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Tuesday 29 September 2009

Mardi 29 septembre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 September 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 septembre 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

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)

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 15, 2009, on the motion for second reading 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 / *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): Further debate? The member for Hamilton–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Today I would like to talk about Bill 185 on second reading. Ontarians want to know that their children and grandchildren will have a healthy environment to live in. They know the threat of climate change is real. They want the Ontario government to act now, forcefully and effectively, to contribute its fair share to the global solution to address climate change. Bill 185 aims to set up a system to cap greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. Combined with programs and policies to reduce such emissions, the government aims to reduce the GHG emissions by 15% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Our party has serious concerns, both about this bill and about the government's climate change plan in general. We are concerned that the government's plan is neither effective nor fair to Ontarians. I want to take some time today to speak about these weaknesses and suggest some better solutions for action against climate change.

Each year that passes, climate change becomes a greater threat to the health and economic well-being of Ontarians. Ontarians are already suffering the effects of global warming. Take, for instance, the increase in extreme weather events in the province. Just look at last summer and the events that took place: thousands of my Hamilton residents facing damages from flooded basements this July during a one-in-100-year downpour, a boy losing his life in Elmdale and hundreds losing their homes in Vaughan in August, as an unusually powerful storm ripped across southern Ontario. Residents in Ottawa, Sarnia, Thunder Bay and Peterborough have all experienced damaging flooding events over the past 20 years, leading to the hundreds of millions of dollars in damages.

The David Suzuki Foundation shows 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. Ontarians want serious action from governments, and they don't think enough is being done at this time. According to the Harris/Decima poll released in August, 70% of Ontarians think that the environment should be as high a priority for governments as the economy, even during our current recession, and similar percentages of Ontarians say that the environment is more important to them now than it was 10 years ago. The vast majority of Ontarians believe that we are not doing enough to address environmental issues.

But Ontarians are also worried that they will be negatively impacted by government actions to address environmental issues. Lower-income people, women, older people and people with less education are more worried that government actions on the environment will hurt them personally. These people are least able to recover from job loss and are hit hardest. Prices for food, electricity and basic necessities become a real problem. They fear that the government will let wealthier individuals and companies off the hook when it comes to the environment, as has been the case in the province. I know that I have witnessed in the industries in Hamilton that the government is a little light on pollution and on pollution controls. They don't enforce or fine companies to the level that they should for some of the spills and environmental disasters that have taken place over the years. They really don't enforce the ministry rules in a lot of cases.

It's important to remember who has contributed most to greenhouse gas emissions in the first place. It hasn't been the single mother balancing two jobs and struggling

to make ends meet. It hasn't been the laid-off factory worker who has to sell his three-bedroom house because he can't afford the mortgage. No. It's actually the richest Ontarians and Canadians who have seen their salaries and consumption rise even as most of us have struggled. Canadian economist Lars Osberg studied this and found that if it were not for the rising incomes of the richest Canadians and the increased consumption that has gone along with their grotesque wealth, Canada would be on track to meet its Kyoto targets.

While low- and middle-income people have contributed the least to climate change, they are hurt the most by taxing or capping carbon emissions because they can least afford price increases. Low- and middle-income people are also most affected by floods, heat waves and extreme cold weather because they can't afford air conditioners, basement waterproofing and proper insulation. As well, low- and middle-income people are least able to afford green and energy-efficient technologies even with the government rebates.

Ontarians want government action on climate change, but they want it to be effective and fair. Low- and middle-income people want to share in the opportunities provided by the new green economy and do not want to have to bear the burden of the problem they did not cause. The McGuinty government has had six years to develop a fair and effective climate change action plan, but it still doesn't have one. Yes, the government has set strong targets for greenhouse gas reductions, and we welcome those targets, but it's still not clear how these targets will be achieved.

In his assessment of the recent government progress report on climate change, the Ontario Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, said that while "quantifiable GHG reduction, fixed timelines and realistic targets are the cornerstone to any plan ... real numbers are absent from this plan." For example, Mr. Miller complained that "the report provides little in the way of detailed analysis to clarify or quantify how 10% of the 2014 GHG reduction target will be delivered through transportation-related initiatives." He has a reason to worry. GHG emissions from road transportation have increased by 35% since 1990 in Ontario. According to Environment Canada, that is due to both urban sprawl and consumer preference for SUVs, vans and pickups. What do we see the McGuinty government doing on this front? Well, this spring it cut a "secret deal"—the words of a Toronto Star person—with developers, which spawned yet another urban sprawl north of the greenbelt in the Bradford-Barrie area.

In its 2009 budget, the McGuinty government allocated more spending on new and expanded highways than it did on public transit. The McGuinty government has allowed transit fares to rise and let government support for transit operation fall to the lowest in North America. The McGuinty government has accepted a 20-year transit plan for the greater Toronto area that will allow GHG emissions to rise by as much as 18% over the 2006 levels. Instead of making public transit affordable, the

McGuinty government is offering up 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. So really, once again, we've got the cart before the horse.

0910

They're offering rebates on cars that haven't even hit the market yet, so it's really not going to be beneficial to the population in any way, shape or form until those cars are out en masse, and I don't think that most of the people can afford them. So what impact that will have, I'm not sure. Instead of making public transit affordable, the government is offering up that rebate. Well, like I said, how many people can afford to spend \$40,000 on a car? Not too many.

Other aspects of the government's so-called green plan are equally problematic. The recent announcement to close at least some coal plants next year is a welcome announcement—if still three years later than they originally promised it. However, the McGuinty government is bringing on a short-term energy gap by taking 10 or more years to build expensive and polluting nuclear plants instead of quick-to-deploy renewable energy. They will have to fill this gap with greenhouse-gas-emitting natural gas plants or possibly delays to the final phase-out of the coal plants. Meanwhile, the government continues to fail to require that the OPA pursue all possible energy conservation in Ontario instead of just two thirds of it.

The government's home retrofit program continues to be a program for the select few who can afford to put thousands of dollars up front on insulation, high-efficiency furnaces and solar water heaters, and then navigate the complex rebate program. It's just out of touch for most people. That's why only one in 80 Ontario homeowners has taken advantage of the government's home retrofit program. A lot of people can barely afford to pay their hydro bill and can't afford to put food on the table, so these programs are not feasible unless they make some major restructuring to the amounts and the people it will help. It's just not working because, like I said, in our present climate, a lot of people are out of work, a lot of people can't afford it, and it just isn't happening.

It is fitting that Mr. Smitherman launched a recent change to the home retrofit program at a million-dollar Rosedale home, for those are the homeowners who are benefiting—a million-dollar home. I don't know how many people can afford to live in that. I might have visited one, I can't remember, but I sure as heck have never owned one. Meanwhile, lower-income Ontario homeowners are going to have to pay more for home heating and electricity, and they won't be able to afford home energy efficiency retrofit programs to reduce these costs. That would probably be 80% of the population who won't be able to afford it; not exactly an effective program, I would say.

And lower-income tenants are going to pay more for heating as landlords pass heating costs from smart meters without reducing basic rents or making energy-efficient

improvements to the apartments. So they're going to raise the rent because they haven't done what they're supposed to do as far as insulating their apartments, and of course, once again, it will be passed on to the consumers.

The government stands up here and talks about programs and how they're going to benefit people and that the consumer will benefit. Well, I don't remember too many people passing on savings to me as a consumer over the years. I don't remember my taxes going down. I don't remember my municipal taxes going down. I do remember them going up all the time, and our salaries were capped. Then, when we have to try to make enough money to pay for these things, we go on strike and these companies are supported with allowing scab labour to come into the plant and things like that. It would be nice if this government finally passes anti-scab legislation so people can actually work and afford to pay for these programs that they're introducing.

All in all, it's hard to have confidence that the government will meet either its 2014 or 2020 GHG reduction targets. One has to wonder why the McGuinty government doesn't design environmental programs that an average person can afford. You know, if it's going to be really efficient, if it's going to work, I think that the majority of Ontarians would have to be able to be in a position to afford the luxury of retrofitting their homes to save them money in the long run, and I'm sure that it would be less consumption of our much-needed resources. One also wonders why it provides so little support for more widely affordable ways for people to reduce their GHG emissions, such as tax credits for bicycle commuting or reduced fare transit passes for workers.

The NDP believes strongly that policies are needed to make environmental options convenient and affordable for Ontarians. Instead of expecting hard-pressed homeowners to pony up thousands of dollars for home improvements, the NDP would provide low-interest loans that could be paid back through energy savings. Instead of funding new highways like the 404 extension, which breed urban sprawl and car use, the NDP would put money into making public transit fares more affordable for Ontarians. Instead of creating a short-term energy shortage by plunging ahead with expensive and dirty nuclear plants, the NDP would expand clean, quick-to-deploy, job-creating, renewable energy.

