with a situation, that absolutely has to be dealt with, and we as a government are doing something about it within the province of Ontario.

We all know that it will take bold action and a range of strong concerted efforts from every level of government—federal and provincial, in North America, Europe and elsewhere around the world, and across every sector of society—to tackle this challenge. That's why our government has made tackling climate change our most critical environmental property. It is, for example, why we introduced our climate change action plan in 2007, with bold, ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets in line with some of the leading jurisdictions in North America. We stated at that point in time that we wanted, by 2014, to reduce the greenhouse gases that are being emitted in the province of Ontario by 6% with respect to 1990 levels, and by 15% by 2020. I know it can be very confusing to the general public, because sometimes people speak in terms of reductions according to the Kyoto Protocol, which is a 1990 reduction. That's sort of the base year. Other times, particularly the federal government has been talking about reductions in terms of 2006, which of course leads to completely different conclusions. I can just imagine how the general public can be confused about this situation quite frequently, unless at least we have a measurement on which we can all agree as a starting point. It is an aggressive and comprehensive approach of reducing greenhouse gas

emissions while transforming Ontario into a global competitive low-carbon economy.

I thought that I would just advise you and advise the members of this assembly and indeed anybody who may be listening as to what kind of a situation we have here in Ontario with respect to how many greenhouse gas emissions we actually have on a year-to-year basis. Well, you maybe interested to know that in Canada in 2007, the emissions that were reported amounted to 747 megatonnes of carbon dioxide, and Ontario had about 200 megatonnes at that point in time—slightly less than that: 197.

1420

The next question is about how that is composed, when you look at the various sectors of our economy, of our way of living, of all the various sectors that affect our day-to-day living. Some 31% of that actually comes in the transportation sector, and of course by that we mean cars, trucks, planes, buses and everything that moves, in effect. They cause 31%, so roughly about 60 megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year in Ontario. Buildings—residential buildings, industrial buildings, institutional buildings and office buildings—cause about 17%. The electricity sector alone causes about 17%. It's a huge sector when you think about it. Industry, large and small, causes about 25% of the total greenhouse gas emissions, with agriculture being at 6% and waste at 4%.

As you know, one of the first things that we did as a government was to start phasing out the coal-fired electricity plants. They will be phased out by 2014. Coal replacement is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30 million tonnes per year—30 million out of the roughly 200 million that are being produced in Ontario on a year-to-year basis. It is the single largest greenhouse gas reduction initiative across Canada.

I can tell you from conferences that I've spoken to elsewhere in North America over the last couple of years, the one thing people are always impressed by at various environmental conferences are two factors as to what we've done in the province of Ontario: number one, the greenbelt that we constructed around the province of Ontario, which is truly innovative and is always commented on by people from across North America; secondly, the fact that we are one of the few jurisdictions, particularly in North America, that are phasing out coal-fired energy plants. We always get very positive comments on that. Quite frankly, some people find it hard to believe that this is actually happening.

You may be aware of the fact that we recently announced the closure of two more units at Nanticoke as well as two units at Lambton by October of next year. These are coal-fired energy plants that will be shut down.

Also, over the last five years since we formed government in 2003, Ontario has reduced emissions from its coal-fired energy generating stations from 35 megatonnes to something like 28 megatonnes. That's a 27% reduction in just the last five years.

But we all know that that's only one aspect, and there are so many other ways in the various other areas that are

talked about that we should be working on, and that indeed we have worked on as well.

One area, of course, is the new Green Energy Act that we passed in this House, for which the regulations are currently being worked on and will soon become a reality for many Ontarians. When you think about it, doesn't it make a heck of a lot more sense to garner the wind that's out there, to garner the power of the sun, rather than keep burning fossil fuels, thereby increasing the greenhouse gas emission levels of this province? Yes, there are some very legitimate issues that have to be addressed, and we are addressing them right now, but any time that we can garner the natural resources out there that are of a renewable nature, surely to goodness that is always preferable to burning more fossil fuels.

You maybe interested in knowing, for example, that the number of turbines in the province of Ontario in the last five years has gone from something like 10 to over 700 currently. And with the contracts that are currently being signed, particularly once the new Green Energy Act comes into being, we can expect contracts for upwards of 1,170 megawatts of new wind projects to come online as well.

But we haven't stopped there. With respect to solar energy, we have contracted for almost 500 megawatts of solar energy right now, and again, that will come on stream within the next year. But we've done more than that. We've also encouraged individuals on a localized basis within their own homes, within their own work environments, to get more actively involved in the whole concept of energy conservation and the whole concept of retrofitting their homes and their places of work.

For example, as you well know, a \$150 rebate is available on home energy audits. You may be interested in knowing that, currently, over 190,000 audits have been done across the province already; 190,000 families and individuals have audited their workplaces and their homes to find methods in which they can come up with a better way to conserve energy, a better way of living in the environment that they are involved in so that in effect the amount of energy that's being used in their homes will be lessened as a result of the retroactive steps that they're taking to upgrade their homes.

As well, there is money going into the repair of social housing. We all know that with the social housing that was built 40, 50 years ago, or even 30 years ago, there wasn't that great a concern about energy conservation at that time. I know, from having been involved in affordable housing for the last 30 years in one way or another, that many of these properties can be upgraded to make sure that we make them much more energy-efficient than they currently are. Our government has put \$100 million on the table in order to make that happen, not only in the housing that's owned by the individual municipalities or by ourselves, but also by other non-profit groups.

Smart meters have been installed in 2.5 million homes. Smart meters are there to tell people that it's better to use power at one time of the day than at other times; it will

be cheaper for them and it will also not put any kind of undue pressure on the grid, particularly at times when energy demand is high.

We have a much more efficient building code that was passed a few years ago, and some of the programs that are contained within that code will be coming into effect within the next year or so. I believe that 2011 is when the new building code that was passed three or four years ago will come into full effect and force with respect to new buildings and with respect to renovations as well.

I talked about transportation earlier, and that 31% of all the greenhouse gases that are emitted in the province of Ontario come from some sort of transportation source. The fact that we have invested, of taxpayer dollars in this province, some \$11.2 billion in new rapid transit programs, particularly here in the GTA but indeed throughout Ontario, is done with one purpose and one purpose only in mind, and that is to get more people out of their cars and get them to use public transport. The only way you can do that is by making it available frequently to people and by making it available on a much more widespread basis than is currently the case.

Municipalities that run their own transit systems have benefited from this as well. You may recall that one of the first things we implemented back in 2004 was the fact that the municipalities were going to get two cents of tax that we got with respect to gasoline that was being sold at the pump. Municipalities have been benefiting from that for a variety of purposes, but primarily for transportation purposes, ever since that day. We've also fast-tracked the approvals for new transit projects. It's fair to say that with the environmental assessment processes, it used to take a long time to get projects approved, and particularly transit projects that are there to improve the environment. We felt it was necessary to expedite those processes and allow transit environmental assessments to take no more than six months to be completed etc. We are also bringing a low-carbon fuel standard that will reduce carbon in our fuels by 10% by the year 2020.

Also, in another areas, we've made some stunning improvements. For example, 50 million trees will be planted by 2020, and there are tree-planting projects going on all over this province. Why are we planting trees? So that they can in effect put more oxygen in the air, suck carbon dioxide out of the air and make this a better place for all of us to live in. I could go on and on, but I really want to talk about the benefits of this bill and what it will do for the people of Ontario. So let me just continue.

1430

Bill 185 lays out proposed enabling legislation that would, if passed, allow us to build on these steps by developing a fair and effective cap-and-trade system for Ontario. I know that the members of the general public who may be watching may be saying, "Well, what is a cap-and-trade system? What exactly do you mean by that?" So I went back to some of the fact sheets we have developed to try to explain the system to individuals. I just want to refer to them and talk a little bit about that.

A cap-and-trade system is a form of market regulation applied to greenhouse gas emissions. It requires industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but provides financial incentives to help in the cost of doing so.

Basically what we're going to do with respect to seven sectors within the heavy-industry area that produce a lot of the greenhouse gas emissions—I'll just mention those sectors to you. One of them is electricity generation, which I talked about earlier with respect to coal-fired energy plants, but we're also talking about industries such as oil and gas, pulp and paper, iron and steel, smelting and refining, potash, lime, cement, chemicals and fertilizers. These are large industries that, in the manufacture of the products I talked about, require the emission of a lot of greenhouse gases. Those are the industries that the regulations we're talking about here will be applied to first of all. We anticipate that there are about 230 of these industries in Ontario.

What we want to do is simply limit the amount of greenhouse gases that each sector that I talked about, and industries within each sector, is able to produce at any time. In order to do that, obviously the first thing that's necessary is that we've got to have the right data. We have to have these companies report to us as government—to the ministry—what their greenhouse gas emissions are in a particular year. That's what the year 2010 is basically meant for. So we will have that information by no later than June of 2011.

We will then go back to them and say, "How can you reduce that within your sector?" That's really what it's all about. When all is said and done, this whole piece of legislation is meant to lower the greenhouse gas emissions of the larger industries that emit more greenhouse gases than others. That's the whole purpose of the act.

If a company is able to basically use less of the allocated greenhouse gas emission standard, then it will in effect be able to trade the surplus—in other words, the portion of greenhouse gas emission allowances it doesn't need—with other companies that may need it, that may not be as technologically advanced.

Let me just read you this, so there can be no misunderstanding about it. It states that if the actual emissions are less than the allocated allowances to a particular industry, then the company that has unused allowances or a surplus can sell or save them for use at a later date. If the actual emissions are greater than the allowances allocated, then the company must purchase those allowances from other companies that have an excess to sell. Surpluses and allowances, under the scheme we're proposing, are quite frankly priced and traded according to the law of supply and demand.

We're asking for changes in the Environmental Protection Act, which already allows us to set limits with respect to greenhouse gas emissions but doesn't allow us to set up this trading system. That's why the changes in the act are required, and that's why this bill is before us today.

It should be clearly understood that cap and trade does not give polluters a free ride. It does give financial

incentives to companies to reduce emissions below their cap, and in this way companies find that it is in their best interests, obviously, to reduce emissions and convert to lower-emission approaches and thereby, in effect, become greener.

I would like to remind the members of this Legislature that we've been working for the past year and a half with many different partners to develop the basis for this cap-and-trade program that will help us achieve our climate change action plan. Last June, you may recall, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the province of Quebec to collaborate on a cap-and-trade system consistent with emerging North American cap-and-trade systems. Quebec and Ontario together represent the two largest economies and population centres in Canada. We have well over 60% of the population and well over 60%, if not a higher percentage, of the actual manufacturing that's being done in Canada.

As you also may be aware, the second joint meeting of the Ontario and Quebec cabinets was held just last week here in Ontario. It was an important opportunity to further our understanding and move forward on a collaborative approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We will be continuing to collaborate with Quebec on a range, including reporting, the development of a registry for cap and trade, regulations development and the cap setting itself. At last week's joint meeting, Premier McGuinty stated that cap and trade is a vital step to building a green economy and the jobs of the future.

We also called, collectively—Ontario and Quebec, and both of our Premiers—on the federal government to provide leadership by agreeing to a climate change plan that would be compatible with the United States and one that would be fair and equitable to all the provinces, and not put Ontario and our industries at a disadvantage. We know that there are real risks of trade measures for those countries that don't have greenhouse gas reduction measures that are complementary to the approach that the Obama administration, for example, is taking in the US. Federal leadership is also needed to ensure our industries remain competitive with their US counterparts and are not subject to additional punitive measures at the border. We will continue to work on positively influencing the development of a federal climate change plan in advance of the international negotiations at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, commonly known as COP 15, coming up in December of this year.

Partnerships with other leading subnational and international jurisdictions have been part of laying the groundwork for the development of a cap-and-trade system for Ontario. Last June, for example, Ontario joined the International Carbon Action Partnership, which is an organization made up of countries and regions that support carbon trading and are actively developing or have already developed cap-and-trade systems. ICAP enables the linking of established and emerging cap-and-trade programs by promoting consistent regulatory frameworks across national borders.

I can tell you we have had numerous meetings with representatives from the large industries that I talked about earlier, and if there is one message that came through loud and clear, it's that there was, first of all, an understanding that cap and trade was coming, that it was to everyone's advantage, not only for this generation but for generations to come, to lower the levels of greenhouse gas emissions. But they also wanted to make sure that whatever program we put into place, there was a consistent, fair and equitable program across not only Canada but across North America and, indeed, across the world. That's the one message that came through loud and clear: Whatever the final outlines of the program were going to be, make sure it's consistent, make sure it's fair, and make sure it's equitable so it doesn't put our industry at any disadvantage on the international scene.

ICAP enables the linking of established and emerging cap-and-trade program by promoting consistent regulatory frameworks across national borders, as I mentioned before.

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Ontario is also a member of the Western Climate Initiative, which is targeting the development of a broad-based regional cap-and-trade system by 2012. We've been part of this organization for about the last year and a half, and I can tell you that it contains about seven or eight states in the US, mainly California and states along the west coast. It also includes British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba on the Canadian side. The work that's been done by this subnational group in both Canada and the US goes a long way, quite frankly, to take credit for some of the actions and some of the changes that we've seen in the approaches at the federal levels in both Canada and the US.

As a matter of fact, we look forward to hosting representatives of the WCI who will be meeting later on this week here in Toronto. The Canadian member provinces of the WCI now represent approximately 79% of the Canadian population in the four provinces that I mentioned earlier, which translates into 73% of our country's GDP and 50% of Canada's emissions.

Joining the WCI has been a very important milestone for Ontario, and we are committed to working with our partners to develop the leading greenhouse gas trading system in North America. We value the work of the WCI in informing policy development at the federal level, both in the US as well as in Canada. As I mentioned before, it's clear that our efforts are having a strong influence on the broader policy discussion in North America.

The WCI is also key to helping harmonize climate change policies among jurisdictions in North America. It supports our goal of providing broad access to trading opportunities for Ontario industries that will deliver real greenhouse gas emission reductions at a lower cost. With all of the various discussions and all of the commentaries you read about, remember what the essence of this whole situation is, and that is to lower greenhouse gas emissions, particularly of the larger industries that emit the majority of the greenhouse gases within the industrial sector.

The importance of linking to a harmonized North American approach cannot be overstated, as I mentioned before, both to the interests of supplying broad access to low-cost reduction opportunities, supporting Ontario's industries and jobs, and to avoid any potential punitive trade or border measures.

As I stated before, Bill 185 will amend the Environmental Protection Act. It's only a first step, though. It will allow us to move forward the regulations to implement a broad and effective cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gases. It will basically provide the authority to set up an emission trading system that will allow us to link to other trading systems both in North America and beyond, such as the ones that are being developed at the WCI and in the US, as well as other international trading systems.

It will allow us the flexibility to respond to new developments as they unfold both here in Canada and in the US. Key to our proposed approach is the establishment of a fair and equitable system that would achieve absolute emission reductions and provide certainty and clarity for industry, for the marketplace, and for all the jurisdictions that are involved.

When we introduced Bill 185 for first reading back in June, we also released a discussion paper called *Moving Forward: A Greenhouse Gas Cap-and-Trade System for Ontario*. It was posted for comment on the Environmental Registry for 60 days and it laid out the details and options for elements of a proposed-cap and-trade system and provided the basis for further consultations with the industry sector. That will certainly happen during this fall as well.

We have been listening to industry stakeholders through our early consultations and through the multi-sector groups which have been meeting throughout the summer. Ontario's industry leaders, particularly our largest industries and largest emitters of greenhouse gases, are an integral part of developing a successful and effective cap-and-trade approach. And you know, some people may get the impression that industry doesn't want this to happen. I can tell you from my experience in meeting with many of the representatives of these large industries that I was very pleasantly surprised at some companies that are very proactive. They realize that this is the way to go, they want to get on board, and they want to do whatever they can to actually make it happen. They are not, as some people might suggest, necessarily wanting to delay this particular process, which was very gratifying. The responses and the feedback that we have received are helping us build a system that works for our industries and for Ontario as we move forward. Their continued involvement and input is extremely valuable to ensure that we get the fundamentals right.