At the end of the day, the recent numbers tell the story of the McGuinty climate plan. After three years of modest progress, the GHG emissions rose—I repeat, rose—by 4% between 2006 and 2007, negating two years of so-called gains. There is clearly much more that the Liberal government could and must do to reduce emissions in the province, which brings us to the bill in front of us.

Like many Liberal bills, this is an enabling bill that leaves the details to regulations. The bill is all of a huge—we're really going to help the climate—three pages. My, that's a real attack on the environmental problems in our province. Three pages: Wow.

It enables the government to set up a cap-and-trade program through regulations. Yes, we do need a cap-and-trade system, but the question is, will it be designed to ensure that emissions are reduced quickly enough to protect the health of our future generations, and will it be designed to ensure that low-income—I repeat, low—and middle-income Ontarians are protected from the job loss and price increases that will occur in this system?

There is real danger that once again, with this bill, the Liberals will put the interests of their friends, developers and nuclear industry, the richest Ontarians, ahead of the interests of ordinary Ontarians, ahead of the fair and effective greenhouse gas reductions we require. In fact, there are indications already that this bill will produce a cap-and-trade system that is so weak that it will fail to make all the possible reductions in the GHGs.

The effectiveness and fairness of the bill will depend on the design features that will mostly be determined through those regulations. Some of the key questions are as follows:

When will the caps take effect? At what level? Will there be incentives for early action? How many sectors will have their emissions capped? Will it apply only to big companies or small and medium ones, too? Will permits to emit be sold or given away? If sold, at what price? Will the revenue be used to quicken the transition to a green economy and to help those most vulnerable make such a transition? Will companies be allowed to buy offsets if they exceed their capped levels? How will qualifying offsets be determined?

Some of these questions seem technical, but they matter in terms of how much the cap-and-trade system will reduce emissions and who will bear the cost.

Ontario is not developing its system in a vacuum. We are greatly affected by what kind of system is put in place in the US and what system is put in place across Canada. But we must not let either of these dictate what Ontarians seek to do. There are good aspects to the Waxman-Markey bill that the government would be wise to follow, but Ontario should go further in some respects.

First, Waxman-Markey is comprehensive in scope. It has a solid long-term goal, an 83% reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2050, which matches what scientists are calling for in developed countries and exceeds the long-term McGuinty targets.

Second, Waxman-Markey covers all fossil fuels and most other greenhouse gases, 86% of all emissions by 2020—not too far away.

Third, it is fair in that it allocates 15% of permits to low-income families. As mentioned, low-income families have done the least to cause climate change and have the most to lose from rising prices on basic necessities.

Rebates in the US program, about \$160 per adult starting in 2012 and growing over time, will help modest-income people cope with the transition. In fact, all low- and middle-income Americans will benefit over time, since unauctioned permits—about half the permits by 2030—will be paid out to US citizens living below the median income level.

Finally, the minimum auction price of \$10 a ton, rising each year, to \$63 a ton in 2050, places a strong price floor needed to encourage changes in business practices. We have to give initiatives to business to actually meet their targets. That's an important practice that hasn't been done in the past, and unfortunately, business hasn't sunk a lot of money into pollution control.

But there are also serious weaknesses to the Waxman-Markey bill, and pressure will come from vested interests for the McGuinty government not to go further in these areas.

0920

First, Waxman-Markey distributes too many emissions permits for free: 85% at the start. This constitutes a free handout in the order of billions of dollars to energy-intensive industries. Yes, industries need government support to reduce their energy use and to transition to greener technologies, but providing them with a free licence to emit won't help them make such a transition. Specifically, Waxman-Markey gives too many free permits to oil and coal companies and puts too much faith in carbon capture. The McGuinty government needs to advocate to ensure that the federal government of whatever stripe does not give oil companies a free ride by continuing to allow and subsidize the massive growth of the tar sands.

Second, Ontario needs to do better than the US in providing transitional aid for displaced workers and green-collar training programs. Waxman-Markey proposes to spend less than 1% on worker transition—far, far too little. There are many creative ways to help workers transition to green jobs, including basic support from income replacement, education and training, community development to build local economies and assistance to low-income people. The NDP has proposed an on-the-job training tax credit to help encourage employers to provide training to new workers making the transition to green jobs.

Finally—Speaker, it's a little tough to hear—the middle-term emission reduction targets of Waxman-Markey are simply not good enough. Waxman-Markey and the Stephen Harper plan aim for what works out to be a 3% reduction in emissions from 1990 to 2020. That is far shy of the McGuinty government's promised 15% reduction and far short of what most scientists believe is necessary to stop global temperatures from spiralling out of control. Pressure will come from industry for Ontario to align itself with these inadequate US and Canadian targets. The McGuinty government must do better in resisting these interests than it has done in resisting the interests of land developers, water bottling companies and other corporate interests where basically the bottom line is profit and not so much protecting the environment.

Here's what a strong and fair cap-and-trade would look like. First, it will start soon. In last year's memorandum with Quebec, the McGuinty government said it would implement a cap-and-trade system as early as January 1, 2010. It has let two years slip by. Now it seems the start date has been moved to 2012. Once again

we're putting it off, putting it off, putting it off. Soon we will see big disasters. So I just—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a pleasure to rise this morning to comment on the remarks of our colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, remarks that were very pleasingly temperate this morning, I'm happy to say, also, as those remarks related to Bill 185, very much consistent with the way our government is moving forward with cap-and-trade. It's quite clear, as the member has outlined, that Ontarians do want governments to take action, and we have a responsibility to act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we owe it to the generations that follow. It's not sufficient to say, "Let someone else deal with it." Governments around the globe are taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and it is indeed a global challenge, one that requires action at every level: internationally, federally, provincially and locally in each of our everyday lives. We are all global citizens and we need to take action. Since this is a global challenge, we are working with the Western Climate Initiative, the International Carbon Action Partnership, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and the Mid-western Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord. We are taking action together. It's extremely important that we do this. Ontario has an open market economy but it operates in a global trading system.

Carbon pricing is a reality for North America and the global marketplace. President Obama is moving towards cap-and-trade. Developing a cap-and-trade system compatible with the US will help protect against potential border measures on Ontario's exports. Since Ontario exports about 80% of its products to the US, aligning our cap-and-trade system with the US is imperative, and we want to be at the forefront of developing this system that will put a price on carbon. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm pleased to rise and comment on the discourse by my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, whom I recognize not just on this, but on any debate we do in this chamber, as one of the passionate members of the NDP. I know he believes in what he is talking about.

I take exception not so much with what my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has to say, but, as I'll elaborate on in my own speech on this particular bill in a few moments, with the whole concept as it has been presented by the Liberal government. The member takes a bit of a Pollyannaish approach in believing that in some manner or means, with the legislation that's enacted herein, to wit the two-page-long—not three pages; three pages includes the cover—legislation called Bill 185, this government is going to effectively address GHGs and global warming by a piece of legislation that's as flimsy as this simply by saying, "We're going to introduce cap-and-trade here in the province of Ontario without really elaborating in any meaningful way on what this cap-and-trade means."

I think what we know is that when we talk about a global initiative—we really are dealing with that term “global”—Ontario cannot possibly go it alone. Does Ontario have to be a piece of the jigsaw puzzle? Of course it does. But in order to pass legislation and make it effective legislation, we need detail.

The member talked about the fact that we didn't meet targets. In fact, we surpassed the targets that we had set here in the province of Ontario. That's not a surprise. There was a fairly scientifically oriented study published earlier in the week, as a matter of fact, that said if we continue on the present course and we actually pass all of the initiatives that are out there on a global basis, we will still see the temperature rise six degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I listened carefully to my colleague Mr. Miller from Stoney Creek. He has already been insulted twice by other colleagues. One referred to his remarks as “temperate”; the other referred to them as “Pollyannaish.” I know Mr. Miller has got to be sitting back there now just smoking, with the smoke coming out of his ears. I'll not offend him in the same way.

He had an effective analysis, as he inevitably does, of greenhouse gas emissions. I know that he delivered that with a strong background as a municipal politician from a community that has coped with environmental issues throughout its history. I enjoy listening to Mr. Miller and his contribution to these debates. It was a thoughtful, reasoned and measured commentary by him on Bill 185, not without its critique of the government, because I would have been sorely disappointed had he not criticized the government. But he nonetheless displayed a remarkable familiarity with the subject matter.

We're going to listen to, I suppose, a Liberal and then Mr. Shurman. I'm looking forward to Mr. Shurman's remarks and I hope that people who are watching at this early morning hour will stay tuned for that. If I have a chance to speak, I'll be making some comments on the bill as well. I have some things to say, perhaps a little bit more obtuse, because everything that has been said, everything that Mr. Miller has said, I could say, “Me too.” But I'm not going to do that. Let's maybe flesh this out a little bit, expand it, look at some other aspects of it, look at some of the other dimensions to this issue, because it's really a broader environmental issue.

I commend my colleague. He was channelling Al Gore, and nobody could have done a better job.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I thank the member from Stoney Creek for his comprehensive comments on many aspects of this bill.

I just wanted to comment on one area that he touched upon: public transportation. The reality is that we, as a government, are involved in a massive investment in public transportation, over \$11.5 billion in improving

transit in the GTA, from Hamilton all the way to Durham. That is a very practical and pragmatic way of reducing our carbon footprint. That's under way right now with York region, the city of Toronto, Hamilton and Durham region. That's one way we can practically take cars off the road, take diesel buses off the road, because most of that \$11 billion is in new electric, low-floor streetcars, or CLRVs, whatever you want to call them, that will go across the GTA. That is pragmatic; it works. It gets people out of their cars when you put in new light-rail systems, which this government is investing in.

0930

I have a massive investment in public transit along Eglinton Avenue in my riding. Eglinton Avenue will now see public transit in modern, low-floor streetcars, which means seniors don't have to step up and disabled people can get in and out. It'll go all the way from Peel region, basically, to Durham; it's an east-west crossroad. That's an investment we're making, along with the investment we're making in expanding our subway system up to the city of Vaughan. It is critical to get an electric subway into one of the fastest-growing areas in Canada: the city of Vaughan and York region. That's practical. We're doing this as part of this bill, so it's more than just what's in this bill. It also complements the greenbelt and creates green jobs—real, well-paying green jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Paul Miller: I must start off by thanking my colleague Mr. Kormos for his kind words. I have never in my life been accused of being temperate or Pollyanna. I think that is quite a unique statement from both the members. That's the furthest from the truth when it comes to me, but that's okay. If they feel that way, I guess that was their way of softening the blow of their slams. But that's okay.

Let's face it, if we're going to be effective, if any government in this country is going to be effective, we've got to take a hard line. We've got to actually go after companies. Some of the other members may be a little more large-business friendly than we are and kind of turn their heads when it comes to pollution control. We're not like that in the NDP. We believe a healthy environment creates healthy people, creates longevity and also creates a good living and jobs. That's what we believe and we're going to stick to it and we're not going to be swayed from our opinion that governments aren't doing enough, haven't done enough and probably won't do enough in the near future.

They can set goals, they can set targets and they can set regulations, but if they don't implement them, they're not worth the paper they're written on. If they want to blow steam off and talk about what they're going to do, put some meat behind it. Let's see it done. Let's actually see some results. I haven't seen a heck of a lot and I probably won't, because I've lived through this my whole life in Hamilton. The ministry does not enforce its own rules. The ministry does not fine enough. The Ministry of the Environment has done a terrible, horrendous

job at going after companies and individuals that pollute. It goes on and on and on. One day we're all going to regret it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I guess we're on our own, Peter.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I guess we are.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Chair recognizes the member from Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I didn't expect to be debating this soon, but happy to rise and add my comments to those of the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on Bill 185, on greenhouse gas emissions, primarily, but really implementing a cap-and-trade system here in the province of Ontario.

The first thing I want to do is go on record and say that Conservatives are not natively deniers of climate change, deniers of global warming, uncaring about pollution. We know that we have these problems to address and we want to address them. The inconvenient truth is that the McGuinty government doesn't know what it's doing in trying to address them with a bill that's as flimsy as this. Not only that, it's important that when we look at legislation that addresses the problem of climate change and we look at it on a narrow scale—and it is a narrow scale when we invoke only Ontario as the jurisdiction we're talking about—we have to explain what it is we're trying to do.

Very recently, knowing that I would rise in debate on this bill, I visited a couple of homes in the Toronto area. I should state from the get-go that these were homes in a great area of town—college-educated adults with great jobs, well-educated children living in the homes, well-read, well-informed, and I said in every case, “Do you know what cap-and-trade is? What's cap-and-trade?” Of the four adults, three said no, and the fourth one said, “My daughter graduated in June and when the ceremonies were over, they pulled their caps off and threw them up in the air. When they all collected their caps, was that the trade?” And it wasn't a joke. They don't know what it was. No one knew.

The Minister of the Environment says that Bill 185 is about protecting our environment and his cap-and-trade plan will do that. I'll get to him in due course. I wish we were here to debate and discuss a bill whose intent is to help our environment and clean our air. Instead, what I see is the Dalton gang wanting our blessing for another tax grab with a fancy title, and I'm sick of it. Not two weeks here, and I'm sick of it.

The folks out there are just catching on, for example, to what the harmonized sales tax will mean. Now you say, “Hey, we can protect the environment if we can just pass this Bill 185,” and effectively, because of what I've just said, “Trust us. We know what cap-and-trade is. It doesn't matter if you do.” I say—well, it doesn't matter what I would say because, frankly, that word would be unparliamentary.

The McGuinty government has over-dealt its hand and the Liberal folks know—you know—that you're going to pay; you know that you're going to pay for it. The

government actually still believes that glossy headlines and repetitive spin are going to make up for the lack of substance and the lack of results. This summer, that has been underscored, and it continues to be underscored every day in this Legislature. But while Ontarians may not know what cap-and-trade is or, for that matter, a lot of the initiatives that this government takes, they have caught on to the government's MO. After a health tax masquerading as life-saving revenue, a WSIB bill as a safety initiative and an HST as our economic salvation, also known as money to enable the McGuinty government to spend till it ends, this bill cannot fool anyone.

Like I said, the public doesn't know what it is. The public wants an initiative on climate change, but they don't know what this is, and you have to explain it. These three little pages, as I pointed out earlier—two if you drop the cover—are really not going to do it. The government should be ashamed of itself for bringing such an inadequate and flimsy proposal before this House to present to the people of Ontario. I'll say again: I am not against a greenhouse gas initiative, and yes, I think cap-and-trade is a legitimate approach, just not this cap-and-trade, just not this bill, with four or six paragraphs of, “We will create something called cap-and-trade and then we'll regulate it.” Tell me what you're going to do. Maybe I'll support that if you do, but you're not.

I listened very carefully to the environment minister in his leadoff speech. I watched him carefully. If you're the McGuinty government and you're the environment minister who fronts for that government on a bill like this, you come out, you call something green and you say that it's there to protect future generations. What you're really doing is you're using it as cover for your own failings. Better still—let me be quite succinct—you put that Minister of the Environment out there to sell it for you, and I'll tell you why you do that. You do it because that particular Minister of the Environment actually looks trustworthy and he looks wise—to me. He could actually say the words, “Ho, ho, ho,” and I'd buy it.

We saw the same thing in effect when that minister introduced the pesticides bill last year in which we saw a ban—a 100% ban—on pesticide use. Then, when the regulations came out, we exempted 98% of the ban. “Don't bother about Health Canada science. It's for the children,” Mr. Gerretsen said. “It's for the children.” As a matter of fact, in answer to a question about that bill at the time in the House by me, he used that phrase again: “It's for the children.” I don't want to digress into the pesticides bill, but I do point that out because when the minister, in his leadoff speech on Bill 185, talked about the reasons for introducing it and being concerned about this, he used the same phrase: “It's for the children.” I might say that in the pesticides bill, if it was for the children, why did you exempt 98% of all usage? Do the children in agricultural areas not matter? Because there's a total exemption there. It's not for the children unless you make it work.

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Minister Gerretsen talked in very broad brush strokes, which is the innate problem of this bill. We want to

improve the environment. He spoke of the urgency and the importance of reducing greenhouse gases. He talked about seeping methane in the Arctic, as if in some way this bill would be able to address that. And he said that global climate change is something we all have to address, a fact with which I agree 100%. Minister Gerretsen is correct on that.

So what's the problem? Well, this two-page bill is as broad as a barn door. Its latitude allows the government an array of powers, but we don't quantify any of those powers. It does not do what the minister said he was going to do. It does not elaborate for an unknowing public on just what cap-and-trade is. The minister relies on the public that generally want a reduction in greenhouse gases and to therefore support a bill he says will do that: "Look, we know that there's climate change; you've got to pass this bill. It's as simple as that." I'm sorry, I cannot walk into this place deaf, dumb and blind in terms of what this bill says I'm supposed to be voting for—no specifics.

For that same public, cap-and-trade means we as a jurisdiction—and I leave it to the listener to determine what that jurisdiction is, whether it's Ontario, Ontario/Quebec, Canada, the Western Climate Initiative, North America or the world—we have to cap our carbon emissions at some level. So we cap the carbon emissions, and then it sets up a market for carbon emissions, hence the trade piece. This trade element is a form of tax by allowing carbon emissions to carry a market-based price generally set at auction. Who gets the money? Government does. Strike me dead, what a surprise. Why? Because the price of products manufactured by carbon emitters will rise and that price will be passed on to us, all of us, via the cost of the products that are created. So what's the quid pro quo? What is it? Government reduces our tax burden at the personal level in a commensurate way.