It's interesting: When a cap-and-trade system and a trading system was first inaugurated in Europe in 2005, in effect the emission levels were set too high. For the first year or so, no effective reductions took place, because the limits that were set per sector and per industry were such that no one was forced to emit less than the year before. So we've learned from that, and we want

to make sure the system that we impose with our partners, both in Canada and the US, will be more effective right from the get-go.

Meeting with industry stakeholders from around the province, I heard loudly and clearly that they believe we have a shared responsibility to deal with climate change. They want to help Ontario with its greenhouse gas reduction targets. They understand that doing so is critical to building a new green economy and a sustainable low-carbon future. They are telling us we need to align Ontario's programs with the emerging North American system and that the scope of this system should be as broad as possible. They're telling us that we need to harmonize reporting requirements within a federal framework, with no overlap or duplication with the federal regulations. They want us to ensure that there's a system put into place that will be fair and equitable to all. And they are telling us that what is needed above all is certainty and clarity on what will be asked of them.

Our approach is based on firm fundamentals: establishing a reliable price signal, ensuring a level playing field for Ontario industry, and avoiding duplication with federal regulations. So what are the next steps?

In the coming months, along with Quebec, we will be releasing draft reporting regulations, a key step towards the implementation of a cap-and-trade system. We will also be working with Quebec to develop a registry for cap and trade, on regulation development, and on cap-setting. Workshops and joint consultations will be held with Quebec and with industry, as well as our other WCI partners, on issues that will inform regulation development during 2009-10, should our proposed enabling legislation pass.

Leading up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Denmark in December, we will continue to work with our partners, as well as with industry stakeholders, provinces and states, and with the federal government, to move forward on a robust approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating the root causes of climate change.

We as a government recognize that this is a pivotal time for our economy, our environment, and the future well-being of our people and the generations to come. By acting on climate change across all sectors, we can set the stage for a new green, low-carbon economic recovery by stimulating the growth of new technologies. We will need to make the transition and create new jobs in the process.

We believe a fair and effective cap-and-trade system for Ontario is both an essential step and a necessary mechanism to ensure that we achieve our climate change targets and do so in the most cost-efficient and fair manner possible. Cap and trade would play an essential role in getting us where we need to be from an environmental perspective. It would further accelerate our collective efforts to create a sustainable, innovative green economy and a prosperous, healthy future for our children and their children.

I am proud to be part of a government that has made fighting climate change a key priority. So let me

encourage all members of this House to support Bill 185. Let us step up to the challenge and meet our clear responsibility to the next generation of Ontarians and the strong, healthy and sustainable future that I know we all want to see.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond briefly to the Minister of the Environment's presentation this afternoon on Bill 185. I listened quite carefully to what he had to say, and it was an interesting speech in defence of the bill that he has brought forward, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to greenhouse gas emissions trading and other economic and financial instruments and market-based approaches.

I heard him brag about the 2007 climate change action plan that the government adopted and released, but I don't think I heard him acknowledge the fact that that climate change plan was only forthcoming after the government was severely criticized by the Environmental Commissioner in his report the previous year.

In his speech, I heard the minister talk about the Kyoto Protocol as part of the motivation, but I don't recall him saying that the Kyoto Protocol recommended a 6% reduction in emission levels from 1990 levels by 2012. I don't think the government is going to achieve that with this bill or any of the climate change policies that they've brought forward. In fact, I know that's not going to happen.

This summer I had the chance to meet with one of my most learned constituents, Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon, who has written a number of very interesting books, one of which I read last Thanksgiving weekend, entitled *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization*. He has recently edited yet another book called *Carbon Shift*, which I'd recommend to all members of the House. In fact, I had a chance to give an autographed copy to our new leader, Tim Hudak, shortly after I had my meeting with Dr. Homer-Dixon.

Again, I think there are a lot of ideas coming forward, but certainly the government has a lot of effort to bring forward on this issue and still has yet to make the case that they are responding to the emergency which is represented by the climate change challenge that we all face today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Toronto-Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The speech by the minister, in fact, presents more questions than it answers. There is no doubt that what we face in human terms, in global terms, is quite substantial, quite significant. "Crisis" is not too strong a word to use. I didn't hear from the minister—maybe I missed the words and the numbers—the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that will be achieved by this bill, and perhaps when it's his turn to speak again, he will comment and tell us exactly what the targets are.

My understanding, when I first heard about the Western Climate Initiative, when I first heard about the

discussion with Quebec, was that by 2010 we would be up and running. Now it looks like 2012 or later. If in fact—and I'm sure it's the case—the minister believes what he has to say about the scale of the challenge, the scale of the threat our society faces, why are we not moving far more quickly on this than he has outlined?

When we have gone through discussions and debates before on matters of consequence to our greenhouse gas emissions in this province, this government has failed to act, has failed to take the steps that are necessary to actually make a difference. We face a huge problem with sprawl in this province. The Places to Grow Act was criticized by credible energy analysts and urban analysts who said that the act that came forward would do little more than provide us with business as usual, and business as usual means ongoing growth in greenhouse gas emissions. When we look at the whole question of energy efficiency for buildings, during the Green Energy Act hearings we had credible testimony of the fact that the energy efficiency standards in place in this province are not enforced. So we continue to see growth in greenhouse gas emissions.

What's before us is inadequate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It certainly is a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 185, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to greenhouse gas emissions trading and other economic and financial instruments and market-based approaches.

I think we can all acknowledge that climate change is our generation's greatest environmental challenge. It threatens our health, our economy, our communities and our way of life. Certainly, as a physician over the last couple of decades, I've been increasingly concerned about the effect of smog on our respiratory systems, the incidence of asthma in children increasing, as we have seen.

So this particular piece of enabling legislation, of course, allows us to move into a cap-and-trade system. Cap and trade is important for Ontario's future. It will be one of the most important ways to combat climate change, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help in the creation of Ontario's future green economy. It will attract investments in new technology and create new jobs.

Under a cap-and-trade system, polluters are given an emissions limit. They can either invest in technology so they can meet the limit or buy unused credits from other companies who have made reductions even further than those required by their cap. They can also purchase other offsets, of course. Over time, the cap will be reduced so there is, in effect, a real reduction in emissions.

The proposed enabling legislation is a first step. It promotes Ontario's interests, especially in future discussions on a broader cap-and-trade system across North America. It allows us to align with the direction in the United States to develop rules and regulations that eliminate the need for border tariffs or other punitive activities. That's an important step in the right direction.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to be in the House today and respond to the Minister of the Environment on Bill 185, the act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to trading.

Really, I'm very disappointed. In fact, I'm hearing that from my constituents, who are saying that there really isn't any effort here to reduce emissions at all, nothing at all in this bill. In fact, if you look at it, this bill is a new Liberal tax, actually. That's what it is. It sets up a mechanism—and I'll read the explanation for the minister who's paying attention, which is a pleasure: "... make clear that the regulations may provide for economic and financial instruments to be created by or in accordance with the regulations, may provide for instruments created by the regulations to be distributed free of charge ... trading and retirement of instruments...."

This is really a mechanism for putting a new sort of carbon tax on current industry. They're already struggling. In fact, there are no emissions in Ontario now because there isn't any industry working. That's the problem—270,000 jobs gone.

What it does is, it shifts that money that they're going to collect—these companies can buy credits in some other jurisdiction, so they're spending money, called trading. That's the troubling part here. They're shifting the pollution to Third World countries, so it's really unfair, if you look at it. Minister, I think you should have another look at this; honestly, I do, in all sincerity. If your real premise here is to reduce the carbon footprint of Ontario and, indeed, Canada, you should have clear signals for targets. These are completely missing from what I hear today.

Interruption.

Mr. John O'Toole: Unfortunately, someone's sending me a message here, which is important. It's probably something on this bill. I'm being shaken by an interruption here. The technology is invading our space here.

But there's more in this bill that could be done to protect the environment. It's simply not here. This is about trading—taxes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of the Environment has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I can't let the last comment go. The message you may be getting is something like, "Sit down," because, really, you've got great difficulty explaining. When you said something about there are no emissions because no one is working, that is doing a lot of damage to all the hard-working Ontarians who are going to work each and every day on an ongoing basis. Yes, there are economic problems right now, but the vast majority of the people of Ontario are still working, and we obviously all want to see that.

I just want to read a couple quotes. One's from the Environmental Commissioner. What did he have to say about all of this? This was in his annual report of last year: "I am pleased with the efforts the government is

making in charting a transparent course to ensure Ontario will reduce its greenhouse gas ... emissions.” He goes on to say that he agrees that “the short-term (2014)” greenhouse gas target “is achievable. The ECO also accepts the broad sector allocations that will contribute to achieving the 2014” greenhouse gas “reductions.”

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He believes in what we’re doing and I believe that the Environmental Commissioner has it right, but I can go on as well.

What does David Suzuki have to say about this? He says that, “As part of the plan, the province has also set the most ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of any province: 15% below 1990 levels by 2020.... [I]t would be an accomplishment for the province to reach that target with virtually no help from the federal government.”

We want to make sure that our kids in the future have the kind of world that we live in today and that the environment that they will have 50 or 100 years from now is something we can all be proud of. The only way to do it is by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and this is a vital step to make that happen.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we debate Bill 185—it’s an initiative ostensibly to change the climate back to where it was—I do wish to stress that it’s called global warming for a reason, a reason that deserves a global response. We see here somewhat of a provincial, local response to an international problem.

On our return to Queen’s Park today, instead of debating issues that people across this province are talking about, issues like the 13% sales tax, eHealth, the latest OLG scandal and lost jobs—that has been mentioned a bit this afternoon, of course—we find ourselves discussing Bill 185. The full title is the Environmental Protection Amendment Act (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading), 2009. As was made mention of earlier, in what has become somewhat of a trademark strategy for the McGuinty team—when in doubt, grab those green headlines with ineffective, costly environmental proposals—very simply, this government has come forward with somewhat of a local response to a worldwide issue. Granted, it might look good on the 6 o’clock news, but I’m not convinced that Mr. McGuinty is going to have an impact on our climate with this legislation.

During the 1970s, we talked about, “Think global, act local.” With respect to climate change, I advocate “Think global and act global.” We should start, obviously, with Ottawa and Washington and their very important relationship with countries like India and China. On this side of the House, our first clue to the ineffectiveness of Bill 185 came when this proposed legislation arrived on our desks at a whopping page count of one-and-a-half pages, if you subtract the title page and you subtract either the English or the French. This legislation is one-and-a-half pages long. A comparison: Take a look at the recent US legislation, Bill HR 2454, which was recently in the US

House of Representatives. The title is the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. Instead of one-and-a-half pages, that came in at 1,200 pages long. One of the amendments alone was over 300 pages. That’s to be expected for an all-encompassing—not just a national issue, but an international response to a problem where literally millions of pages have now been written on this subject and have come out on the electronic blog sites, for example.

We need solutions, we require solutions, really, on a world stage to be effective. So the US House of Representatives just finished up that cap-and-trade bill at a total of about 1,500 pages; we’re debating a cap-and-trade bill of 1.5 pages. I see a difference here. Again, it’s called global warming for a reason, and it requires a global response.

To be clear, and this was explained somewhat earlier, Bill 185 is cap-and-trade legislation. It goes by other names—cap and tax, for example. It’s aimed, obviously, at reducing carbon emissions, carbon dioxide emissions and emissions of other gases—methane, for example—through setting emission limits for business and industry, with those unable to meet those limits having to buy carbon dioxide credits from those who emit less, or if some of these companies, industry or manufacturing have to increase their emissions, they have to buy more credits.

In many ways, the bill is what we see in this country as an extension of Stéphane Dion’s Green Shift, although it is not strictly a green tax of the Dion school but it’s an extension of the green tax. Basically it is a tax, albeit a hidden tax. Basically, as costs are downloaded, it becomes an extension of the Green Shift in the form of an indirect tax, a hidden tax on residents of Ontario and obviously it will have a negative impact on Ontario’s industry, our primary industry and our manufacturing. Hence, we hear the moniker “cap and tax.”

Now, in all fairness, this concept is far from new. Ronald Reagan and Brian Mulroney successfully addressed sulphur dioxide and acid rain through an emissions trading program, a program limited to North America, not global. So in that case, a form of cap and trade, a forerunner, did work with respect to those kinds of emissions between those two countries. But I do question, why would Ontario expose business and industry to an unlevel playing field? Why do this now, given the state of our economy? Why expose our primary industry, our manufacturing, to unfair trade and competition at both the out-of-province and international levels? Again, this at a time when the latest figures indicate we’ve lost 330,000 manufacturing jobs. That represents about 27% of the manufacturing employment that’s gone down the drain. That’s just in Ontario alone. We have an economy that continues to sputter along, if you will, under additional government hurdles and red tape, the kind of stuff we’re going to see in Bill 185, the kind of measures, rules and regulations that will only impede recovery.

I do think, in all fairness, Mr. McGuinty is beginning to understand this. I read in the media he does lament

Ottawa's cap-and-trade musings as a threat to Ontario's manufacturing and was recently quoted in the September 10 Toronto Sun, as saying we are "now going to be placed at a disadvantage because of efforts we have made to close coal-fired generation." I really think somebody in government should have seen that one coming.

One of my main concerns about this legislation revolves around the inadequacy of what I consider this provincial—local, if you will—response to a global question. Quite simply, if some of the main producers of carbon dioxide are not going to be involved in this cap-and-trade gambit—I think of China; I think of India—how can Mr. McGuinty feel he can change the climate? How can he change the climate back without the involvement of some of the major carbon dioxide emitters such as China and India? And beyond that, how would we continue to compete with their uncapped imports? Hence, the moniker, and we hear this south of the border, the name they have for this, "cap and trade jobs to China." That's what it's called in some of the US states.

Now, when you consider that China, at 1.3 billion people, is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, you realize the true nature of this carbon question on a global scale. This is quite encouraging: Very recently India, at 1.15 billion people and the fourth largest emitter of carbon dioxide, announced a cap-and-trade plan. This was announced on August 25. I find that quite encouraging.

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Instead of spending time chasing green headlines, handcuffing industry and business, as is the case with this particular piece of legislation, this government would do better to rethink its approach to cap and tax and ensure that Ontario does not cap and trade jobs to China.

So here we are. We're in the dog days of a recession. Yet again, government has seen fit to bring forward environmental issues to centre stage, grabbing headlines but doing little else. In fact, this particular initiative is yet to be much in the media.

There are other things this government could be doing other than pulling the rug out from under the industrial sector and our manufacturers that have—so far, there are some that have survived this tailspin economy.

I do find it interesting to note some of the historical background on this expansive issue of climate change. It's certainly not a new concept. I'll just back up a moment to 1969. At that time I taught environmental science at Simcoe high school. It was a program under our agriculture department. One of my course offerings was the greenhouse effect. We talked about carbon dioxide, we talked about methane. That was 1969. So we've been talking about this—I've been talking about this—since at least 1969. My concern with the debate we have today is that we will continue to talk. There have been accusations of this government planning to continue to talk on this subject with very little action.

Let's go back a little further; let's go back to 1953. A friend of mine, Robert McKaskell, from Windsor, drew my attention to a Globe and Mail article of May 15,

1953. The headline: "Carbon Dioxide in Air Making World Warmer." So we knew about it in 1953; we've been talking about it since 1953. This is not something new. Some people get a newfound interest, I have noticed, over the years. I do see these cycles of concern, certainly in 1969—and the Ontario government of that day brought in admirable environmental legislation during that era and throughout the 1970s. So we talked about this in 1953, and under this government we will probably continue to talk about it on into the future.