Now, has anyone in this chamber ever heard of a tax that Dalton McGuinty didn't like? So in the same sense as the pesticides bill did not and does not control pesticides—though this summer there was more asthma and hay fever, including my own acting up—this bill allows for a broad-based market system for carbon trading, but there are no stated objectives in specific terms. I need to know and the people of Ontario need to know: What are the specifics? What is it that we have to do, at what cost, to achieve what effect? And don't tell me it will be on a world scale that we'll reduce carbon emissions. I get that, but I want to know what piece of what jigsaw puzzle we're talking about.

The minister's job is to address issues on behalf of a concerned public and fix this problem. The problem here is greenhouse gases. This bill doesn't fix that. In fact, the closest the minister can come is to talk about the federal government getting our country into a worldwide agreement. That makes sense, but the bill is whistling in the wind. The minister likes the word "green," but saying it a lot doesn't make it green, and we saw that with the Green Energy Act. How does this bill reduce carbon emissions?

I'll say that again: How does this bill reduce carbon emissions? It doesn't say in any real way that it can or that it will.

I heard the minister list initiatives he claims to have undertaken, or will be undertaking, in aid of the environment. Now, you don't really want to talk about shutting down the coal plants again, do you, Minister? I don't know how those even relate to this bill, which is the very tip of a market system for carbon credit trading. He said himself what this is about: It's about a supply-and-demand system for carbon trading, as distinct from controlling greenhouse gases.

Controlling greenhouse gases by legislation, they tell us, doesn't work anymore, so now we have to have a cap-and-trade system—fine. I'm often accused of a certain cynicism in this place and today is no different. I am cynical. This is not a bill that will make any immediate or real difference in global greenhouse gas emissions and the control of them. Global warming is what we're concerned with, and we are truly concerned, but this bill is, forgive the pun, a smokescreen. This government has concerns about the manufacturing sector spewing carbon into the atmosphere. I say that you should be so lucky, considering what you're doing to the manufacturing sector.

Let's be clear: This has nothing to do with the environment. Cap-and-trade is all about reworking the tax system. And, by the way, it's not such a bad idea if you do it properly.

Let me quote from a recent publication on cap and trade put out by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce:

"The largest active cap-and-trade program in the world is the European Union emissions trading scheme. It regulates CO₂ emissions from the energy sector, iron and steel production and processing, the mineral industry, and the paper and board industry. The United States has a nationwide cap-and-trade system for sulphur dioxide ... emissions from electrical utilities.

"In both the EU and the US, emissions permits were given to industry"—and I stress, given to industry—"for free (at the start of the program) to obtain support for the system and encourage the rapid start-up of a market for trades. Providing permits for free allows firms who would not have been able to acquire credits in the auction to remain in business. For firms that would have been able to pay for permits at auction, or would have reduced emissions anyway, obtaining permits for free creates an extra benefit.... Free emissions permits are valuable assets—they increase the firm's income either by increasing revenue if the permits are later sold or by decreasing costs if the permits are used. This is a key reason why industry may prefer a cap-and-trade system over carbon taxes. 'Were all permits subject to auction, big industry may look much more kindly on a carbon-added tax.'

"A national cap-and-trade system" for Canada "would require the creation of new administrative and legal trading infrastructure, complete with new regulations and institutions to effectively enforce the system ... and a national electronic registry for issuing, holding, transferring and cancelling permits."

That, to me, is a pretty significant commitment, and it's not addressed in any way, shape or form in the bill we're debating now.

I'd like to go on just for a moment with a couple of other paragraphs from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce that address this complexity of setting up cap-and-trade on—a global basis would be too broad, but just a Canada-wide basis, let alone Ontario:

"It is preferable to auction permits at the start and use the revenue to reduce personal and corporate income taxes...." That, inherently, is what cap-and-trade is about. It's a swap of the taxation system from personal and corporate income tax dependency to a dependency on revenue generated at auction from cap-and-trade. That's the trading system, and that's the quid pro quo that we, the citizens, are supposed to get the benefit of. But we have no details being supplied by the McGuinty government or Minister Gerretsen on how this is going to be effected through Bill 185.

I'll go on from the chamber of commerce document: "This would stimulate additional economic activity, offsetting some of the negative impacts of a cap-and-trade system. Without auctioning the permits, and recycling the revenue back to taxpayers (individuals and businesses), a cap-and-trade system that increases the cost of producing goods and services in proportion to their CO₂ emissions will put Canadian industry at a competitive disadvantage relative to other countries that are not taking similar action."

So there are some specifics here in a study—this is a learned paper, a well-researched paper, which has been published by an organization with a lot of credibility, on what you have to do. And it's not a two-page, four- or six-paragraph bill that just says, "We're going to do this," it is a blueprint for how you're going to do it.

It seems to me that every time I hear mention of climate control, it is almost always referred to as global climate control. So does Ontario have a fit into global climate control? Of course it does. But you have to do this on a global basis, not just say, "Hey, cap-and-trade for Ontario: Isn't it a good thing?" Sure it's a good thing, but what are the details? The devil is in the details. Global, by definition, means "of, relating to or involving the entire earth, worldwide." And I said just moments ago that, left to our devices, if we were to invoke every single outstanding climate change treaty that hasn't been signed yet and some of the initiatives that have been implemented at this point, notwithstanding all of that, and if we go to Copenhagen in December and sign that, we're still going to have a result at the end of the 21st century of a rise in world temperature by six degrees Fahrenheit. The scientists said that; I didn't.

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That being the case, what's our legacy? Nobody in this chamber is going to be here at the end of the 21st century, but our children as old men and women and their children as younger people are, and they are going to reap the results of what we create. So let's get with the program on a global basis if we're going to create anything of a lasting and positive nature.

I have noticed that this government now includes itself in the definition of "worldwide." I agree with my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk, who spoke at the outset of the debate on this bill. He said, "Think global, act global," and I couldn't agree more with that sentiment. Mr. McGuinty and the province of Ontario alone are not going to solve the global climate crisis, and in fairness I don't believe that they think they are. What I do believe is that they haven't enunciated the policy in a bill that carries the weight and the import that groups 13 million people, 13 million Ontarians, together and has them say, "We are onside. We want to be onside. We support this legislation because we understand the cause, and now we see the effect, and here is a solution." That's not the case.

It actually is up to the federal government to bring in some form of cap-and-trade system or other environmental policy, and it must relate to the money piece. It must relate to taxation. It must relate to a swap. The swap would be carbon emissions at a cost in auction, which is the real trading system that's being discussed on a worldwide basis, and it must include mandatory diminution of personal and corporate income tax.

This government is going to try to use a three-page bill to say, "Look at us. Look at what we're doing, and in the global context." Speaker, it's just three pages of paper. You haven't done anything when you set out a four- or six-paragraph bill that is supposed to change our entire environmental system. The minister would have you believe that that's not the case, but it is. When I saw this bill for the first time, I thought, "Well, here's a cap-and-trade system that we're initiating, and then we'll regulate it," and that's precisely what it is. So now I, along with the rest of us and all of Ontario, have to wait for that regulatory system to find out what they actually mean.

How can you expect us to take this seriously? What is it? What are the targets? What's the mechanism? What are you going to have to do to effect what you want? Claiming that this is some kind of an environmental program is nonsense. This is a lob ball over to the environmental side, saying, "Here, we're doing something. Isn't it great? Leave the rest to us." I'm not prepared to. I've seen too much of that in other legislation that this provincial government has brought forward and I need detail.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to commend my colleague from Thornhill for his wonderful, well-thought-out and researched comments. However, I'm once again going to blow my temperate image. The bottom line here is that we will see down the road where the present government and the official opposition really stand when it comes to implementing tough targets and tough emission controls on major companies. I really don't believe they will follow through and vote for implementation of programs that are really going to help the environment. I believe they will follow their business roots.

I'll tell you what's going on right now in Hamilton. Some companies have already applied to move ahead the

number of years for their compliance that has already been set forth by the government. They were supposed to have the environmental control systems in by a certain date and they were supposed to meet those targets. They will not meet those targets and they're already applying to extend it again. So here we go, delay, delay, put off, put off, and not having to spend the money.

I must say, in all the years that I worked there, when they were making hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in those industries, they weren't sinking a lot into pollution control. But now, when there's a recession and there's not a lot of money around, they're crying poverty. But they made hundreds of millions of dollars. They could have done it then. But they're not even doing it now; a lot of companies in this province are asking for an extension, and this government will probably give it to them, and it'll be another five or 10 years before anything is done.