When there's a bit of smoke, usually there's some fire. I do regret that this present Ontario government has done little save for—well, we know of the ongoing coal closure shell game, the closure of all the coal-fired generating stations in Ontario in 2007, which did not happen. But I have seen very little as far as action with respect to climate change, with respect to dealing with carbon dioxide, with respect to capturing, compressing or sequestering carbon dioxide. Nothing has been done by this jurisdiction.

So again, we've got an opportunity for more debate: Bill 185, the greenhouse gas emissions trading act—the McGuinty green shift, an extension of Dion's carbon tax. As I mentioned, in some corners it's known as cap and trade as a short form; it's perhaps more accurately known as cap and tax. That may be a more accessible title once the other shoe drops on this one. It's a hidden tax, it's an indirect tax, and as I mentioned, in some quarters it's referred to as "cap and trade jobs to China."

I am concerned that the first shoe to drop on this province's attempt to address global warming is going to lead to regulation. We know very little of what's in those regulations. We know virtually nothing as far as the feedback that came in on the effort by this government to ensure feedback and a registry of concern over the summer, which wrapped up in July. I've asked for some of that feedback and have not been given any of that information by this government.

The minister mentioned the Western Climate Initiative, WCI. As we heard, this initiative is a collaboration—Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington—to address climate change. Ontario applied to join last summer—somewhat of a johnny-come-lately on that one. Other jurisdictions have joined. Utah, British Columbia, Manitoba, Montana and Quebec have signed on. But it really kind of says something that our neighbouring jurisdictions had not signed on with Ontario. I think of the big farming and industrial states: Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania. I really wonder, do they know something we don't?

Now, we understand that the goal of WCI, the Western Climate Initiative, and today's legislation, broadly speaking, is to address climate change linked to carbon dioxide and other products in the atmosphere. In very basic terms, we would be asking companies that have a need to increase their emissions once the economy starts picking up again, or that cannot meet this government-set cap, this intrusion into the marketplace with a cap, to buy carbon dioxide credits from those who are emitting less.

Very clearly, that's government intervention in the marketplace. I know that some describe it as a market approach.

We can look back at the historic precedent with both Reagan and Mulroney, the emissions trading program that was successful. It addressed sulphur dioxide and the issue of acid rain. That program alone was based on Canada and the United States being at the table; that was not a piece of Ontario legislation. That's how it works. It's not going to be, say, through WCI; it's not going to be Ontario and Utah at the table changing the climate, or Arizona, Utah and Ontario sitting at the table.

Will it work? Will Mr. McGuinty change our climate? I really have my doubts, especially because in conventional wisdom this is a global issue.

Now, Jim Prentice, Canada's environment minister, has commented that the allowance of trade sanctions on imports from countries with higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions—again, it could be Canada, China or India. If the United States, for example, were to put those kinds of tariffs on our country, that would be devastating if we can't measure up to what they have been discussing in the US House of Representatives and what they have now commenced discussing in the Senate. He describes that as a prescription for disaster. That's known as trade protectionism under the guise of environmental protectionism. I do put forward again that that's a debate better left between Ottawa and Washington, or perhaps the World Trade Organization. That's not going to be solved by Utah and Ontario sitting down.

There are a few things, though, that we must recognize in this great country of ours and in this province. We do know that fossil fuels—natural gas is a fossil fuel—produce carbon dioxide. This government is building a number of natural gas peaker plants in the province of Ontario. So fossil fuels like natural gas, coal, of course, and oil produce carbon dioxide. What we have to bear in mind is that these fuels also provide 77% of Canada's energy. That's why Canada—and Ontario—became one of the best places in the world for investment and development. That applies to Ontario as well, or it certainly did up until the last several years.

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When we do talk about this bill, we must consider a number of issues, threats if you will—clearly the economic threat. We must think of our energy environment, the climate threat, of course. They're somewhat independent. Provincial legislation like this isn't going to pull that together, necessarily. We have an urgent need in this province to reinvigorate our economy, like the United States. We do have to enhance our energy security. We do have to make meaningful action to not only slow down carbon dioxide production but to stop it and possibly reverse these kinds of emissions if we have any hope at all of addressing a change in climate.

I will continue to address facets of these issues, but I do wish to point out the elephant in the room, the fourth threat, and that is overpopulation. The reason I mention that is that if we turn to the legislation and take a look at

the preamble—and I do give the bill credit for identifying this somewhat at the beginning—"most of the observed increase in global average temperatures is due to human activities."

Because climate change represents a global problem, it requires a global solution and international action. National and international leadership is essential. It's great for Mr. McGuinty to be involved and to kind of run around a bit and try to get meetings with the federal government. That's a good thing, but this has to be an effective international policy framework, requiring robust action by all the major emitting countries and, by extension, various provinces and states within Brazil and India and across Russia. But the bottom line for this to work is that it must be global, and again we must act globally.

When we talk about the global nature of climate change, so many people fail to recognize that elephant in the room, which is population. The year I was born, the world's population sat at two billion people. So far in my lifetime, population has more than tripled to what I consider an alarming—I thought it was about 6.5 billion people. The population of the world right now is 6.78 billion people. That's a tremendous increase from the two billion people when I was born. According to population projections, the world's population will continue to grow until around 2050. I'm not sure what's going to happen then to stop the increase. Perish the thought, really—I hate to think about that. Because births outnumber deaths, it's expected the world population will climb to nine billion by the year 2040.

I would like to take a look at the world's three most populous countries.

China is at the top of the heap. China has just over 1.3 billion people. It's the world's most populous country. It's also the biggest creator of carbon dioxide. China represents 20% of the world's population. One in five of the people living on this planet is a resident of China. They imposed the one-child policy in 1979. In April of this year they decided to continue that policy through to 2010.

The second-largest country in the world is India, 1.15 billion people. The population of India is expected to surpass China's by 2030. Ironically, India crossed the one-billion mark the same year the world crossed the six-billion threshold. In 1950, India's fertility rate was six children per family. They have attempted to address their overpopulation. I spent time in India, in northern India, in 1969. I remember the very large billboards—two adults and two children—a voluntary media-driven birth control program, essentially, in India. I remember in discussions at the time, the projections were that voluntary birth control, this kind of program, wasn't going to work. Regrettably, it did not work, as predicted.

The United States ranks third among the world's most populous countries, although there's a significant difference in their population, at almost 307.5 million people. The United States is growing by 2.5 million people each year, making it one of the world's fastest-growing industrialized nations. Just take a look at what has been going

on at the Mexican border, for example. By 2050, the US population is expected to grow by nearly 130 million people. I suppose that's something like adding another three states of California.

In order, the other countries with very large populations: Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria, followed by Russia in ninth place.

So when we read the preamble to this bill—and I do say it is quite appropriate to have that phrase in there that climate change, global warming, is attributed to human activities. Part of that is just the gross numbers of people, as I've indicated. Since the end of the Second World War, people in this world have skyrocketed from two billion to something like 6.8 billion people.

I'd like to read an excerpt from an article in *Science Daily* from April 20 of this year. "Overpopulation is the world's top environmental issue, followed closely by climate change and the need to develop renewable energy resources to replace fossil fuels, according to a survey of the faculty at the SUNY"—State University of New York—"College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF)."

At 6.7 billion people and a changing climate—and I think there is a link here; I don't deny the influence that 6.7 billion people have on the earth's climate.

I'll quote from that school. "Dr. Allan P. Drew, a forest ecologist, put it this way: 'Overpopulation means that we are putting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than we should, just because more people are doing it and this is related to overconsumption by people in general, especially in the "developed" world.'"

I might add the trend is to consume goods, especially in the developed world. Our trend, clearly, and certainly in the United States, is to consume goods manufactured in the underdeveloped world, China in particular.

Another quote, from Dr. Susan Senecah, who teaches the history of the American environmental movement: "But, whether developed or developing, everyone is encouraged to 'want' and perceive that they 'need' to consume beyond the planet's ability to provide."

Much of that consumption is fossil-fuel-based and carbon dioxide-based, again, yet another reason—and it's hinted at in the preamble to this bill—that we have to think globally. That said, an overpopulation of 6.7 billion is not going to be solved overnight and that's not going to be—I feel it's addressed in this legislation but this legislation doesn't deal with that one.

1530

Here is another issue: cost. If Ontario or North America have carbon dioxide costs, and China, for example, does not, then carbon dioxide regulations become what many consider a massive transfer of wealth to a country like China. More importantly, it will lead to higher carbon dioxide emissions globally as we see production shift from what is considered relatively efficient factory procedures, for example, in the United States or Canada, to what is perceived as less efficient processes in China, just because they can rely on inexpensive labour.

Any thought that Ontario needs to lead the world on greenhouse gas regulations and that the world will fall in place and follow, I consider that naive.

I put the question out there. I have not received an answer as to how much this will cost our economy. What is it going to cost as far as our own electricity bills go, for that matter, or the electricity bill that US Steel down in my riding will, hopefully, be paying once they get running again?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's closed.

Mr. Toby Barrett: And it's closed now, regrettably.

When starting to think global—I think the question is interesting: How can you control all the carbon dioxide emitted by all the nations in the world, taking into account the different levels of development? I feel the answer is, you can't. I really don't have my hopes up on this one.

By the same token, how would we expect countries to create carbon taxes? How could they agree on carbon taxes? Come election times in those democratic countries, the temptation would be to cut those kinds of carbon taxes. I'm concerned we may see the same kinds of pressures on any kind of cap-and-trade process.

I do disagree with Dion. I feel that cap and trade in the long run would be more effective than straight-out carbon taxes. But maybe an argument can be made for these kinds of hidden taxes. But when you have so many countries involved, then you start hearing talk about trade tariffs.

I'm going to talk a bit about coal. The People's Republic of China is the largest consumer of coal in the world. It's about to become the largest user of coal-generated electricity. If anyone is interested in these figures, they get 1.95 trillion kilowatt hours per year, or 68.7%, of their electricity from coal. These are 2006 figures. In the United States, 49% of their electricity comes from coal. I think nuclear provides only about 20% of the energy in the United States. Canada relies on hydroelectric for about 20%.

China has 13% of the world's proven reserves of coal. That is their present key for economic growth. They can continue that for a century or more, although even now their demand for coal is outpacing their production. Their production, as many will know, is the deadliest in the world. They've got the world's worst safety record. About 13 people die every day in Chinese coal mines. In the United States, regrettably, about 30 a year die. Coal production in 2006, year by year, rose 8% and production was sitting at 2.38 billion tonnes. The nation's largest coal enterprises saw their profits exceed well over \$8 billion a year.

At this point in time, there's no question that China's present and China's future are based on coal. This legislation may not change that. My worry: If China is not onside and if China is not part of any carbon trading scheme, we're spitting in the wind, so to speak, especially if you think that hampering industries and manufacturing in our own province—and I know Mr. McGuinty is concerned about the impact that cap and trade will have

on manufacturing in Ontario. So if we hamper the industrial activity in Ontario and in various states in the United States, I am not sure to what extent it's going to make much of a dent in carbon dioxide emissions and to what extent the cost can be justified.

There is some hope. I think I had mentioned earlier that at the end of August, India did announce they had plans to cut 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year by creating a market for energy certificates. Reuters reported this just on August 25 this summer. The headline: "India Unveils Cap-and-Trade Market Worth \$15 Billion," and "The plan involves creating a market-based mechanism that would allow businesses using more energy than stipulated to compensate by buying energy certificates from those using less energy because of energy efficiency practices."

It sounds like a cap-and-trade program. The government of India "is setting up energy benchmarks for each industry sector. Companies that do not meet the benchmarks would have to buy the certificates under a reward-and-penalty system.

"A government statement said the efficiency mission would ensure an annual saving of 5% of India's total energy consumption and a cut," as I'd mentioned, "of about 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year from its annual emissions of"—according to this Reuters article—"three billion tonnes" a year. That seems awfully high to me. I'm suspicious. There is that tendency to kind of highball it and then anything that you can work your way down, you can get credit for it. Three billion tonnes a year—I wonder about those figures. It's a plan that will make things more difficult for energy-inefficient companies, a good thing: They've announced financial support. There's a fund that provides the banks with guarantees for loans to go to the energy-efficient projects. So it's nice to see the government of India bringing in a carrot approach.

They talk about a second fund that will support investment and manufacturing of energy-efficient products and the provision of energy-efficient services. Two funds; the government has indicated they have budgetary support. I'm heartened by that. That's using the approach of a carrot rather than a stick. Congratulations to India if this is true and if they are going to pull this off. That's coming a long way. I mentioned my time in India. That was a time of bullock carts and coal-burning steam locomotives. I found those gigantic locomotives so interesting to see as I travelled across India, steam locomotives brought in mainly from Britain and the United States.

But as far as this announcement—I know talk is cheap. I have been exposed to the Indian bureaucracy. It's ponderous and it's slow-moving. It certainly was in 1969. It would take me all day sitting in front of a bureaucrat to get a travel permit, for example. I always refused to pay the bribes, but at that time India was notorious for a very slow-moving, labour-intensive bureaucracy. I don't have my hopes up on this, but they made this announcement a few weeks ago. I think that's a good thing.

Most companies in India—and I will mention that India is Asia's third-largest economy. It's also the fourth-largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world. Most companies don't keep records. They have no plans. They do not measure emissions and at present, they have no deadlines to curb them. But energy efficiency is the focus in the previously announced climate change policy announced by India last year. It lays out a road map for a green economy, if I can use that phrase, but it didn't fix any targets for carbon emissions. With such very high emissions of carbon dioxide—after China and the United States and Russia—it's worth noting that India's per capita carbon footprint remains relatively low at 1.2 tons a year. Now, that makes sense because there are so many people who live in India. In the United States, the per capita emissions are 20 tons a year per person. The world average: about four tons per capita.

1540

The International Energy Agency—this is a policy group based in Paris—forecast that the demand for energy in India would more than double by 2030. If their policies do remain unchanged, per capita emissions will double—and we're talking about per capita emissions of the country that eventually is going to be the largest country in the world. Even at that, their per capita emissions, we recognize, remain well below the average of industrial countries.

That agency, the International Energy Agency, forecast the transportation sector will drive up energy demand the fastest, and India will soon be well known for producing automobiles. Coal imports to India are going to increase seven times over, and construction will skyrocket—again that's very energy-efficient.

Hillary Clinton visited India this summer, I think it was. She had a bit of a to-and-fro with the Minister of Environment and Forests, and apparently this did not go over well. Ms. Clinton, US Secretary of State, indicated to the minister, "It is essential for major developing countries like India to also lead. Because over 80% of the growth in future emissions will be from developing countries." Well, that went over like a lead balloon, and the minister, Jairam Ramesh, replied, "There's simply no case for the pressure ..." Again, the US is putting pressure on India to bring in caps on emissions. "If this pressure was not enough, we also face the threat of carbon tariffs on our exports to countries such as yours." And he's probably right. I understand that not only the United States but also Japan and Europe are talking about protectionism. They're talking about carbon tariffs on imports that don't meet the bar.

I'd like to talk a little bit about China. It's difficult to find out what they're doing. We do know that in China top Legislature, for the first time in its history, is specifically addressing climate change with a review of a draft resolution. So we're told. Ni Yuefeng, a vice-chair of the National People's Congress environmental committee, indicated this resolution shows the NPC is taking the issue seriously: "The involvement of the legislative body in climate change issues will help facilitate govern-

ment actions to combat global warming.” So I find that encouraging.

We also hear from Shi Zhengrong, the chief executive and founder of China’s biggest manufacturer of solar panels. It’s a company called Suntech Power Holdings. Apparently, Chinese companies have already played a leading role in pushing down the price of solar panels. They pushed it down by half, according to what I read here, and the CEO of the company goes on to say that through Suntech, their strategy is to build market share installing solar panels on the American market for less the cost of materials, less the cost of assembly and shipping. Now, that sounds familiar. I don’t know whether anybody here has opened a can of Aylmer/Del Monte fruit cocktail—that’s associated with CanGro. The pears and peaches in those cans and containers used to come from Niagara. They now come from China. They taste different too; I can attest to that. This is a trend we see. Now we will see it with solar panels. I’m not surprised. Just about everything seems to come from China.