So the government and the official opposition can talk environment control, they can talk pollution control. I really don't think they'll back it up; I really don't think they'll follow through with it. I think they'll follow the lead of their friends in Ottawa.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Thornhill for his comments this morning, his 20-minuter. I respect the position that he has taken, but I would suggest to those who are following the debate on television and those here in the chamber, you might expect, after having listened to the 20 minutes from the member, that in fact the legislation that's before us here today would be the only thing that has come forward from the McGuinty government over the past six years relative to climate change and dealing with greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Ontario. Clearly, I haven't heard any mention about the 1.8-million-acre greenbelt around the GTA. I haven't heard any discussion around the 50-million-tree commitment that we've made. I haven't heard any discussion about the far north boreal region legislation that's before us today. A significant number of programs and legislation have come forward that deal with climate change and global carbon emissions over the past six years. They are before us and continue to come.

There's one specific one that I would like to talk about that has had a direct impact on my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The member may not be aware, but when the Conservatives did govern between 1995 and 2003, there was a very clearly articulated policy on their part that they were no longer going to be in the game of funding public transit. I'm not here to debate that particular policy. That was a position taken by the government of the day over an eight-year period, and that's fine. That was the position they took. But from the city of Toronto, in terms of their ability to move forward with mass transit projects, subway cars, light rail vehicles, it had a direct impact, and nothing happened.

We came forward in 2003 with a very clearly articulated policy to get back into the game of funding

mass transit, and I can tell you that not only has that helped ridership increase significantly in the city of Toronto, but it has also had direct economic benefit for my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan at the local Bombardier plant, where we now have seen close to \$2 billion worth of contracts land. Much of that work is to be done in my riding.

I think there are other pieces that have happened over the course of the last six years that perhaps the member from Thornhill might lend his mind to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I wish to comment on the very recent presentation by the member from Thornhill. I concur that this legislation is inadequate; I think the member used the term “flimsy.” It comes in at a page and a half, if you subtract the English or the French, in contrast to the 1,500-page legislation that we are seeing in other countries.

This government is not explaining cap-and-trade to people in the province of Ontario. They are not engaged in a dialogue with respect to climate change. As the member from Thornhill indicated, we, as the opposition, support the ever-important climate change initiatives.

This government brought in a bill. Its members will not stand up and explain the bill. They don't seem to have an interest in this bill, in contrast to much of the rest of the world. I think of the very recent meetings at the United Nations General Assembly, where the president of China showed up to talk about climate change. The president of Japan, only elected six days before, showed up at the UN General Assembly to give a major speech on climate change. President Obama gave two speeches at the UN, one focusing solely on climate change. The president of France travelled to New York to present on climate change and his solution, which is the Dion-style carbon tax, as opposed to cap-and-trade. Like Japan and the United States and the rest of Europe, those countries are very interested in implementing carbon tax tariffs and protectionist trade sanctions on those countries that do not get up to speed—something I know Mr. McGuinty is worried about.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

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Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak in response to my colleague from Thornhill. I'm just going to say at the outset that I don't agree with his comments that just because the legislation is a few pages long, it is somehow inadequate or does not have the force or the intent which is meant for it.

I think we have to discuss this issue in context. When we talk about the climate change and greenhouse gas emissions issue, that is not an issue that is just limited to Ontario. That is an issue that is global in nature, and when it comes to the environment, we need to make sure that we are working in accordance with other like-minded regimes to create a system that works effectively.

Creating an Ontario-only cap-and-trade system which does not work effectively with other Canadian provinces or with the regime perhaps put forward by the Canadian government or our other North American partners like the United States and Mexico would not be of any real consequence or impact.

By creating enabling legislation, which this legislation essentially is, the Legislature is giving the authority to the Minister of the Environment to work with other jurisdictions, such as the Western Climate Initiative, which Ontario is part of, and other provinces, to ensure that we create a cap-and-trade system that works cross-jurisdictionally. That is the crux. When we look at the geographic boundaries of Ontario, environmental issues just do not stop there. It has to be done in a manner that conforms with a mechanism or regime that is operable in other jurisdictions as well, and that is what we are trying to do through this cap-and-trade legislation. It is the intention to create an effective system that works all across North America and hopefully globally, and that is the purpose of the legislation.

I'm very proud to stand here and support this enabling legislation which will create a cap-and-trade system in Ontario along with our other partners in North America.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Thornhill has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you to all of my colleagues for the comments. They are somewhat enlightening and they're all passionate, and I recognize that.

I'd like to begin by mentioning my colleague from Ottawa Centre, who suggests, in a way, that he agrees with me by saying we have to understand that this is global. Most of what I said was to that effect, that this is global, and you don't agree with me. This is rather puzzling to me, because we're about to see debate on this bill collapse. So if you're so passionate about this, why isn't the party that has put the legislation forward standing up and talking about it and doing precisely what I said, which is elaborating on what you mean and how this piece of the puzzle fits into the global overall context? That's what I want to see.

As to my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, he talks about the fact that the Liberal Party and our party, the Progressive Conservative Party, will ultimately cave and will support business. I want to make a point perfectly clear: Number one, I know very well all of my colleagues in my caucus, and I can tell you that we are just as passionate about climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases, as the holier-than-thou NDP is. And I can tell you that this is not about business; this is not about caving to business interests. Here is what we believe about business: We believe that healthy business creates a healthy work climate. That's what we're trying to create. We don't cave to business, ever.

My friend from Haldimand–Norfolk talks about the fact that there is a need to explain cap-and-trade. That was the nub of my discourse. I want an explanation. I want to be able to vote for something not because somebody across the way tells me that there is a real

thing called climate change, there is a real thing called global warming, and I have to address this real thing by voting for whatever it is they put up that passes for legislation. That's simply not true. My friend from Haldimand–Norfolk also said that there is no dialogue with the public, and that's precisely right. The closest that that party, that government, is coming to creating dialogue with the public is you folks on television watching me and my colleagues debate this in a closed environment, and there's probably not 100 of you.

That's the problem with this legislation. This legislation is going to die probably today—go off to committee, where hopefully we'll get some amendments but ultimately we probably won't, and what will happen is we'll get a series of regulations that will create what passes for a cap-and-trade system. I've got a problem with that.

I'm glad to add my comments today, Speaker, and I thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 185. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Madam Speaker, I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): So ordered.

Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: There being no further business prior to question period today, I would ask that we recess.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The House will recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I draw members' attention to the west visitors' gallery where we have, from the riding of Mississauga–Streetsville, a student group visiting from the Netherlands as part of an exchange group. The students are visiting Rick Hansen Secondary and hail from a Dutch school called Sophianum. Their Rick Hansen student hosts will visit Holland next May. I welcome them all to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of Culture and page Jacquelyn McLaurin, to welcome her aunt Joanne McLaurin to the public gallery today. Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Halton and page Chantelle Colangelo, we'd like to welcome her mother,

Fiona, her father, Tony, and her godmother, Kathy Dinn, in the west members' gallery. Welcome today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. The public accounts released late in the day Friday show, quite frankly, the McGuinty Liberals cannot be trusted to produce results for Ontario families.

Premier, on page 9 of your 2009 budget, you said your plan will be "creating and sustaining an estimated 146,000 jobs in 2009-10." Exactly how many jobs has the economy created since your budget day?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What I can say is that—and I may have to refer some supplementaries to my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure—there was a specific plan to build infrastructure—schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and the like, to not only create 300,000 jobs in the short term but also to enhance our economic productivity over the long term.

But there is a strong consensus on Parliament Hill, across the country, in the US, the European Union, India, China and the like, which is that it is very important for us to invest in infrastructure, to stimulate the economy. That necessarily requires that we run a deficit for the time being. We acknowledge that creates challenges in the long term, but we think it's the best thing for us to do together right now: strengthen this economy, stimulate the economy and create jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It was a rather short and direct question. The Premier boasted in his budget that he'd create 146,000 new jobs this year. The reality is the Premier's so-called jobs budget has been an enormous bust.

In your budget speech, the Liberals said, "Our government has designed a stimulus package that creates jobs today." Six months and four days since promising those jobs "today," Statistics Canada reports that 74,000 full-time jobs have been lost since then, under the McGuinty Liberals—74,000 fewer full-time jobs.

Premier, why have you not created the jobs that you promised in your March budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. George Smitherman: The figures that the honourable member has quoted are based on a formula of infrastructure investment widely used here in Ontario and in infrastructure projects, in partnership with our municipal and federal governments in the country.

As the honourable member will know, this year and next fiscal year in the province of Ontario, we're making some of the biggest investments that have ever occurred in infrastructure in the history of our province. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has spoken against those, but as an example, we're looking at moving for-

ward projects such as the one in Port Colborne, which will enhance access to people in that community to sports and recreation infrastructure. The dollars invested there will certainly sustain a substantial number of jobs. Our \$16 billion in infrastructure will sustain 150,000 jobs in the construction and related trades.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Hold on a second. I asked a question, a very simple question to the Premier of this province. The Premier of the province referred all of my questions last week to the finance minister. He put out his public accounts that showed the biggest deficit in the history of the province of Ontario late in the day Friday, and then he wasn't even here to answer questions on that very budget yesterday—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member—you know the rules of not making reference to people's attendance. Thank you.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, let me register to the Premier the profound dissatisfaction of the official opposition with his increasingly slippery behaviour in holding this government to account here in the Legislature.

Premier, will you answer a very simple question? You promised 146,000 jobs; since then, you lost 78,000. Where is the timetable for those jobs, as you promised?

Hon. George Smitherman: I know that the mechanics may prove difficult, but interestingly, the loudest heckler over there was recently crediting our government for investments that we were making in the underlying infrastructure in Ottawa, related to a bridge. And there's another member in that party that speaks to me very often about the desire to see an additional project supported in their local community.

The point is that in many projects, some of which are in partnership with the federal government and some of which involve our municipalities, we're investing unprecedented sums in our province's infrastructure, and substantial employment in the construction and related trades occurs. The honourable member need only check in at the hiring halls to know that the building trades, as an example, are enjoying employment as we use government dollars to rebuild the infrastructure of Ontario and to employ our people.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: I've asked a very simple, straightforward question to the Premier—if he'll answer a question in this Legislature—a very simple question about your jobs plan. I'm getting no answers from the Premier; I'm getting lots of answers from a wannabe mayor of Toronto instead.

Premier, asking you back, when you took office, you started off by cancelling tax credits for seniors, you raised business taxes, and you brought in the largest tax increase on Ontario's families in the history of our province. The Premier tells us that his tax, spend and big-deficit policies are good for jobs. If that is the case,

Premier, why are you closer to breaking Bob Rae's record of 300,000 jobs lost than you are of hitting the target in your so-called jobs budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The honourable member may pretend that he is not aware that Ontario, like the rest of Canada, like the rest of the world, has been affected by a global recession, but Ontarians understand what has happened to us. They also understand that it's important for us to stimulate the economy. They understand that means that we have to borrow money. We have to run a deficit. We're being upfront with Ontarians about the deficit that we're running.

My colleague was a member of a government which surprised all of us with a \$5.6-billion deficit, which none of us were aware of. Ontarians are aware of the deficit that we're running; they're also aware of our motivation for doing that. We think it's important to stimulate the economy, to create jobs—that meets the needs of our generation at this moment in time. But we are also mindful of our responsibility to the next generation. We'll be speaking more about that through our fall economic statement and our upcoming budget, as to how we're going to deal more specifically with our deficit, which we've run for the right reasons.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: In fact, I was proud to be part of a government that helped create one million net new jobs here in the province of Ontario.

I remind the Premier, in the last calendar year alone, sir, you've lost over 200,000 full-time jobs.

Premier, maybe I'll get a straight answer from you on this question. In your public accounts released at the end of the day Friday, you announced a record deficit of \$18.5 billion. Premier, give us a straight answer: Is that it? Or how deep will your latest deficit actually be?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to remind my colleague that there is a very broad consensus of the need for us to stimulate the economy, of the need for us to take actions collectively around the world to ensure that a great recession did not become a great depression. I think many would argue that we have, in fact, done the right thing as part of a large, global, collective response to a global challenge. As I say, we are mindful of the dangers associated with running a deficit, but we chose specifically not to pursue the path recommended by my colleague. We did not make cuts to our schools, we did not make cuts to our hospitals, we did not make cuts to our environmental protections, and we refused to make cuts to our business partners which are looking for us to support them in a time of great challenge. That's the approach that we've brought. Again, we are mindful of the deficit challenge, and we'll be speaking more about that through our fall economic statement and the budget as well.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Premier, your empty promises of spending more money are not creating jobs for Ontario

families today. In fact, since your so-called jobs budget, we've lost over 70,000 jobs in the province of Ontario halfway through the fiscal year. Yes, we are part of a government that reduced the tax burden, focused on the economy and fuelled economic growth under a PC government for over a decade. When this Premier took over, he basically started out on third base and thought he had hit a triple.

To the Premier: Why did you take record economic growth and job creation and then turn it into record deficits and unemployment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Admittedly, it is an interesting storyline. It has some attraction to it, but it's not founded in reality. We were all affected by a global recession. We participated in a responsible approach to dealing with it. I want to quote the federal Minister of Finance. He said, "Our government will be making a deliberate choice in the budget to run a substantial deficit. The deficit will be a temporary tool—one that allows our government to invest in a stimulus plan that injects money into our economy and delivers real benefits to Canadian families and businesses." I could not agree more, and I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he pick up the phone and speak to the federal Minister of Finance so that they're in sync once again on these important issues.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Premier and his ministers say that businesses are going to pass on the HST savings to consumers. Ontarians remember the GST, and they don't believe that for a minute. With winter coming, people are very worried about home heating costs and what that's going to mean next year when those costs are 8% more with the HST.

My question: Can the Premier elaborate on the savings that hydro companies are going to have to pass on to consumers and whether Ontarians will actually see these savings?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague will understand, I'm sure, that the HST or its equivalent has been around for some 40 years now, perhaps 50 years. She is aware that 130 countries have adopted it. She is aware that provinces of all political stripes have adopted that as well. I'm not sure if she has had the opportunity to speak to the Premier of Nova Scotia, who heads up an NDP government there. He is not prepared to rescind the single sales tax that is now up and in place in his province.

So why is it that once governments put this in place, they don't take it away? They do that because it serves the public interest. It serves to strengthen our economy. It serves to ensure that we have the resources to support our schools, to support our hospitals and to support our environmental protections. But most importantly to our families, it puts in place the opportunity for us to create

more jobs, which is the single greatest concern for our families today—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: That non-answer is not going to calm the fears of the elderly couple that I met up in Thunder Bay over the summer who have a \$500-a-month home heating bill cost; it's going to go up \$40 a month as a result of the HST. If hydro is anything like Tim Hortons, consumers are going to be in big trouble. Last week, the London Free Press quoted Tim Hortons senior executive Nick Javor, who said he "doubts the ability to write off sales tax on business inputs will result in savings for the consumer."

Why is this Premier playing ivory tower, head-in-the-clouds economist instead of listening to Ontario businesses and people?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is a really important debate for us to have, and I think from time to time we should listen to external experts on this. A TD report, in its recent intervention in this debate, said the following: "About 80% of the expected total cost savings will be passed along immediately in the first year the HST comes into effect, with that ratio eventually reaching 95% by year three, with the full cost savings of these firms to take up to six years to feed through to consumers." So from an independent, objective third party, the advice that we're receiving is that in fact all the savings ultimately flow through, and more importantly, it does result in the creation of new jobs, which is the single greatest concern to Ontario families today.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Small businesses are even more worried about the impact of the HST. A CFIB survey showed that nearly 60% of Ontario businesses could not think of a single benefit of the HST—almost 60%. Meanwhile, the Premier and his caucus have their heads in the clouds. In a letter to constituents, as a matter of fact, one Liberal backbencher says that realtors should lower their fees to offset the HST, even though there are very few savings to pass on. When will the Premier come back to the real world and admit that a tax that makes life less affordable and kills some 40,000 jobs every single year is really a bad idea?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's always interesting to see the leader of the NDP stand up and represent business interests in this House. I take that as progress, as a healthy evolution of the New Democratic Party of Ontario, and I welcome that.

There are great politics to be had in dealing with the debate over the harmonized sales tax. I understand that, accept that, recognize that and embrace that. But I think the question that Ontarians really want us to answer is, "What do we need to do to make ourselves stronger?" They know in their heart of hearts that getting stronger is not an easy thing. They understand that sometimes we've got to do stuff, our generation has to take on certain responsibilities which are not easy, to create a stronger

economy for the future. That's what the HST is all about. That's what harmonizing our sales taxes is all about. That's why finance ministers from previous parties who formed the government here all agree: that the single most important thing for us to do to strengthen—

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier as well. Yesterday the Minister of Finance said he expected to see belt-tightening in the coming months. He wouldn't elaborate, unfortunately, on the details, so I need to ask the Premier the question: Tell us where the people of Ontario are going to be feeling the squeeze over the next little while?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is an important conversation that we would ask our colleagues to engage in as Ontarians, and more broadly as well. I think Ontarians understand where we find ourselves. We're running a significant deficit. We've run it for the right reasons: to stimulate our economy as part of a global effort in the face of a global challenge. That was the right thing to do for us, but as I said earlier today, we're also mindful of our obligation to our children and our grandchildren to get ourselves out of this financial challenge. That will call for some difficult decisions.