As far as climate change and cap and trade, these international trading relations, say between the US and India, are important. US-China relations in our world are key. Again, I hope we’re not discussing legislation that is part and parcel of cap-and-trade jobs to China; this is my concern. At present, the United States—here are some figures—imports \$338 billion of Chinese goods. These are 2008 US Department of Commerce figures. India exported about \$21 billion to China last year.

But, as I mentioned earlier, global warming policies being considered by the United States and Japan risk provoking trade barriers, and officials in both India and China have been quite public in their concern about this. So it can be argued that we could go down the wrong road on cap and trade and, if anything, go back to trade protectionism. It can be an excuse to place trade barriers and tariffs on imports from other countries by calling their products environmentally dirty or beyond the criteria for carbon dioxide.

It is important for us to realize the World Trade Organization rules. They make it fairly clear that trade-limiting measures imposed to protect the environment should have the purpose of protecting the environment. They should not be used to address any adverse competitiveness on domestic industry. So if you break that connection between measure and purpose, you do have yourself a problem, and as a result you would see litigation and you would see retaliatory tariffs around the world, or you would see both, I would imagine.

I don’t expect India or China to stand idly by as their trade is embargoed, and I’m not clear on what Canada is planning on doing on this issue, for that matter. I know that Mr. McGuinty is worried with respect to Ontario’s manufacturing. Mr. Harper is on his way to Washington this week. I would hope there’s an Ontario contingent accompanying Mr. Harper to Washington, because we’re talking about an international issue here and I hope this particular subject is on the agenda. The bottom line is that we should not get tied up in developing moot local

cures that hamper our business owners while failing to address the expansiveness of this issue.

Both India and China are on the road to joining WTO, the World Trade Organization. India did walk out on the Doha round of talks last year. They collapsed, in large part because the US insisted on removing support prices for farmers and, like Ontario and so much of Canada, farming is a very large and important constituent in a country like India. As part of that process for these two countries to be more involved in WTO, the West indicated it wants more changes beyond the use of subsidies and taxes that we see in those countries; it wants co-operation on climate change.

Now, oftentimes when the words “climate change” come up, officials in India and China are quick to point out that that is a result—a creation—of Western excess.

1550

I have a thought: Ontario has joined the WCI, the Western Climate Initiative, with jurisdictions like Arizona and Utah, as we heard. When this was announced last summer, I would say to people in the coffee shops: “Ontario just signed a climate change deal with Arizona. What do you think?” People’s eyes would glaze over. It’s very difficult to explain a lot of this, I find, and I do regret that this government didn’t have any town hall meetings that I could attend to see what people had to say about this. When you talk about Ontario signing a deal on climate change with Arizona, to some I think it makes about as much sense as signing a climate change deal with Utah. Then I explain to them, “Well, Ontario did sign a climate change deal with Utah as well.”

If cap and trade is to be global, if it is to be market-based, perhaps we should really consider organizing it under the World Trade Organization. I feel there’s success there. Again, we in this Legislature are a provincial entity, and I would expect—I would hope—that Mr. McGuinty is approaching Ottawa and Mr. Harper with some of these measures.

Now, what of the United States, the third-largest country in the world? We know that the US House of Representatives passed their bill on June 26, also known as the Waxman-Markey bill. I followed some of that debate, and I got a kick out of some of this.

US House of Representatives, June 16:

“The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Latta”—that would be Congressman Robert Latta, a Republican from Bowling Green, Ohio, and he spoke:

“Cap and tax is nothing more than it is going to be, a national energy tax.”

Again, Mr. Latta represents the fifth congressional district in Ohio. As he pointed out, it’s not only the largest manufacturing district in the state of Ohio; it’s the largest agricultural district in the state of Ohio, just across the lake from the west end of my riding, and just across the lake from Speaker Steve Peters’ riding—an economy like Ontario, like my riding, based on agriculture, manufacturing and industry.

Mr. Latta, the representative from Ohio, went on to say, “But who’s our competition? You know, last week,

we had the AG secretary before us in the agriculture committee, and we asked questions about China. And China is not going to abide by cap and tax, and in fact the day that we had the hearing, they said that they were not going to abide by cap and tax.” He concludes by saying, “I would ask that this legislation be defeated.”

He did not get his wish, as we know. It did pass, although 49 Democrats did vote against Obama on that cap-and-trade bill.

He talks about the Heritage Foundation and the Brookings Institution, who have put out a formula on how many jobs are going to be lost. The Heritage Foundation has estimated anywhere from 1.5 million jobs being lost in the United States. Carrying out to the end date, the Brookings Institution estimates this will cause the loss of 2.5% of employment in the United States. In this Heritage Foundation study, they used what’s called a manufacturing vulnerability index. They measure the amount of energy used and the type of energy. Again, the representative points out that in the state of Ohio, 87% of their energy comes from coal. Next door in Indiana, just to the west, 94% of their energy comes from coal. So his particular area, his jurisdiction, is in trouble.

He went on and talked about the fact that it’s not just affecting people on the industrial side and the manufacturing side. He makes reference to his farm constituents. Like in Ontario, over half of his farmers have to have a job in manufacturing or in industry or in towns. They have to have that balance. They’re worried, as he says, about not only having to turn on the energy at the workplace, but also turning on the energy at the farm. This sounds all too familiar. Again, his concern: How is a farm going to survive, especially with the pressure from cap and tax? They’re going to go up 10%, as far as taxes related to this legislation. He makes reference to both gasoline and diesel prices going up 58%, electricity cost projections of 90%, all by the year 2035.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: They’re guesses.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I’m quoting a representative in the US House of Representatives, and I hope to be in touch with him. He’s the guy who’s fighting for his steelworkers, I might mention.

Let’s go to Illinois, another big farm and industrial state. Representative John Shimkus joined the debate. This is later on the same day. He makes reference to figures from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, which sent a memo to his delegation:

“If the Waxman–Markey bill were to pass”—and we know it did—“Pennsylvania is looking at a bleak scenario by 2020: a net loss of as many as 66,000 jobs, a sizable hike in electricity bills of residential customers, an increase in natural gas prices....

“And if you don’t believe that”—these are his words—“just listen to the comments made by now-President Barack Obama in January 2008: ‘Under my plan, a cap-and-trade system, electricity costs would necessarily skyrocket.’”

Republican Bob Inglis of South Carolina continued this debate. When he was in Spartanburg, they had a

town meeting and folks were joining in the debate. There were folks who spoke passionately, and he was in agreement. There were others who really didn’t buy the science of climate change. But there was a very good discussion, a very good debate.

I do ask the members opposite, how many town hall meetings have you hosted on cap and trade? How many meetings have you attended? I’m not aware of these town hall meetings in the province of Ontario on this subject. That probably explains why I do draw a blank stare when I’m in a coffee shop and I start talking about McGuinty signing a climate change deal with Utah.

So where were the meetings? I think Minister Gerretsen had a meeting. He spoke to engineers at McMaster. I don’t know whether the press was there or not. I didn’t hear about these meetings.

I encourage everyone here to host some meetings.

A number of times I’ve hosted a symposium on energy and the environment. I’ve invited Minister Gerretsen. I’ve invited the Premier. I had a meeting last fall. I had 250 people come out.

I encourage you to start having some town hall meetings.

Again, the member from South Carolina—and I know I’m running out of time—went on to state: “It starts by stopping the current cap-and-trade proposal. The problem with cap and trade is: It’s a massive tax increase in the midst of a recession; it’s a Wall Street trading scheme that would make traders on Wall Street blush; and it punishes American manufacturing because the tax—the cap and trade, which is essentially a tax—is applied only to domestically produced goods and not to imported goods.”

Indiana representative Mark Souder, with similar concerns: “The cap-and-trade bill, or as many of us call it, the cap-and-tax bill, are what a manufacturing district like mine would call a ‘cap and trade our jobs to China bill.’” This is in the state of Indiana. This is where a lot of Ontario steel is now being made—Gary, Indiana—and that’s a shame.

1600

He represents what would probably be the northwest corner of Indiana, this side of Chicago. That’s where they made the motor homes at one time. When you travel through there now, you still see the Amish buggies, and that will continue, but nobody’s buying the large motor homes right now.

He mentions here he has one thing going for him: “We have one of the biggest pickup plants in the world. It produces the Silverado and the Sierra.” I drive a GMC pickup truck. I guess it’s a Silverado; I can’t remember. The last Chev Sierra pickup truck rolled off the line in Oshawa last May 14. At least they’re still making them in Indiana, and if my farmers wish to acquire a truck, something that is required in the business of farming, at least you can still get them in Indiana. The steel for that truck, if it’s through US Steel, is not being made at Nanticoke right now; it’s being made in Gary, Indiana, which is regrettable. I have yet to see the province of Ontario jump in on that debate.

I go down to the front gates at US Steel quite regularly. I was down there Friday night at 9:30. My question Friday night: How many windmills would it take to run this steel plant? You can imagine the kind of response I got.

I think I'll end there. I know I have about two seconds left. I thank you for the time.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My thanks to the member for his brave attempt to get through that hour.

He raised many, many points, but one point that he touched on was the effectiveness of this. I have to go back to the parliamentary assistant and the question I asked the minister when I spoke before, and one that should have been answered before my colleague rose to speak: How many megatons of greenhouse gas emissions will this bill actually reduce? Because frankly if you don't have a goal, if you're just talking in very general terms about putting in place this legislation, then this bill's primary function exists to say that we have a bill rather than to do something.

There are a variety of matters before us. There's the American legislation. There's the pending federal legislation. At no time have we had any word given by the minister or the parliamentary assistant about how these things will mesh. If in fact a federal system is put in place, if in fact that federal system has any impact at all, will this government proceed with cap and trade in Ontario? And if it does, how does it sort out the whole question of emissions certificates?

There are big questions that should be answered to us, the legislators. We are being asked to vote on a bill that is of consequence, we are being asked to speak on an issue that is of consequence, yet we do not have before us the mechanisms that detail how this will be carried out.

I don't generally measure the ability or the consequence of bills by their net weight on the scales, but I have to say that the Waxman-Markey bill in the States, the American cap-and-trade bill, is a lot more detailed so you can actually say, "Okay, I can see how these mechanisms work. I can see how this rolls through an economy."

That isn't what we have here. What we have here, I think, is a placeholder so that the government can say, "We have a bill." I could be wrong. I look forward to having more information from the government on exactly how they will make this thing work.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to stand in favour of Bill 185, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to greenhouse gas emissions trading.

Some have said that it's too big a problem and that we should do nothing. I disagree. We need to be leaders in this House to improve our air quality and grow our economy. Climate change is an enormous challenge. We need to act now to protect our air for present and future generations. Bill 185 is an incredibly important initiative

that will see real reductions in our emissions in this province.

Air quality is a major issue in my riding of Mississauga South. The Clarkson airshed study identified our air quality as stressed. Residents have concerns about the cumulative effect of emissions in the area, especially in light of a proposal for a gas-fired power plant in this district.

That's why I welcome a comprehensive plan to improve our air quality and establish targeted emission reductions in south Mississauga. The OPA has recently delayed its selection in order to develop such a plan. By working together, our community has achieved this goal.

Reducing emissions is crucial not only to tackle climate change but to protect human health, and a cap and trade is an effective way of doing just that. It helps Ontario achieve its climate action plan targets, it helps to drive innovation and it also accelerates Ontario's transformation to a low-carbon economy that will bring the associated new green jobs.

That's why I support this bill, which reduces emissions province-wide and grows our green economy. It will help set and achieve real targets for emission reductions. These efforts are crucial not only for my community, but crucial for the province of Ontario, and they will benefit generations to come.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to be able to stand today and make a few comments today on our member's leadoff speech. I really wanted to go back to the minister's speech when he actually, in his closing remark, chastised the member from Durham. He used two examples. In one, he used comments from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Mr. Gord Miller, and how Mr. Miller supported this legislation. Then he brought up the topic of the David Suzuki Foundation and how the Suzuki foundation supported this legislation. I agree that you take those opportunities and you use those kind of comments.

However, it's just been so amazing. I've been through the site 41 landfill battle this summer up in Tiny township. I think we've all heard about it. It was amazing that those very same two people—Mr. David Suzuki from the Suzuki foundation wrote a letter to the Premier and to the Minister of the Environment asking them to please reconsider and intervene. Also, the Environmental Commissioner has given a long report on an application I put in under the Environmental Bill of Rights to have the application reviewed. He is completely ignoring the Environmental Commissioner on that particular application. So it's nice how you can be selective on one bill, but when the facts come forward from another issue, you completely ignore them. They've had no response or anything else. The Environmental Commissioner was completely ignored on his thoughts on the site 41 legislation. The Minister of the Environment basically stood idly by and did nothing. I thought it was interesting that when you're creating legislation, how selective a minister can be in his thoughts and comments at particular times.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to my colleague and friend from Haldimand–Norfolk. He spoke quite eloquently for about an hour. It was a little rambling at times, I must admit, but he came up with some good points, points that I often do not hear. One of the points that he did talk about was the problem in the world of overpopulation and how overpopulation is driving the environmental degradation to the same extent as, or possibly to a greater extent than, global warming. It is refreshing to hear that because very often, when one talks about seven, eight, 10 or 12 billion people as if it's not going to impact the earth, it is an erroneous assumption.

He also talked about the fact that—and I listened intently—he was more in favour of cap and trade than a carbon tax, although he then went on to attack the cap and trade for a good deal of his speech. I would have to agree with him that the cap and trade is probably a far better system. Canadians in general seem to believe that as well.

But when it came down to him talking about his arguments, he seemed to give less weight to the environmental degradation problems that are occurring than he did to the economic argument. I have heard the economic argument, and I think most of us have for a long time. People are afraid to take that bold first step to a greener economy, a greener future for themselves and for their children because it may cost jobs and it may cost in terms of money, and I think we ought to reject that. We ought to, for the sake of our children and the people who are going to follow us, reject that, because we have to leave the world in at least as good a position, and perhaps a better, than we found it ourselves. He has questioned the environmental aspect of all of this, but not the economy, and I think we have to start looking at the two in tandem. The economy that produces a degrading environment has to go just as fast as the degrading environment itself.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the comments. The member from Toronto–Danforth raised some very good questions. Through this legislation, how much carbon dioxide will be prevented? How do we measure this? How does it work? Where's the detail? I have to admit I have not read the 1,500 pages of the US representatives' bill.

1610

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Why not?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I know. Why haven't I? I plead guilty. I don't know how to get it on the computer. I also do not have high-speed Internet. I live out in the sticks and I don't think I'd be able to access it.

But the concern—and I concur that there is concern if this one and a half pages is just kind of show-and-sham politics.

The member from Mississauga South mentioned that natural gas plant peaker plant. Yes, natural gas is a fossil

fuel. It creates carbon dioxide. These plants are being built by your government in the province of Ontario. At least you're not fighting a nuclear plant in your riding or a brand new coal plant, as we see in so much of the rest of the world.

The member for Simcoe North, speaking of fighting, is involved with site 41, and his indication is that either the Minister of the Environment's not up to the job on that one or the ministerial processes or the environmental processes are just not able to deal with that and give people the kind of say that they want.

The member for Beaches–East York: I appreciate him picking up on this issue of overpopulation. In my view, 6.7 billion people do create, by various means, an awful lot of carbon dioxide and do have a tremendous impact on the world.

As far as the economic impact, I ran out of time. I would have talked more about the potential damage to the economy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate? The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I still have my supporters and enthusiasts in this House—not a lot of them, but I still have them.

Madam Speaker, as you know, Ontarians want to know in a fundamental way that their children will have a future, that their grandchildren will have a healthy environment, an Ontario that will be clean, that will be prosperous. They know that the threat of climate change is real and they are looking to the government, they are looking to all legislators to actually take the action necessary to stabilize our climate, to deal with our economy, to give us that future. They want the government of Ontario to act now, to act forcefully, to act effectively to make a difference in the next few years so that we don't have significant disruption of our society.

Bill 185, the bill that's before us, aims to set up a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions here in Ontario. Our party, New Democrats, have serious concerns about the effectiveness and the fairness of what's put before us. I have to say that part of our concern comes from the very fact that the bill is so skeletal that it is hard to know, in fact, what will actually arise out of what's before us. We're concerned that this plan is neither effective nor fair.

I want to talk today about the context within which this plan has to function, I want to talk today about what I believe has to be in such a bill for it to be of consequence and I want to talk about the larger question of how we take on climate issue, how we take on the economic issue here in Ontario.

We face two great races before us. There's a race to stabilize the climate, and I'll talk about that at greater length, but there's a race to get ahead of the changes that are happening in the world so that we don't deal with disruption that we can't handle. There's another race, and that's the clean energy race. Increasingly, as I read the literature, it is very apparent that in the United States,

China and the European Union they understand that just as the space race defined a lot of technological policy, foreign policy and military policy in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the clean energy race, the race both for the industries of the 21st century and for energy security, is going to be critical to the well-being of government and nations in the decade to come, and we can't afford in Ontario, in Canada, to be non-players, to be out of those races, to be losers, laggards in that race. This bill as put before us today doesn't, in my opinion, take us very far forward in either of those races.

I want to first talk about that race to stabilize the climate, because there are consequences to climate change that are both local and global. Every year that passes, climate change becomes a greater threat to the health and economic well-being of Ontario. Ontarians are already suffering the effects of global warming. Take, for instance, the increase in the number of extreme weather events in Ontario. This past summer, thousands of people in Hamilton, Ontario, had their basements flooded in a once-in-a-century storm. Well, that term, "once in a century," a term that was developed for engineers to design capacity for sewers, to set up the proper infrastructure for buildings, is going out the window, because what was once in a century is going to become far more often once in a decade. People in Hamilton, directly in their basements, took an economic hit because the scope of extreme weather events is getting greater, and the frequency is becoming more often.

We lost the life of a boy this summer, and hundreds lost their homes in Vaughan because of a very large, powerful storm system that moved through Ontario with multiple tornadoes. Residents in Ottawa, Sarnia, Thunder Bay and Peterborough have all experienced damaging flooding events over the past 20 years, leading to hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. David Suzuki was referenced earlier in this debate. Recently his foundation commented that the frequency of natural disasters in Canada has tripled between the 1960s and the 1990s, at least in part because of warmer air associated with climate change.

So the reality for us here in Ontario is that we are getting hit, that we are starting to take damage at the first, very low-level edge of climate change that we're seeing here in this province. This is like a day towards the end of winter, and we can see summer coming towards us, much hotter. This is like a warm day at the end of winter, the events that we're starting to see now. We are seeing effects globally that are going to affect us locally. Impacts that are distant now will have substantial consequences for us, for our families and for our country in the years to come. Just this August, the Danish Institute of Meteorology reported that the expectation that the Arctic would be ice-free decades from now isn't in touch with the trends that are actually there, that in fact by 2015 we may well see an ice-free Arctic.

I have to tell you a personal story, Madam Speaker. In 2001, I went to the Kyoto negotiations in Bonn, and when I was flying over there I was reading the text of a

book by Bob Hunter, who is a prominent environmentalist in Canada.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Was.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Was. Thank you. Bob had written a book called *Thermageddon*, and this was in 2001. We both followed the science, and he said, you know, "I can't believe that the Arctic ice cap is going to be around much longer than 2030, and when we hit that point, there's going to be a substantial disruption of world weather systems." I liked Bob, but I really thought he was a bit off the mark, because everyone in the scientific community was saying 2040 or 2050. What's clear is that he was being conservative when he said 2030, and the estimates that we had in the 1990s and the beginning of this decade understated the scale of change and the pace at which change could and has come. That's of consequence for us in terms of rainfall patterns all over this country, all over this world.

To the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, if you look at the study that was done by the government of Canada in the 1990s talking about agriculture in Ontario and the need in this province in the next few decade for irrigation-based agriculture becoming far more dominant than it's ever been in our history, that has consequences in terms of cost, in terms of the burden that will be put on agriculture. That matters to us. That matters to us profoundly.

1620

This weekend the Toronto Star ran a series on India and the impact of drought there; their headline: "India: Dying of Thirst." The reality is that with climate change we're beginning to see a disruption of the monsoon upon which agriculture depends in East Africa and South Asia. Any members in this Legislature who come from a South Asian background, from the Punjab, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh, all of those people and the communities that they are connected into are going to have to deal with the reality of disruption. The erratic nature of the monsoon is already setting in. When they talk in this Star article about the impact in India, they talk about a 40% reduction in food productivity in that country in the next 70 years. Seventy years is a long time, but frankly, given the growth of the population, even if the growth of food flatlines in the next few years, that is of substantial consequence. If the production of food drops 10% in the next decade or 15 years in India, in South Asia, that is of substantial consequence to the stability of that region and to the families and communities that we all connect into because South Asia is no longer a stranger. All of us have South Asian friends. All of us have South Asia as part of our lives here in Ontario.

It's very clear now that the projections that were done in the 1990s and the beginning of this decade understated the situation and that we have a problem moving much faster than we expected at that time.

There's a second reality that I referred to at the beginning of my speech and I need to expand on now, and that's the clean energy race. If you look around the

world, governments understand that oil and natural gas are not going to go on forever. You see China moving into East Africa. You see it moving into the Sudan. You see an interest of China in the oil sands in Canada. You see American, Russian, European and Brazilian interests in oil that are going after a resource that is crucial to the operation of the industrial machine, to the operation of transportation in this world. Countries understand that they have to secure their future by making sure they have as much energy as they're going to need to operate their society, and secondly, they know whoever is making the products of the future is going to have an extraordinary advantage over those countries that don't have those products. These issues all tie together: climate action and economic action.

China has seen that renewable power development is a priority for their economic future, and so they have actually decided in the last year to invest from \$400 billion to \$700 billion over the next decade in renewable energy. They have decided to become strategically significant on a global level in renewable power. They've already, or they will have by the end of this year, installed enough wind energy capacity to make them the largest wind electricity producer in the world. They are already the leading solar panel manufacturer in the world. They're competing with Japan to become the number one producer of electric cars. They're starting to nail down their abilities in a variety of crucial technical areas. And this, for us, has got to mean a lot of hope, because there's no question that the emissions from China and India are a problem for the world's climate, and to the extent that China, India and other countries that rely on fossil fuels move into renewables, that's an advantage for us.

But the concern is that we here in North America are being left behind. We made a huge mistake in the 1960s and 1970s with electronics. The whole electronics revolution—all the consumer electronics that we rely on now are made in Asia. In the 1960s in North America, there was a focus on protecting vacuum tube manufacturers selling transistor patents to Japan. Today we don't have that many vacuum tube manufacturers left in North America. It ain't there anymore. We have microchips, we have transistors, we have very sophisticated electronics, and it has moved away from this continent. We on this continent have felt for a long time that we could become a service-oriented economy, that we could do banking, we could do engineering, we could do the thinking, and someone else would do the manufacturing work, the assembly work. Frankly, that is not going to hold up over decades. Those who control the technologies of tomorrow by manufacturing now are going to be the leaders in the world economy, and we will become their hinterland. That's of consequence for us.

And so we have these two races, to stabilize the climate and to make sure that we're an economic player for the decades to come. This bill and the plan within which it exists are too feeble to actually drive the changes that have to happen so that we're players in those two races.

Ontarians want serious action on greenhouse gas reduction, they want serious action on creation of green jobs, and right now they're not seeing it. They don't believe it's happening, and they are right. According to a Harris/Decima poll that was released in August, 70% of Ontarians think the environment should be as high a priority for governments as the economy, even during a recession. They believe that we as legislators should be taking action to protect their health and their future even now; it should not be something put on the back burner. A similar percentage of Ontarians say that the environment is more important to them now than it was 10 years ago. When you see headlines like "India: Dying of Thirst," when you see storms coming through and flooding thousands of basements, and lines of tornadoes running across southern Ontario, then after a while you put together the pieces and you say, "You know what? We've got a serious problem here. We've got to do something about this. We can't just rely on photo ops and very skimpy bills that get to have a history of announcement and reannouncement and reannouncement."

Ontarians are worried that the action that will be taken to deal with environmental issues won't be taken in a way that is fair and that allows them to hang on to their standard of living. Some people, when I say that, sort of recoil and think, "Well, they want to live in a palatial way." But a lot of people live paycheque to paycheque, and for them, price shocks are extraordinarily difficult. So when we go forward with a plan, it's one that has to protect people so they can continue to lead stable lives, lead lives avoiding as much deprivation as possible, while at the same time making those changes to our atmosphere and our economy that allow to us move forward.

Those people fear that this government will let very powerful companies, very wealthy people, get away with doing what they want while they in fact have to take the hit economically and take the hit environmentally. Those same people are the ones who are affected by heat waves, because good air conditioning is expensive. They are hit by floods. They are hit by extreme cold weather. These people, the big bulk of the population, our folks, don't have the money to make the kind of investments that they need to reduce the energy consumption in their homes, and they need to have that support. They need to have government financing programs like the ones that exist in Manitoba so they can get low-interest loans, pay the cost of the insulation upgrades, the window upgrades, the change in their heating systems to geothermal, have all of that done without them having to put tens of thousands upfront, but allow them to have it done and allow them to pay for those changes with the savings they get from reduced energy bills. That's of consequence.

1630

The McGuinty government has been in power for six years. It has had six years to actually put together a climate plan that will take Ontario where it needs to go. It has set targets for greenhouse gas reductions—and they were set in 2007, before the last election, so four years

into its mandate. Not exactly a highly urgent move on that particular item. But the targets it set—it's still not clear how, in fact, they will be achieved. It is as murky as this bill before us today.

In his assessment of the recent government progress report on climate change—and that was earlier this year—the Ontario Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, said that while “quantifiable greenhouse gas reductions, fixed timelines and realistic targets are the cornerstone to any plan.... Real numbers are absent from this plan.” Real numbers are absent from this plan, and that's the situation we find ourselves with in dealing with this plan today, this cap-and-trade bill. When Mr. Miller, the Environmental Commissioner, complains, “The report provides little in the way of detailed analysis to clarify or quantify how 10% of the 2014 greenhouse gas reduction target will be delivered through transportation-related initiatives,” he has reason to worry. He isn't just looking at a report and making a glib comment; he is making a fair comment. You don't see how things will actually be achieved. The plan is not set out.

When the minister, John Gerretsen, spoke about the government's achievements—and he talked about smart meters and transit investments. Frankly, to talk about individual pieces and not add them up and show whether you're getting to your target or not doesn't give me any reassurance and doesn't give the people of Ontario reassurance. It's like saying that I borrowed \$100 from you, and you say, “You haven't paid me back,” and I say, “But, Madam Speaker, I gave you a buck yesterday and I'm going to give you two bucks today, and last week I gave you three dollars.” You say, “That doesn't add up to a hundred.” “But I've given you money,” I'll say. It's the same with this Liberal plan. There are a variety of small announcements that, if you don't understand the larger picture, sound like something's happening, but in terms of something actually moving forward so that we are a player in that climate race and so that we're a player in the clean energy race, no, we're not seeing it. That's not happening.

If you look at where the emissions are really coming from, you should note that the biggest increase in emissions in Ontario since 1990 is from SUVs. And that needs to be broken down a bit, because when you look at that number, you have to understand that that happens in a situation where urban sprawl continues unchecked in this province. In fact, if Ontario didn't have sprawl and had SUVs, we'd have dramatically lower emissions. It's the sprawl that drives the amount of emissions, that forces people to drive long distances every day. The critical piece, when you look at that number, is the ability to have an urban fabric that allows people to walk to work or take transit conveniently, and if you don't have that, you're going to have high greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. This plan isn't going to address the single biggest item that has driven the increase in greenhouse gas emissions in this province—the biggest one.

The other big piece in greenhouse gas emission increases in Ontario is from commercial and institutional

buildings. It's of great consequence to this province. As I said earlier today, during the Green Energy Act hearings we heard strong, credible testimony about the fact that the energy efficiency standards that have been put in place for buildings in this province are not enforced. They may be beautiful, they may be some of the most elegant pieces of legislation ever written by humankind, but they are not enforced and thus they are not of any consequence. So we continue to see substantial growth in greenhouse gas emissions from commercial/institutional buildings, and this bill is not going to deal with that.

In fact, it's interesting, when you actually look at where the greenhouse gas emissions are in Ontario, in manufacturing, they have declined since 1990. So you can whack as many of the big manufacturers as you want; they're already below 1990 levels, according to the 2006 numbers for Ontario. Where you have to go is, you have to deal with sprawl, you have to deal with transportation, and you have to deal with the efficiency of buildings. You do have to deal with electricity and heat generation. But again, they are like number 4 on the list, and if in fact we continue to have this electricity surplus in Ontario, the shutting down of the coal plants should be advanced substantially, and then, you're going to have a much smaller piece to cover with a cap-and-trade system.

What we're seeing is this rise in transportation emissions, in fact a 35% increase since 1990 in transportation emissions. As I said, we have seen sprawl, and the Toronto Star referred to a secret deal that was cut this fall with developers in the Bradford West Gwillimbury area that will spawn yet more urban sprawl. In its 2009 budget, the McGuinty government allocated more spending on new and expanded highways than it did on public transit. So you're bringing forward a cap-and-trade bill with one hand, and on the other hand, you're increasing sprawl, which is actually going to elude that bill and continue to change the atmosphere that we depend on.

The McGuinty government has allowed transit fares to rise and let government support for transit operation fall to the lowest level in North America. That's of consequence. If you don't have frequent, comfortable, affordable transit, people aren't going to use it. If you don't have that, people will use cars, and you'll get more air pollution and more climate change. The McGuinty government has accepted a 20-year transit plan for the greater Toronto area that will allow greenhouse gas emissions to rise by as much as 18% over 2006 levels. So I have to ask myself, how are they going to meet those targets that they set for 2014 and 2020 if we continue to see these rising emissions from the transportation sector? That's of consequence. This bill is not going to address that.

Instead of making public transit more affordable, the McGuinty government announced rebates on a \$40,000 electric car that still doesn't exist and which the vast majority of Ontarians won't be able to afford. It's interesting to look at different strategies, because in Michigan the governor, Jennifer Granholm, has actually

been successful in attracting hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in car battery factories to her state. They have actually been going out and seeking those manufacturers and bringing them in. That I think is going to have an awful lot more consequence on the future of car manufacture in North America than this rebate that's been offered by the McGuinty government.

In fact, if McGuinty government was serious, it would say, "Electric cars manufactured in Ontario, first call for Ontario government car fleets in the future. We'll create a market with our own public sector purchasing. We'll go to municipalities and universities and tell them that we want them to be buying electric cars made here in Ontario." That would be the better place to spend that money. What they actually did was good for a photo op, but much less useful in terms of public policy to get electric cars here on road in Ontario.

The government's home retrofit program: The minister talked about 190,000 audits that were done in Ontario. He didn't say that only one in 80 households actually then went and had the work done to reduce their energy consumption. If you set up the system so that people have to take tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket up front, there are very few people who can afford to do that. If you don't break that financing barrier, then we're not going to get the retrofits of the homes we need; we're going to have ongoing dismal numbers of one in 80 who actually do the energy conservation retrofits. So that when the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure launched recent changes to the home retrofit program, he did that in a home in Rosedale. I'm glad that the people in that home actually took the challenge, took the opportunity to retrofit their homes. But that's far more representative of who can actually afford to do this work. The majority of people in Ontario don't live in Rosedale and don't live in houses that are as big as those in Rosedale. They live in relatively small places, and they have relatively small incomes. They need financial support to actually make their homes energy-efficient.