I'm proud of the fact that in our recent public accounts it registered less than a 0.5% increase in our expenditures in comparison to our original estimates. So we have done a good job at holding the line, but there are more difficult decisions to come, and I'm always open to advice and recommendations from my colleagues opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As Ontarians brace for the squeeze, others are doing quite well. The latest public accounts that the Premier is referring to reveal that the Courtyard Group received \$6.8 million in payments from the government last year. That's an amount that's six times greater than they received last year and the year before that. Meanwhile, the belt gets tighter across Ontario. People in Fort Erie watched yesterday as their local emergency room was shut down, and children's aid societies from Rainy River to York region are facing significant funding cuts. When will the Premier and his well-connected friends start tightening their belts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: When it comes to public services, we've made some dramatic new investments. Whether you look at health care, education or investments in strengthening the economy, there have been dramatic investments ranging from anywhere from 25% to 34% during the course of our mandate in government.

With respect to Courtyard, my colleague knows that we have a new rule in place now, one that the NDP government refused to put in place during its day and that the Conservative government refused to put in place during its day. We have now said that you cannot move ahead with sole-source contracts. We think that's inappropriate. We have now prohibited those. It is the

appropriate thing to do, it's the right thing to do, and perhaps it's unfortunate it wasn't put in place before by previous governments.

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians understand that getting out of this recession is not going to be easy. They are ready to make the sacrifices; there's no doubt about it. But they want their government to be balanced and fair. When the Premier is willing to close ERs, slash children's aid society budgets, but give his friends six times more, Ontarians feel cheated. Why shouldn't they?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My colleague knows that we've closed the door once and for all, something that no government did before, with respect to prohibiting sole-source contracts. That's done and it won't happen again. I think Ontarians also know that we have smaller classes, we have higher test scores, we have higher graduation rates and we have more teachers than ever before. They also know that we've got shorter wait times in our health care. We've got more doctors. We have more nurses. We're now tapping emergency room wait times. We're doing more to ensure that more Ontarians get access to family health care as well. So they know that we have not been a perfect government, but I think they also recognize that when we come across particular issues and particular problems, we face up to those and take steps to ensure that they don't recur.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the finance minister. If a budget is about a plan, public accounts is a report on the results of that plan. On March 26 you spoke to the budget in this House and said, "To confront the current economic challenge, our government has designed a stimulus package that creates jobs today." Minister, Ontario taxpayers are still waiting for the results. Job numbers show that Ontario lost 74,000 full-time jobs over the 189 days since you said jobs would be created that day. When you said you'd create jobs, did you mean at the Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What the government said quite clearly is that like the western world, we were confronted with a declining economy that would see job loss, but that like the rest of the western world, we would invest aggressively in stimulus to create jobs, and we did that. It was the appropriate policy to undertake. There are projects underway across Ontario utilizing that money and employing people. Those people who are employed on those sites are, in turn, spending money in their communities to help with the economy. There is no doubt that there is a challenge in the economy on jobs. There's no doubt that this party has laid out a plan to help deal with that, and that plan is working.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: Again for the Minister of Finance: The McGuinty Liberals haven't honoured the promise

that Minister Duncan made to create full-time jobs. In the last six months the Premier lost 74,000 full-time jobs. Over the past year, Ontario is down 200,000 jobs. The minister must be familiar with the phrase, "Fool me once; shame on you. Fool me twice; shame on me." Why did the Minister of Finance say in the public accounts that he "took measures to ensure that jobs are created today," when he knows that he didn't?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I take it then the party opposite doesn't support infrastructure investment. I would say to my colleague opposite that he is being rather selective in his reading of the budget. He will have seen throughout the budget, in the narrative and in the graphs and so on, that employment would continue to be a major challenge around the world and here in Ontario. He would see quite clearly that the stimulus we were projecting was designed to begin the process of rebuilding, recognizing that political parties and the leadership of this province, both here and in the business and labour communities, had to come to terms with the new reality, and that's what this government's done. As long as one Ontario family needs a job and wants a job, this government won't rest. He ought to support the kinds of investments we're making in infrastructure to improve the economy in the short term and improve—

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

CITY OF OTTAWA

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. An article in yesterday's Ottawa Citizen suggests that political interference is once again slowing down efforts to improve public transit in Ottawa. Fingers are being pointed at this minister. My question is very simple: Will the people of Ottawa finally see progress on public transit or will this minister let his mayoral aspirations get in the way?

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm particularly proud of the track record of the McGuinty government when it comes to delivering funds for the city of Ottawa. Let me just talk about some of those investments. Since 2003, the city of Ottawa has received \$512.5 million in transit funding; highway infrastructure, \$282 million; municipal roads and bridges, \$47 million; the new archives—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I am prepared, as I've said before, to tolerate some interjections from members, but constant interjections from certain members—and you know who you are—are wearing on me and wearing on our guests who are watching this. I would just ask that it not be the constant interjections.

Minister?

Hon. Jim Watson: The Investing in Ontario Act saw \$77 million, \$33 million of which is going to go to help clean up the Ottawa River—from raw sewage going into the river; and the stimulus fund, over \$125 million. As a result of an agreement we reached with all municipal partners, the uploading process has already begun for the

city of Ottawa. When fully uploaded, the city of Ottawa will be ahead by \$122 million. This government has delivered for Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the minister. By the sounds of it, this minister isn't the only member of the McGuinty cabinet considering greener municipal pastures.

Ministers and their fledgling municipal campaigns pose a real conflict of interest. Since this minister won't want to be accused of improper interference, will he set an example for the rest of his cabinet colleagues and remove himself from involvement in Ottawa municipal issues until he decides whether he's in or out of the race for mayor?

Hon. Jim Watson: Thank you for that vote of endorsement. I understand you're announcing you're running for mayor of Toronto with that little speech, so it's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a second, please. If the members can relate back to a previous question period leading up to a September 17 by-election, I reminded everyone here that we would appreciate the campaigning to take place outside this chamber.

I also recognize that there may be aspirations of individual members in this House or people who think that people are going to run. I would ask that we confine ourselves here to dealing with provincial issues and issues that pertain to the province of Ontario and keep all the electioneering out of the chamber.

Hon. Jim Watson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very proud of the relationship that we have developed with the city of Ottawa. I couldn't say it better than our mayor, who said, "The province... has never in its history been as good to eastern Ontario and Ottawa as it has been over the last two years while I have been mayor. Our relationship is warm, it's co-operative and it's moving to the future. All I can say is, I'm very, very happy the city of Ottawa is working in this manner with the McGuinty government because they are coming through for the city of Ottawa." That was Mayor O'Brien in Nepean This Week in April 2008.

I look forward to continuing that strong relationship of delivering funds and services from the province to the great city of Ottawa.

TAXATION

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. The wholesale trade sector plays an important role in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga. In fact, the wholesale trades sector employs over 1,400 people in my riding. This industry includes wholesale distributors, agents, brokers of goods—for example, farm products, petroleum, food and beverage, personal and household goods, motor vehicles and parts, building materials, supplies, machinery and equipment.

Employers such as Home Hardware distribution and supply in St. Jacobs employ 1,172 people in the township

of Woolwich, and Freeman Sporting Goods employs 25 people in the township of Wellesley, which makes an incredible contribution to our community.

My constituents in the wholesale trade sector are concerned about the implementation of the HST and what it's going to mean for them.

Minister, what effect is the HST going to have on the wholesale trade sector?

1100

Hon. John Wilkinson: I thank the member for the question. I can share with her, and I hope that she'll share, the success stories that we have in her riding. Estimates show that Ontario's wholesale trade sector will save roughly \$455 million net per year as a result of our tax reforms. This includes some \$425 million a year through HST input tax credits and another \$220 million a year through corporate tax savings.

Times have changed. We're seeing the biggest global economic crisis in this world in some 80 years and we're taking bold action to ensure that we can improve the competitive position of our businesses here in Ontario as they compete for new jobs around the world. That's why it's important that we're supporting an industry which I know is so important to the member for Kitchener-Conestoga.

We have a choice: We can refuse to fix what we all know is broken, or we can take bold, aggressive steps to—

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: There seems to be a great deal of support in the business sector to make Ontario more competitive and to create jobs. Minister, TD Bank released a report: Harmonization will make Ontario business more efficient and lead to more investment. It will lead to higher incomes for Ontarians. Economic analysts are unanimous in predicting that harmonization will lead to a higher real GDP per person in the long run. I know that businesses such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce are tracking association support.

Will the minister tell us if the HST will make Ontario more competitive and create jobs? My constituents are asking the question and would like to hear it directly from the minister.