1640

Lower-income tenants facing the whole prospect of sub-metering while they're stuck with the cost of heating their apartments—you, Madam Speaker, have quite a few apartment towers in your riding. You know very well the condition of the windows in those apartment buildings because, like me, you canvass. I've been in buildings in winter where you can feel the wind come through the windows. If tenants are stuck with the cost of heating, those windows will never be fixed, because the landlords will never have any incentive to actually replace them with the kind of triple glazing that's required. If tenants are stuck with the cost of heating, they will never have the money to insulate the outer walls of those buildings to reduce energy consumption. The whole focus of this government is wrong in terms of actually achieving the ends and transforming energy use in this province.

For all those factors, it's hard to have any confidence that this government will meet its targets for 2014 or its targets for 2020. If it wanted to make those targets

happen, it would provide those financing programs, it would provide tax credits for people who want to get on bicycles or e-bikes. If we provided hard-pressed Ontarians with financing programs so they can do renovations to their homes, that would make a difference. Frankly, if we went to the owners of the major apartment buildings in Ontario and said, "We'll make a deal with you. We'll provide the financing to make your buildings extraordinarily energy-efficient, and you protect the tenants from rent increases and being stuck with the energy bills," I think that's a deal that everyone could live with, and it would have tremendous positive benefit for the people of the GTA and the people of this province.

Instead of funding new highways like the 404 extension, which breed urban sprawl and car use, we need to put the money that would go into those new 400-series highways into public transit, in terms of expanding both systems and operations. Running a six-lane highway is not cheap. It doesn't just sit there, it deteriorates. It takes a lot of maintenance work.

Frankly, if we want the money to make a difference, to change the electricity system in Ontario, we shouldn't spend the \$100 billion or so that will be needed to revamp a nuclear-centred electricity system. That whole approach is going to suck money out of Ontario's economy and make it impossible for us to actually finance the changes that will make a difference.

At the end of the day, what do we have? We have a bill before us that enables this government, through regulation, to put in place a system that will cap—set an absolute limit on—the amount of greenhouse pollution that is allowed, and allow possibly trading, possibly auctioning—a variety of options that have not been explained to us here in this Legislature.

We can use a cap-and-trade system in Ontario. I have to say that I prefer the term "cap and auction," because I think that trading is not effective in the way that auctioning is. I think that if we are going to have a system that caps emissions, we should in fact be auctioning off the permits to put greenhouse gases in the atmosphere so that that money can be used for a transformation of our basic technology away from fossil fuels and nuclear, and to help people make the transition in their homes and in their apartment buildings. That's what has to happen to make sure we have a design that's effective and actually makes a difference in this province.

There's the danger with this bill that the interests of developers, of the nuclear industry, are put ahead of the interests of the majority of Ontarians; that they will not be protected and in fact the costs of the bill will be put on their shoulders.

This bill has a lot of unanswered questions, ones that don't seem to spark a response when I raise the questions in this debate.

Exactly when will these caps take effect? As I had said earlier today, when there were first announcements made, we were talking about as early as 2010. Well, that seems to be pushed back. Is there a firm date for this to start? I'd like to have that put in the legislation—"This bill

takes effect on this date”—so that we know what the target is.

What will be the level of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions? That's a central question. That hasn't been answered by the government. It's not in the legislation. It has not been answered in any statements made by the minister or the parliamentary assistant. I haven't seen any fact sheets on that. I haven't seen any detail on that. Frankly, if it reduces the emissions by 1% or 2%, why are we going through all this agony? Tell the people of Ontario, tell the legislators in this House, exactly what we've got coming up.

Will it apply only to big companies or will it apply to medium-sized companies?

Will permits be sold or will they be given away? Giving them away is of great consequence in a world where there is carbon trading going on in Europe. There will be carbon trading going on in the United States. If we give them away, so the permission to pollute can be traded to other jurisdictions for cash and not result in improvements in local air quality by having local companies reduce their emissions, that matters.

We need to see in this legislation where the revenue from that system is going to be applied.

Will companies be allowed to buy offsets if they exceed their cap levels? For those who follow this issue—and I have to say, it is kind of obscure and mind-numbing—the idea is you set a cap on the amount of pollution, and if companies don't think they can operate within that cap, they're allowed to buy what are called “offsets.” Someone else reduces the amount of pollution they put in the atmosphere, they get a credit for it, and they can sell it to the company that can't meet its target.

There are problems with offsets. One of the problems, frankly, is that you're going to have to do a lot of quality control. How do I know that the tree that you planted will actually be there five years from now and not be cut down or burned? How do I know that the minor changes that you've made in the operation of your home or of your apartment building are going to be consistent over years to come? Who will monitor that? Who will pay for the quality determination? That's of consequence.

One story that has been told by the author George Monbiot about the purchase of offsets in China alleges that there's a company that makes CFCs, which are very powerful in terms of their greenhouse effect—that it sells to another company that destroys them and gets credits that they can then sell. That kind of playing with the system undermines everything that we want to see happen. For me, the best system is one that doesn't have offsets, that says very clearly within the system that if you can't meet your target, you have to go to someone else who can reduce their burning of fossil fuels so that the amount of fossil fuels burned goes down in real terms, in real numbers. That's critical.

We are going to be affected by what goes on in the United States, without a doubt. I don't think we should have our system dictated by what's brought forward in the United States. The American cap-and-trade bill, the

Waxman-Markey bill, has a few points that are useful. It's comprehensive in scope. It has a solid long-term goal: an 83% reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2050. There could be a better goal, but it's a substantial goal, and one that would be at least within the direction that we need to go. However, there are serious weaknesses with that American legislation, and so if we talk about integrating with that American legislation, I want to make sure that we don't get drawn into the weaknesses.

1650

Waxman-Markey distributes too many emission permits for free: 85% of their permits are free at the beginning of their process. I know it is a difficult issue to deal with. It is a difficult issue to come to grips with and sometimes one's attention wanders, but ultimately one can focus in on this. That handout of 85% of permits is equivalent to \$1 billion of giveaways in pollution permits. We can't have anything like that in Ontario. We should not be following that example. It is a mistake. It is a profound error in the direction they have taken.

We do need to support industry in making the transition to green technology. We should be providing them with accelerated capital allowances and tax breaks so they can make the transition rapidly. We should be financially supporting new technologies to make them cheaper and more available very quickly. But we should not be giving away those emission rights. It corrupts that whole system. It puts us in a situation where you're not getting a real drive to a new energy economy, to a new technology base. You're getting simply a replication of what's gone on for a long time.

Waxman-Markey gives free permits to oil and coal companies, and puts a lot of faith in carbon capture and storage. In the 1980s, Bush the elder—my colleague from Beaches—East York sometimes refers to him as the one who's a bit smarter—referred to the economics of Ronald Reagan as voodoo economics, and frankly, carbon capture and storage has many elements of voodoo economics about it. That's an area that we should not be spending our time on. We need to make sure that the federal government doesn't give oil companies a free ride. That's not part of this legislation, but it is part of the political posture that we have to have within Confederation. If you look at the numbers, there are two provinces in Canada that are the number one climate change problems: The first is Alberta and not too much further behind is Ontario. All the rest drop dramatically after those two.

Fifty three per cent of the greenhouse emissions in Canada come from the oil and gas industry—more than half. They are of substantial consequence. Our bill here is not going to change much. We don't produce much oil and gas in Ontario, about 1% of what we use, but to the extent that we substantially reduce our consumption of oil and gas, we reduce the demand for oil and gas in western Canada and help drive down their greenhouse gas emissions.

We need do better in Ontario for those workers and companies that may be affected by the transition. It's a

simple reality in the United States that 1% of the revenue that is generated by selling permits is going to go to the transition. That is not adequate. There needs to be money coming out of this bill to help companies make the transition from being a big polluter to a green energy user. That will save jobs. That will stabilize our economy.

We in the NDP think there needs to be an on-the-job tax training credit to familiarize workers and companies with the kinds of jobs that will be developed in a green economy. It was interesting, there was a recent report by the Telfer School of Management in Ottawa that estimated that if you actually did the renovations to houses across Canada that were needed to substantially reduce their emissions, it would generate one million person-years of work. That is a lot of work. And their calculation was that there were not enough trained construction workers in Canada to actually carry out that scale of work right now.

If we're going to make the changes that have to happen, we have to make the investment in training and education so that people can take advantage of those jobs, so that we can put them to work and so that we can take advantage of the transition. There will be jobs that will be lost and there will be jobs that will be created. We need to move people from one category to the other so that they have a stable future.

The Waxman-Markey bill and the Stephen Harper plan that we've heard the details of so far aim for reductions of about 3% in emissions from 1990 to 2020. That's completely inadequate. I said earlier that Waxman-Markey wasn't bad, or the American cap-and-trade bill isn't bad when you look out of the year 2050, but far more immediately, it's far too weak. We shouldn't be following their example. We have to go much further than that, both for our economic future and for our environmental future.

If we actually are going to have a cap-and-trade system that is of consequence, there are a number of things that need to be put into this legislation. First, it has to start soon; 2012 is too far off. I've heard the minister speak and I've heard the parliamentary assistant speak. They talk about the urgency and scale of the problem before us. It's 2009 right now. They've wasted a lot of time. They should be making sure that this plan is in place as soon as possible. They can pick up lessons from the European Union if they have to. Trading systems have been put in place. Cap systems have been put in place. They don't have to reinvent the wheel; they have to take the best of the systems that are out there and they have to put them in place as quickly as possible. We need more of a sense of urgency that reflects the words of the environment minister about the scale and scope of the problem.

Secondly, the government has to set real caps so that it can achieve those overall reductions that it says it wants to see in 2014 and 2020. All the permits should be auctioned from the very beginning. Polluters should be paying for their emissions. They shouldn't be subsidized in their emissions by taxpayers. There is no reason that

we should be giving away those permits. We need to generate revenue and that revenue needs to flow. The economic transformation needs to help people who are hit by higher energy costs in the years to come and needs to help people who are hit by the whole process of transition from one area of employment to another.

Full auctioning of permits takes out a lot of politicking and takes out a lot of that cost of trading. There will be some trading, but it will be substantially reduced. We need to have that if we're going to have an effective system. The government has to set a strong price signal from the very start. That has to be done in conjunction with the stakeholders. We all have to sit down and set a floor price at the beginning, and then if companies want more permits than that price would permit, they can bid for the rest.

The plan should cover all sectors and it should set the threshold low enough to ensure that small and medium emitters are covered and at least 90% of emissions are captured so that we have a very comprehensive system and we don't have leakage and loopholes.

Caps should cover electricity and they should cover imported electricity so that we aren't in a situation where we're clean within Ontario's borders and importing coal-fired power from somewhere else without having to deal with a penalty. Including all sectors is the fairest and best way to spread the costs over the broadest part of the economy.

Sixth, the plan should strictly limit or avoid altogether offset credits. I talked about that earlier. Offsets are a substantial problem for actually reducing the amount of fossil fuels we use. Offsets will undermine the integrity of any of these plans. If significant levels of offsets are allowed, the price of allowances will drop and the incentive to reduce emissions will be lost. As I've said before, we'll be caught up with very complex rules and complex costs for actually monitoring to see that the offsets are real and of good quality.

1700

Notwithstanding all that I've said, if the government decides that it wants to go ahead with offsets, they should limit them so that they're only a small part of what's available for offsetting carbon emissions and they shouldn't have pre-existing projects or commitments such as the closing of the coal plants. The closing of the coal plants should not be something that results in the unleashing of a large number of credits that this government can sell into the market, because if that happens, then the closing of the plants will be of no consequence. It will allow large volumes of other pollution to go forward. If the government is thinking about doing that it should throw that thought out of its head right now. That would be indefensible.

Finally, this government should be working with the federal government, whoever will be in power within the next three or four months, to make sure that we have high emission tariffs so that jurisdictions that don't actually deal with carbon are not able to siphon industry out of Ontario or Canada because those jurisdictions avoid carbon costs and carbon penalties.

In my opinion, this bill will be—and I'm assuming that everything falls out right, that it actually does become a bill, that there actually is auctioning and there actually are limited or no offsets. Assuming all of that happens, I still think this bill will be a relatively small part of what has to happen to transform Ontario's economy. It is a strategy in a larger package, not the centrepiece, because if it's the centrepiece this province is in trouble—and certainly according to the government's own climate plan, it is not the centerpiece. I think the number is somewhere around 15%. The government's projected reduction in emissions comes from the federal cap-and-trade program. I'm going to guess right now that they see them as interchangeable, the provincial and the federal. This won't be a centrepiece.

We will see soon, possibly—I don't know how soon; they may not pull this forward for committee very quickly—exactly what the government is talking about with this bill. I say to them that if they really want to make a difference, if they want to advance the climate agenda, what they need to do is put in place policies for purchasing by the province of Ontario, all its agencies, all of the bodies that receive substantial funding from it; put in place policies to substantially reduce emissions right there and show the rest of the economy how it's done and what the benefit is from it. We don't have to worry, as the downtown office towers do, of a division between the interests of tenants and owners. It's all ours.

I think it was the member from Haldimand–Norfolk who talked about social housing in this province and using our ownership there to substantially reduce energy consumption in those buildings. We need to do that.

The government needs to purchase those energy services that are clean and renewable. It needs to provide financial support for individual homeowners and individual businesses to make the transition. It needs to recover those supports through lease payments that come from the energy savings that are enjoyed by homeowners and enjoyed by businesses. It needs to put in place regulation and enforcement so that in fact we have far more energy-efficient buildings, motors and elevators; a whole gamut of machinery, equipment and buildings so that we do have dramatic reductions in energy consumption. And with that, you actually have a strategy that can go somewhere.

I could, as others have in this Legislature, continue on and repeat all that I've said in the last 55 minutes, but out of consideration for you, Madam Speaker, and for those in the wider world who are listening, I will leave my comments at that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It's great to be back in the Legislature and to participate in the debate.

I'm very happy to stand and speak in support of Bill 185, the cap-and-trade legislation. As did many other members, I'm sure, over the summer months I had the opportunity to speak to a lot of members in my community while I was out there knocking on doors. My

community in particular is quite interested in issues around the environment, so there's a lot of excitement as to the Green Energy Act and its implication and what it means, especially in a dense urban environment like my riding of Ottawa Centre in terms of energy co-operatives, etc. But there was also a lot of conversation and excitement about the cap-and-trade legislation, this particular proposed bill, as to what it means for Ontario in being part of the mechanisms, the schemes that are being developed across North America and hopefully globally.

I think we all recognize that we live in a world now where carbon has to be a commodity, has to have a price associated with it. That's exactly what Bill 185 is trying to do: It's creating the parameters necessary to create a regime that works well with whatever system we come up with, whether it be Canada-wide or across North America. As enabling legislation, it provides for the right set of tools and the flexibility to ensure that we have an effective cap-and-trade system in Ontario so that we can participate in the marketplace where carbon can be traded, so that we can all ensure there is a price associated with carbon. At the end of the day, what we want to do is obviously reduce our reliance on carbon, to make sure that we live in a sustainable fashion, that we can really address the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on our province and our community. So I'm very excited to speak in support of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnett: I listened with interest to the member for Toronto–Danforth, and I know he has a great deal of knowledge and interest in this particular issue from his background before he was privileged to serve his constituents in the Legislature. In my mind, there's no question that an effective and coordinated response to the challenge, and indeed, as I said earlier today, the emergency, of climate change is in the public interest today.

Years ago in this House, I was one of the first in our caucus to acknowledge publicly that climate change was a fact, that the preponderance of scientific opinion was concluding that human activities and the release of greenhouse gases were contributing factors to climate change, and that these were facts beyond dispute. While I've harboured doubts about the willingness and the practicality, and indeed the ability, of Canada to achieve the targets set by the Kyoto Protocol, I've never opposed further international discussions to set targets for greenhouse gas emissions which are possible and achievable.

Let's remember two things. The provincial government would have us believe today that Bill 185 is a big step forward in addressing climate change. If this is true, why did it take them so long? Why did they not release any climate change strategy until 2007, an election year, and only after they had been strongly criticized by the independent Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller? And why is it that after six years in office, the McGuinty government, while claiming they support the Kyoto targets, are nowhere near a 6% reduction in greenhouse

gas emissions from 1990 levels, with 2012 less than three years away?

Our critic for the Ministry of the Environment, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, offered a thoughtful and well-researched critique of Bill 185 this afternoon. He says that to combat climate change, we need to think global and act global. I believe he's right, and without a concerted, comprehensive global response to controlling our greenhouse gas emissions, our efforts are likely to be too little and too late.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently for the hour, or nearly an hour, to my colleague from Toronto–Danforth, and I think what he had to say in that hour is not just that climate change is upon us, not just about the need to make changes in our lifestyle to try to save the planet, but he actually gave some clear directions on what this government should be doing. I hope the members opposite were listening, because he outlined—I tried to write down as many as I could as fast as I could. Just some of the things he talked about included that the federal government needs to get out of the tar sands or we need to make sure that what is being developed in the tar sands is not going to pollute any more than it already does. He talked about transitional aid to green-collar jobs and how that was going to be necessary in a cap-and-trade system, and how the economies of this province are going to have to be linked to transitional aid.

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He talked about education and training and the necessity of education and training for the people who live in this province, if we are going to be leaders in the cap-and-trade system. He talked about training tax credits. None of which has yet appeared in the mini, three-page bill. He talked about auctioning and the whole sense of auctioning, and how that is going to have to take place from the beginning, if the bill is to be effective. He talked about energy intensive industries, and how we have to develop those here in Ontario. Lastly, he talked about avoiding offset credits.

Now, these are all very important things that need to be contained within the body of the bill, and it's not just enough in this House to say you want to do everything you can for the environment; it's not just enough to set goals or expectations that cannot be met. The government is going to have to heed his words and is going to have to put in place some of the very programs that he has outlined in order to make it a reality because to do less than that is really not to help the environment at all.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to join a debate which is very much an informed, dispassionate one, and in these few moments remaining to me, let me add a couple of points of my own to it.

In terms of climate change, one of the first things you can do with regard to carbon is stop generating it, and a great deal of what the bill deals with is turning off coal.

In order to improve our climate, one of the best things we can do for the people of Ontario is to stop using coal to generate electricity, and part of what this bill does is continue the process to eliminate coal by the year 2014.

As well, the other thing we can do is substitute that energy with something that has a much lower environmental footprint, such as renewable energy, and Ontario has gone in the last several years from being a laggard to a leader in renewable energy.

Another thing would be transportation. It was my pleasure in the year 2007 to be a part of the unveiling of MoveOntario 2020, which will see the province spend something like \$11.5 billion on rapid transit. One of things that's going to do is enable more of us to leave our vehicles at home, those vehicles that spew carbon monoxide into the air, and be able to take affordable, convenient, fast, efficient public transit to get around the GTA.

These are some of the initiatives inside this particular bill that help Ontario do something our people really want to do, which is to recognize that the severe weather that we've been having and that we have seen in the last several years comes from climate change. We'd like to return ourselves to a more normal climate, and this bill is part of doing it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Toronto–Danforth has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My thanks to the members from Ottawa Centre, Wellington–Halton Hills, Mississauga–Streetsville and Beaches–East York for their commentaries.

Ontario is not an energy leader; Ontario is an energy laggard. Its commitment to nuclear power for 50% of its future electricity generation says that it's stuck in middle of the 20th century and is not taking on what has to happen. We are not moving quickly on our climate plans. You very well know in your riding that the need for rapid transit, if satisfied by electric trains rather than by diesel trains, would substantially reduce emission in that riding and help drive forward the technological, the clean agenda in this province. What we're seeing are the small pieces at the edge, contained boutique items that are not going to deal with the problem that we have.

If you are in a lifeguard station or if you're in a coast guard boat and you see someone drowning, their ship sinking a kilometre out to sea and you go out 100 metres or 200 metres or 300 metres and say, "I've done something," they are still going to drown, and the reality before us is that we are not going the distance that has to be gone to actually save and stabilize our climate and protect our economy, and that's the reality before us today. China is becoming a leader in renewable energy; we are a bit player. In the United States, there are states that are moving forward on renewable energy in a way that we aren't even thinking about in this province.

This is a very depressing and dismal reality that we face in Ontario, one this bill does not look like it's going to correct. We'll see what their details are.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm also happy to have an opportunity to say a few words on this bill. The bill that we're debating today, Bill 185, is actually an amendment to an existing bill. It amends the Environmental Protection Act with regard to greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases, according to this bill, are made up of six different types of gases. We talk about carbon dioxide as being one of them, but there are also a few other ones here that I think are worth mentioning. I'm just going to read them out loud: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride. These are all different types of greenhouse gases that are affecting our environment today.

Sometimes, when we watch television, or we see something on the news, we wonder why that thing happens. Just last weekend, there was a story all over the news about two German ships that crossed the Northwest Passage here in Canada. I remember the Northwest Passage as being a frozen part of Canada that was almost impassable and that, for many centuries, was almost impossible to cover until recently. But the news headline was that two German ships were able to breeze through the Northwest Passage, I think on their way to Asia, which saved them from having to go, I guess, south down through the Panama Canal.

You may hear that story and say, "Big deal," but it is a big deal, in the sense that suddenly this ice, which was impassable, has now become water, which is passable. Someone can navigate through that, and these ships were able to do that without any problem.

The other day on television they were showing a documentary. It was about polar bears and the fact that polar bears now are finding it increasingly difficult to find food to eat. And why is that? The polar ice cap in the North Pole is beginning to melt, and the more it melts, the more you end up with small areas of ice where the polar bears are limited in their hunting, and they either end up stuck on that ice, drowning or not surviving beyond that generation. We're seeing the same with the walrus population in the north as well.

We also hear about icebergs that are being located or found significantly south of previous locations, and we wonder why. Why is an iceberg being located off the coast of Newfoundland or even further south of that? The reason is, the ice is melting.

So the option to not do anything is not really an option, and I think we as a governing body are going to have to do something about it. We can sit here and point our fingers all day today at China or at India or at other countries, but in the end, it comes down to what we can do here in Ontario. The Premier has taken the lead by bringing forward a bill that's trying to limit the amount of emissions of those six gases that I mentioned earlier so that they don't heat up the atmosphere and cause the ice to melt. It's plain and simple. We want to protect the climate, and at the same time, besides protecting the climate, the other side effect with this bill is that we

create new technologies, better ways of doing things in our province and hopefully around the world that don't cause these gases to be created.

1720

The latest data come from 2007. The total emissions in Ontario of these types of greenhouse gases was 197 megatonnes, the largest one being transportation, 31%; industry at 25%; buildings at 17%; electricity, 17%; agriculture, 6%; and waste at 4%. We're trying, as a government, to reduce that 197 megatonnes of greenhouse gas produced by those different areas. The best way to do it, in my view, is the way that the Premier has suggested—and the way that he has unveiled in this bill, which is a carbon cap-and-trade plan, carbon being the lead greenhouse gas out of those six that I mentioned. What this bill basically does, very simply, and I'm just going to give an example—because the good thing about speaking on a bill is that you get to research the bill before you speak to it, hopefully, and you learn a little bit about it so that you can then explain it to your constituents as well as to others who may want to know about it.

If my name is John, and if I own a factory and let's say I produce 12 megatonnes of greenhouse gases a year and I know or hear of someone else named Mary who produces eight megatonnes a year—I produce 12 and my name is John, and Mary produces eight. All this bill is saying, in simple words—part of the bill, anyway; that's not the only thing it's saying—the main thing it's saying is that John can go to Mary and say, "Look, the limit was set at 10 megatonnes. I'm over my limit by two, so can I buy two credits from you? You're at eight; you're below the standard of 10." There's a trade that occurs; there's a purchase that goes on there, the idea being that eventually John will get tired of having to buy from Mary those credits, and John will eventually change his plant and make it efficient and maybe bring it from a 12 down to an eight by using new, greener or green-friendly technologies. Then if that happens, another person or another company, Jerry's company, comes along, and Jerry is creating 14 megatonnes of emissions every year. Again, he's capped at 10. So what does he do? He now goes to John and he goes to Mary and he purchases two credits from each of them so that instead of 14, he's down to 10. I know the pages present here today can understand the math—it's pretty straightforward. You go from 14, you take two from John, you take two from Mary, and 14 minus two and minus two brings you down to 10, which brings you to that range.

The idea is that this will entice other companies to do the same thing so that eventually both—and not just John or not just Jerry—but other companies out there will want to reduce their greenhouse emissions so that they don't have to go and buy these credits from other places. By doing so, they create green technology, they put less of these six different types of gases or—I don't know if you can call them gases—substances into the air, and you create new jobs by doing so. So it's a win-win-win situation. It's not going to happen overnight; no really

good change ever does. We just need to look at the European model. I had an opportunity to look at what Europe does. They have the largest cap-and-trade program in the world. They started in 2005. We're in 2009—it's working, but they're still tweaking it and changing it and trying to administer it in a way that is effective and centralized through the European government as opposed to each government within there doing it on their own.

Our Premier, back in June, went and met with Premier Jean Charest and said, "Why don't we get together, Quebec and Ontario, and create a market, an area, so that if—again using the example of John and Mary—if John is located in Ontario and Mary is located in Quebec, there can be a trade there?"

Beyond that, recently the government has also—and the minister made mention of this—started to have discussions with a group of West Coast provinces and states, including California, I think Arizona, British Columbia, and several other states that are already grouped together so that they become part of this market. Because the larger the market, the easier it is to make these trades; the easier it is for the different companies to find someone who will buy or sell those various credits that are available out there.

The long-term goal: Of course we don't want the trades just to keep on happening, but we want to entice people, without shutting down plants, to become green-friendly as opposed to not friendly towards the green environment. So it's a subtle yet strong way to send industry, business and the way we do business into a green economy without killing these different businesses, because nobody wants to see plants shut down and nobody wants to see people unemployed. This is a gradual way to do it. It works.

The other thing that's really interesting about this bill that I want to speak about, very briefly, is the idea of offsets. I mentioned carbon dioxide, but one of the other problems is methane. Methane is also released into the atmosphere and it causes the same thing, basically, which is the heating up of the planet. If there is a landfill site out there and that landfill site says, "You know what? We're going to clean up our methane and prevent the methane from going out there," they'll be able to have what's called an offset, and they can sell that offset or trade it with one of these other companies and be able to take part in this whole attempt to try to clean up our economy. So it's good for an existing place like a landfill site to get involved in this trading or in this restructuring of pollution in general.

Even people who decide to take, let's say, a large piece of land and plant trees, because trees, we all know—and the pages will learn soon probably, if they haven't already through their biology class—take in carbon dioxide and put out oxygen, and oxygen is good for our atmosphere. If someone decides to grow a large field and put trees out there that will stay in the ground, they too can apply for an offset and be able to sell. There's an incentive there now, because they can sell that credit to someone who is over their limit.

And as we bring these limits down—because that was the problem, I guess. Someone mentioned it earlier. I think the Minister of the Environment mentioned it, that in Europe the limits were very high and it wasn't working. But as you bring the limits down—let's say, in the example of John and Mary and Jerry there, there's no longer 10. Let's say it's nine; we bring it down to nine.

Interjection.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: John, I mentioned John already.

So if we bring it down to nine, then all these three companies will have to work to bring themselves down to nine or will have to purchase from either an offset or from someone else who's efficient and below nine. The idea is to gradually bring that level down further and further.

So it's not a difficult thing to understand, and the ultimate goals are simple: We want to make sure the polar bear survives. We want to make sure that the other animals in our ecosystem survive. And ultimately, we want to make sure that the planet itself survives, because almost every day in the news we hear about an ice shelf or a piece of the North Pole or the South Pole, to put it in simple language, that is melting. We want that to stop. And if we can work together with Quebec, hopefully with the western provinces, eventually, perhaps, hopefully with all of North America and perhaps all the world in doing this, then we will reduce the greenhouse gases. Because if we don't, eventually we're going to see the North Pole melt. We're going to see the South Pole melt. Water levels will rise. The entire ecosystem on the planet will change and we'll no longer be here as human beings.

So when we look at it, I know that there are other complexities to it. I'm not perhaps as well versed as some of the other people are who have studied this. I look at the bill and I look at the simple, straightforward goals of the bill, and I think they're goals that are well-intentioned, that are well worth doing and make a lot of sense.

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So I stand here today supportive of Premier McGuinty and supportive of our government, because it is the right thing to do. The details can be worked out. The bill says here that something can be done through regulation, and that will be worked out in the future, but just to put everything out today exactly as to how we're going to do it won't really work. In Europe, they tried doing that, and as they went through 2005, 2006, 2007, they had to make changes. The Americans are struggling with a system right now, and Obama has brought something out. He has to be careful because again, he doesn't want to lose jobs and have places close down.

This program in this bill is quite similar to something that was successful years ago in the United States where they were able to reduce acid levels caused through acid rain. Again, it's straightforward. The goal is to reduce greenhouse emissions and create new technologies by pushing or nudging those different industries—and it's not just industry in itself. It's also transportation. A

previous speaker spoke about buildings. It's our electrical sector, agriculture, and even a small portion of it is through the waste sector. But in total, it adds up to a lot—197 megatons of emissions. We want to reduce that. The right way to do it is through this system here, providing for caps and providing for trades of those credits.

I'm supportive of it. It's straightforward. It's not difficult to understand. I hope that the opposition will also support this bill when it comes down for its final reading. I know that we always, at committee, discuss making some changes, but as a whole the bill is extremely supportable. I applaud the Premier for bringing this forward and for working with Premier Jean Charest and others to try to expand the scope of this bill into other jurisdictions.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I was pleased to have the opportunity to hear the presentation from the member for Scarborough Southwest. I've received an e-mail from one of my constituents. I haven't really had a chance to talk to them to see if they would want their name attributed to the comments, but I would like to read the text of the e-mail to the member and the House:

“Dear Mr. Arnott:

“The cap-and-trade (tax) must not be implemented in Ontario. This tax will only affect the companies and consumers that can least afford to pay. Those who can afford the costs will continue to use the same or more energy, thus raising CO₂ and not lowering it. If we look at Europe as an example of how this tax will work, we see that lobbyists have completely rendered the intent of the tax ineffectual, resulting in little or no reduction in CO₂.

“Please tell me where were the people, the voters of this province which this government is supposed to answer to—on this tax, they were not asked. Is this government for the people or the new world order elite? I think I know that answer. The tax is going to be the world's largest new stock market, trading exclusively in a stock called carbon credits, where the mega profits will be made by speculators, hedge funds, and the same financial and investment houses that just finished crashing the global economy.”

This comes from one of my constituents who lives in Georgetown, and I would ask the member for Scarborough Southwest to respond to him as a government member.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened to my friend my colleague from Scarborough Southwest. I was listening to hear exactly what the government intends to do with this bill, and it is quite clear from the way he spoke—and I hope he does not take umbrage—that he supports the goal of the bill. The goals are to recognize that there is a problem out there and to attempt, over time, to do something about it.

He went on to say that the details have to be worked out—his exact words—“worked out later” or “worked

out in the future.” But I would suggest that is not what we should be debating here today. We have had six years since the Liberals came into power, six years of talking about taking an environmental stance and doing something. I will acknowledge that the Liberals so grudgingly and so slowly are moving away from coal-fired generation, but I will also say that they are continuing down the wrong path with nuclear, they are continuing down the wrong path with gas-fired generation, they are continuing at a snail's pace to go out there and to look for renewable energy.

I just wonder why we always end up just talking about goals in the future. We talked about goals when it came to the developmentally delayed, Ontarians with disabilities, about trying to help people set their own lifestyles and hire their own people, and yet there was never any money or any attempt to do that. We talked about that but nothing ever happened. We talked about reducing poverty. We talked until we were blue in the face but nothing ever happened because all we do in this place, it seems—and this government—is set goals that are never met.

I think we need to start talking about real things. We need to start talking about offset credits, energy-intensive industries, auctioneering. This is what I want to hear from government members, and this is what I'm hoping they'll talk about in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Again, it's a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 185, one of the building blocks of our battle against climate change and our efforts to reduce greenhouse gasses.

My colleague from Scarborough Southwest alluded to pursuing green technology, and so I'd like to remind the members of this House just what our government has actually done in this regard.

First of all, we've provided support for transitions such as the emerging technologies fund, \$250 million over five years for a new emerging technologies fund focusing on clean technologies, health and life sciences, and information and communication technologies, including digital media; the innovation demonstration fund, \$50-million replenishment over four years for the government to partner with innovative companies to develop emerging technologies with a preference towards bio-based environmental and alternative energy technologies.

In addition, we have the Ontario Research Fund, \$730 million over four years commencing, as it did, in 2005, to support research that can be developed into innovative goods and services that will boost Ontario's economy. We have established Ontario Centres of Excellence, and this is a program focused on meeting the competitive needs of Ontario industry by tapping into the remarkable potential for Ontario colleges, universities and hospitals to act as generators of innovation. And that's not all.

The Next Generation of Jobs Fund, the jobs and investment program: \$25 million of the total \$1.15 billion Next Generation of Jobs Fund over four years will help

companies in a wide range of sectors to expand in Ontario and develop innovative products for global markets. All of this to help research in environmental technology.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Speaker of the House: The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member from Scarborough Southwest made mention of what Obama is doing, and I guess the House of Representatives is right in the middle of it now. That bill passed June 26. It's now before the Senate. The House passage was difficult, of course; all the Republicans voted against it and 49 Democrats voted against Obama, and they're predicting it's going to be an even rougher ride in the Senate to get it through than the House of Representatives. As I understand, there were a number of concessions brought forward.

As far as amendments to this legislation, I'm not sure—again, at a page and a half, I don't know whether there's very much we can do with this as far as amendments. But certainly in the debate south of the border leading up to that vote on June 26, they reduced the targets for emissions with respect to gases to get votes of Democrats. They scaled back the mandate for renewable electricity, again, to try and get some Democrats to vote for it, and this is a good thing. Incentives for industry were sweetened considerably.

As far as the upcoming or the ongoing debate now in the Senate, there is a provision to prevent costs from rising too quickly in any one year. They've earmarked billions of dollars for new energy products, subsidies for low-carbon agricultural practices, and of course, ongoing research into clean coal—which is one of Obama's projects—and in addition, financial assistance for electrical vehicles.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Scarborough Southwest has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I wish I had more time. I appreciate the comments from the various members. Just with regard to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills and his e-mail, I know that his constituent is concerned, and I'm sure that constituent will have an opportunity, when this goes to committee, to speak to committee and bring forward those concerns there. I also want to thank the members from Beaches–East York, Oak Ridges–Markham and Haldimand–Norfolk.

What I want to say is that the bill makes it very clear. No doubt about it, there is a section here that reads: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations establishing programs and other measures for the use of economic and financial instruments and market-based approaches, including without being limited to emissions trading, for the purposes of maintaining or improving existing environmental standards, protecting the environment and achieving environmental quality goals in a cost effective manner." You can't be any more straightforward than that. The bill says right here—it's an amendment that says that the government can move towards allowing these types of measures to take place.

When I talk about details, it's more that—I know that these things go to committee and then come back here for third and final reading. We have in the past—and I know that this has happened in our government at least; I don't know if it happened so much when the Conservatives were in power—accepted amendments on various bills that have gone to committee. All I was saying was that if there are some ideas out there that potentially could be incorporated in this bill—I don't have the final say. I don't know which committee it's going to. But ultimately this thrust brought forward by the section I just read is the key. The government is going to take action to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and to improve the quality of life of Ontarians and, hopefully, all the people who live on this planet.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 185, and a rather thin bill it is. Not a lot of paper here.

It could be that the government didn't want to have too many details in this bill, or quite frankly it's possible that they used up all of their paper credits—not carbon credits, but paper credits—with the expense chits that were used at the OLG and eHealth and over at MPAC in the last year and they just didn't have enough paper left in this Legislature to write bills. We certainly know there has been a heck of a lot of that expensing going on at those government agencies. And what did the Premier have to say today? He just wants to stuff it all under the carpet, just like he told those people on the committee to vote against bringing those people before committee—just terrible.

Then we are debating a serious issue here like carbon credits, when they don't even want to allow this Legislature to review what should be brought before this Legislature, and that's what has gone on at OLG and eHealth here in the last couple of—well, ever since this government's been in power, quite frankly.

I want to respond a little bit to the member from Scarborough Southwest. He was painting a very lovely picture of a perfect world where everything works just the way it should if everybody behaves and everybody does what's expected. We know we don't live in that world. He also was thinking of an equitable world where everybody is treated the same. It doesn't work that way.

Let's talk about a few of those realities. He's talking about trading these carbon credits. Well, the European experience teaches us that they're just trading them. Those that can afford to buy the credits are using those credits to produce the same amount of carbon or more carbon than they did before, by buying those credits from companies that don't produce the carbon. It hasn't resulted in a reduction of carbon emissions in those jurisdictions. So is that what we're asking here, that we're going to do the same kind of thing?

They're losing some of the big picture here as well. We have to keep in mind—and he wants this—we're going to change the world here in Ontario with carbon

emissions, based on the speech of the member from Scarborough Southwest: This is where it all starts. This will be the story about how Ontario changed the world.

In Ontario, we produce less than 1% of the world's CO₂ emissions. If you put that into perspective, if we stop producing carbon totally, right now, this minute—the end of carbon production in Ontario, over—China will replace that within six months. That's how fast that country is growing—its population, its economy, and its carbon emissions—because they're building their economy on carbon emissions.

I know the member from Toronto Danforth talked about how China is one of the world leaders in renewable energy. If we want to talk about a megawatt basis, he's correct, but there's no place in the world where there's greater growth in the demand for power and electricity than China. We've had a recession in the last year, the Americans had a recession in last year, Europe's had a recession in the last year, but there's been no recession in China. Did their economy stop growing at the rate that it did before? Yes, but there's been no recession. The economy continues to grow in China, and this year it's expected to grow at over 10%. Would we be happy with 10% in this province? My God, Dalton McGuinty wouldn't be worrying about eHealth. He would have had all those records electronically taken care of because we'd have the money. But what we've been doing here is killing jobs by closing manufacturing plants because of the tax policies of this government and the energy policies of this government, which are making us less and less competitive. If you want to compete on the world market, you've got to be able to produce goods at a price at which you can sell. If you produce quality goods but you can't sell them, you'll have very full warehouses but very empty bank accounts. That's what we've been forced to do in Ontario under this government.

So here's what they want to do: They want to have a cap-and-trade program in Ontario, but if the world is not going to work with you, and in all the latest climate change negotiations, China and India have been exempt from any limits—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: One per cent, Madeleine, remember that: 1% in this province. If we shut them down today, we're not going to make any difference. If you're going to save this world, you'd better start thinking globally as well, and you'd better start thinking about what's going on in India and China.

So here we are; we're going to exempt the Chinese and Indian economies from any limits with regard to carbon emissions under any climate negotiations. That's like saying, "Well, I've had a few impaired charges, so everybody else is allowed to have a few more until they catch up. We know it's a bad thing, we know we shouldn't be doing that, but you're allowed to catch up." So we'll let those economies catch up to our carbon emissions or the Americans' carbon emissions, and that's saving the world? That's reducing global warming?

The world gets about 45% of its energy from coal. That number will be over 50% by 2015. It's growing

every day because, as Mr. Tabuns from Toronto–Danforth was talking about, while China is a leader in renewable energy—that's right, on a megawatt basis—it is the leader in building coal power. A new coal plant is going up in China at the rate of about two coal plants every three weeks. That's how fast they're building coal power in China.

This is about politics and this is about appealing to the segment of the population here who buys the story that if we cut our carbon emissions and cut our jobs, somehow we're going to change the direction that the world is going. We will cut our carbon emissions, but we won't change the direction the world is going, because until you exact the same requirements of those economies, you're not going to change that. So all of a sudden now we're going to say that we're going to have all kinds of limits here, but those economies—the ones, incidentally, that are our biggest competition when it comes to supplying the world with products, not only our competition but the Americans' competition as well. So they figured that if we'd just take it all upon ourselves, everything was going to be right.

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The member from Brant guffaws, but he was down in Kansas City as well. The amount of investment, billions and billions of dollars being invested in the United States in the science of carbon sequestration and carbon capture, pipelining carbon into oilfields and gas fields so that it will assist in the exploration and the extraction of those resources, at the same time capturing the carbon so that it is not emitted into our atmosphere—will it be expensive? Yes, it will. It will be expensive, but the Americans will do it, because the United States has 26% of the world's known coal reserves. They're all underground in the continental United States. That country has realized the folly of being dependent on foreign sources of energy. They've come to the conclusion that they need to be more self-reliant when it comes to energy.

One of the things they are going to do is to extract the energy from the coal that they have. They're going to ensure that they get that energy out of that coal; otherwise, they will be getting oil from the Middle East and eventually natural gas from the Middle East or Russia, because the natural gas reserves of the Middle East and Russia are much greater than those of North America. North America only has about 5% of the world's natural gas, whereas Russia and the Middle East have about 70%. That's where the resources are when it comes to those particular resources. Eventually, they will have the bulk of that market. But the Americans are going to want to ensure that they can get as much as possible of their future energy from sources that they actually control, because they've realized that having to depend on sources from another jurisdiction is iffy at best, particularly in the uncertain world that we live in.

But let's get back to the whole principle of this trading. If you're just taking carbon credits and saying, "I need some, I buy some," does that reduce the amount of carbon that you're emitting? I know the member from

Scarborough Southwest says, “Well, eventually it might encourage it.” Only if you’re going to be unprofitable doing so. If you can do it and be profitable, then there’s no incentive for you to reduce the actual amount of carbon that you produce. Business has one responsibility to its shareholders, and that’s to be profitable. If a business is profitable, shareholders will like it. If a business can produce goods, or whatever they happen to produce, and, through a carbon-trading mechanism, still is able to do that profitably, then there’s not likely to be much of an incentive for them to reduce that carbon output.

The member spoke about what we can do here. There’s no question; no one disagrees that we should all be doing what we can to reduce our footprint wherever we are. But to do it alone is suicidal, economic suicide. The Americans understand that and the Canadian government understands that. They’re reluctant to sign on to international treaties that don’t include those who we know will be the biggest carbon producers over the next 20 years, and that is the emerging economies and the growing economies of China and India. We have to ensure that everybody’s playing on an equal field here.

My colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk had a very interesting and informed speech earlier today on this issue as to why this government has to be questioned as to what the intent of this legislation is at this time. Of course, the legislation, as I said earlier—I have the bill here somewhere—is very vague. It gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council some rights. It does make some amendments to previous pieces of legislation, but it does give the Lieutenant Governor in Council some rights with which to enact regulations.

We’re always at a disadvantage here in this Legislature when a bill comes before us, and you know as a member yourself that there are many times where we would like to have the opportunity to actually see what the government is talking about, to see the regulations that they intend to bring forward here. In this piece of legislation—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —but you don’t see that here. All you see is a big framework with respect to what they may or may not do.

Just for some historical correctness here—because it’s difficult to get it from the other side sometimes. You see, they only tell us what they’re told to do out of the Premier’s office, whereas here we have the freedom to express the reality of life in Ontario. But they’re talking about the Premier’s promise, when he was in opposition, about shutting down. We’ve gone so far down that road. They’ve pretty well shut them down now because of the fact that they’ve wrecked our manufacturing economy.

I believe it was on August 2, 2006, that we hit an all-time-high record demand for power in this province: 27,005 megawatts. I think it was about 4 o’clock on that August afternoon. Earlier this year—it was some Saturday in June. I don’t remember. I should have written down the date. But I was looking at the ISO website, and the Ontario demand at that time was under 11,000 megawatts. Now, if somebody would have said to you in

2006 that this province, which had hit a high of 27,005 megawatts, would have a time in 2009 during the summer months—it could have been late spring, but I believe it was after June 21—at some point in that day when the Ontario demand would be less than 11,000 megawatts, I know you would have said that they were probably short some of their faculties, and I would have agreed with you. Even if you would have said it about me, as sometimes I’m sure you do—or think, anyway—I wouldn’t have disagreed with you at all. But that’s what has happened in this economy as a result of what they have done. So they’re talking now about this coal shutdown and accelerating it, and good for them, but it’s hardly a great feat of governance when you’ve taken away the need for something as opposed to eliminating it because of your care for the environment.

Back in 2002, when Dalton McGuinty was waxing on about why we have to shut down coal plants by 2007, he didn’t seem to know what CO₂ was. Carbon trading was probably something when you took your pencils back to Wal-Mart for a refund, you know? You took your lead pencils back or something; I don’t know. But he never, ever used the phrase “CO₂.” He talked about nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide and particulates. He talked about pollution, he talked about smog and he talked about the health effects of the emissions from coal plants and the effect that they were having on people in Ontario—not because of CO₂, because CO₂ is not a pollutant; it’s a warming gas. But he never, ever talked about CO₂ when he made his promise to shut down coal plants.

All of a sudden, CO₂ became the driving force behind their coal issue, not particulates, not sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide. Because quite frankly, we suggested at that time that we put scrubbers onto our coal-burning stacks, which would have eliminated—we have scrubbers and catalytic converters on two stacks at Lambton and scrubbers on two stacks at Nanticoke. The dual purpose removes almost all of the NO_x and SO_x on those burners, but they never put in a single piece of emission abatement equipment on any of our coal plants in all the time that they were in government. They refused to do it, and all of a sudden, then their mantra shifted away from particulates and polluting emissions to CO₂, so now all the talk is about CO₂.

I just want to, for the record, remind you that when that promise was first made, they never talked about CO₂. My good friend from Wellington–Halton Hills, who was a member at that time—I was not—will remember that they never raised that in any of their talks at all. CO₂ was never discussed. It was all about pollutants. Am I not correct, my good friend from Wellington–Halton Hills?

Mr. Ted Arnott: That’s my recollection. Dalton was the energy critic from 1990—

Mr. John Yakabuski: That’s right, he was the energy critic at that time.

So many times the driving force behind this government and its policies is politics. We know what the world out there is like right now. We realize that, and we don’t

disagree that we have to be doing things to make our environment cleaner. But they've put this stuff out with little or no thought to some of the consequences because they believe it will be a politically popular message. That's not leadership. That's politics.

We need less politics in this Legislature and a lot more leadership. If we had leadership in this Legislature and less politics, our manufacturing sector wouldn't be in the shape that it's in today. We would be bringing forth quality pieces of legislation, unlike what this government has brought in over the last couple of years.

I'm getting the signal from the Speaker. Unfortunately the clock, as it always does when I'm speaking,

accelerates. There's a conspiracy, I know. They speed up the clock whenever I'm speaking. I don't know if it is done from that side, or maybe it's from above, but I'm absolutely convinced that when I'm speaking, that clock runs quicker. I realize we are out of time, and I thank you for listening to me this afternoon.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It being 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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