Hon. John Wilkinson: The TD report that the member referenced estimates that the harmonized sales tax will reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario by roughly \$5.3 billion a year. Ontario businesses will see a \$500-million reduction in their compliance costs. We are also cutting the small business corporate tax rate by some 18%, from 5.5% to 4.5%, and we're eliminating the small business surtax. Ontario will be the only jurisdiction in Canada to eliminate this barrier to growth. We are cutting the general corporate income tax rate from 14% to 12% on July 1, 2010, and then cutting it further to 10% by 2013. We are cutting Ontario's marginal effective tax rate on new business investment in half. Currently it's about 33%; we're cutting that down to 16%, making On-

tario one of the most competitive jurisdictions in the industrialized world for new investment—

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

WINDSOR ENERGY CENTRE

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the finance minister. Last Wednesday, Minister Duncan unmuzzled himself long enough to say that I should look at the 2007-08 public accounts, which report that the McGuinty Liberals spent \$50,555,000 on the Windsor Energy Centre.

On Friday, two days later, this year's public accounts came out. Why did Minister Duncan say that the McGuinty Liberals spent \$50 million on the Windsor Energy Centre when you spent \$81 million?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think what I said was that the member ought to look at the public accounts that were out. I think I also said that there would be further information available in the new public accounts.

As the member opposite knows, I was actually trying to be of help, because what he has suggested—he stood in his place and said that that information was not public. In fact, it was. He knows full well that there is a lawsuit with respect to the ownership of that centre that makes it difficult for me to comment. I'm glad he looked into the public accounts and followed my advice. I would—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Again to the Minister of Finance: The public accounts that came out two days later revealed that he actually did spend \$80 million for this project in his riding. The minister is supposed to be good with numbers, heaven help us all. Would he explain how his pet project cost \$30 million more in just two days?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'm delighted that the member now is looking at public accounts; it was evident that he wasn't before. That's a very good thing to do. It informs public debate. I think it's always important to be factually accurate in what one says in the House. When he suggested last week that the information wasn't public, he was wrong, demonstrating that he hadn't looked at it.

The member knows that the ownership of that centre is a subject of some legal dispute and he knows that I'm not able to comment on that. But I'm delighted to see that he's in fact following up and looking at public accounts, where we've been full and transparent in all of these dealings, in the interest of all Ontarians.

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On September 1, the ministry abruptly—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I just reminded the members to keep municipal election-

earing outside of this chamber and I'm hearing comments from the government side.

Mr. Michael Prue: —the ministry abruptly closed a small and cost-effective youth centre in downtown Toronto. The centre had a week to transfer their youth to other facilities. The staff will be laid off on December 1.

The young people were forced out of the York Detention Centre in downtown Toronto to go to Brampton or Cobourg, far from their families, the clinical supports and rehabilitation programs that they had obtained in the cost-effective CASATTA program. Can the Minister of Children and Youth Services explain why a decision so potentially detrimental to these young people was rushed through without proper consultation?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy, actually, to have the opportunity to talk about this. Our youth justice system is now transformed. We now have a stand-alone youth justice system where all young people are in youth facilities; there are no more youth in our adult facilities. This is a very important change in how we work with young people who are in conflict with the law, so that they can move on with their lives in a more productive way. They have opportunity for programming for schools, for training. In fact, yesterday I visited Bluewater in Huron county, where I personally saw the impact that the right teachers and the right staff can have on kids.

You are absolutely right: We have closed two different facilities as we make the transformation to a dedicated youth justice facility.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: We have people here today listening to these answers: Don Adam, Deborah Satira and people from the York Detention Centre and CASATTA.

Transferring these children and youth to another city is unhelpful, expensive and myopic. Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is very concerned. Irwin Elman has told us, "My office feels that it would be unfortunate if young people lose contact or have diminished contact with families as a result of placements outside the city. Distance, transportation, and time are key factors that hinder the ability of parents/guardians or key people to meet with the young person." The closure also contravenes the recommendations of the David Meffe inquest, calling for youth detention centres to be smaller, stand-alone facilities. Why is the minister contravening the good advice offered by her own experts?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Quite to the contrary, we know and act on the notion that contact with parents and contact with families is a very important component of the youth justice system. That's why we will facilitate transportation of their parents to wherever a youth is being held.

I think it's important to understand that, overall, Toronto families are being better served, because previously, before we opened the new Roy McMurtry centre in Brampton, many youth were being held in Hamilton or in Cobourg, and actually only a very small number were being held at the York Detention Centre. They will

actually be closer in Brampton than they were when they were in Hamilton or in Cobourg.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr. David Oraziotti: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry regarding the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's young entrepreneur program. Minister, young entrepreneurs often struggle with the initial investment required to launch their businesses. For too long, young people in northern Ontario have left home, because of a lack of opportunity, to pursue careers and business opportunities more easily found in other regions.

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One of our government's initiatives, the young entrepreneur program is making a difference in the lives of northerners by helping to give youth the support they need to develop small businesses and plan for their future.

Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's young entrepreneur program, we are investing in creative and talented young business people by helping to provide the resources necessary for the next generation of business leaders to be successful in northern Ontario.

Minister, could you explain how the recent investments to this program are supporting the creation of new jobs in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks to the member for Sault Ste. Marie, who is so supportive—as are all our northern caucus members—of this great program.

This past July, actually, I had a chance to attend a young entrepreneur event in Thunder Bay, where I was able to announce our government's support for four Thunder Bay-area young entrepreneurs to start up new business ventures.

The businesses included a hair salon, a specialty jewellery manufacturing business and a sled dog tourism enterprise—tremendous ideas. We were able to provide \$25,000 to each of them. We've subsequently made several other announcements of support for young entrepreneurs.

This is a remarkable program. It creates great employment. Over the course of the program we've provided \$6.1 million for up to 260 young entrepreneurs in the province of Ontario. It's just a great program that we're very pleased to be supportive of.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Oraziotti: Thank you, Minister. This program has had tremendous benefits in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie as well. In April we announced \$109,000 in new funding for several young entrepreneurs, including a web design business offering web hosting and animation, Graystone Environmental Services, and the Algoma Natural Healing Clinic. It's a program that's important to all communities in northern Ontario, as it helps to build economic prospects while providing incentives for young people to contribute to the prosperity of their own region.

Minister, in addition to this program for the youth of northern Ontario, I know that business owners in Sault Ste. Marie have also benefited from the NOHFC's northern Ontario entrepreneur program. It's important to support these ambitious entrepreneurs and promote job creation among all age groups as we work to ensure that new business ventures and opportunities come to life in northern Ontario.

Minister, could you explain the importance of this program and any recent investments made through this initiative?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: This is a new program, the northern Ontario entrepreneur program. It provides up to \$125,000 for entrepreneurs across the north.

The distinction with the young entrepreneur program is, young entrepreneurs have an age limit of 29. What we certainly understand, in terms of the challenges we're facing with the economy in northern Ontario, is that there are many people with some tremendous business ideas who are older than the age of 29. This program responds to that. We have received a tremendous response to that. This is as a result of recommendations made by Dr. Bob Rosehart in his report, in terms of recommendations for economic renewal in northwestern Ontario.

May I mention also the efforts of our Northern Ontario Heritage Fund board of directors, who understood that a program such as this will make a real difference in terms of people with some grand and entrepreneurial ideas moving forward.

We are very, very pleased with this program. There's been tremendous uptake. We're looking forward to making a number of very positive announcements.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Transportation: The minister will know that there are some 400,000 uninsured motorists on Ontario roads. They're driving illegally, they are an increased safety risk and are responsible for increasing registration and insurance costs by the millions of dollars every year.

The minister also knows that even though drivers are required to make a declaration of valid insurance when they renew their driver's licence, his ministry's information system doesn't even record that information.

This past Thursday there was a debate in this House to deal specifically with his ministry's failure to record that information. That resolution called on the government to prioritize fixing that problem. Can the minister tell us when he will present us with a plan that has specific dates on which that—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, I want to commend the member for bringing forward the resolution that he did. I know of his very long interest in matters related to transportation. He had the privilege, as I have now, of being the Minister of Transportation of Ontario. I've appreciated the fact that in much of the legislation

and many of the regulations we've brought forward, he has taken a constructive rather than a critical approach to these matters.

I want to say that the resolution that he brought forward is one that I happen to support very strongly. I know that he will be pleased that we are working as quickly as possible—

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It says here “as quickly as possible.” He'll want us to get it right. I know he wants us to get it right. I commend him for his ideas in this matter.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: That was my note to the minister letting him know I was going to ask the question.

The minister knows that over a six-year period, uninsured drivers were involved in more than 20,000 collisions in this province, killing 300 and injuring more than 10,000. Uninsured drivers were at fault in more than 80% of those accidents. More than 2,000 were impaired, nearly one quarter fled the scene and more than 1,300 had suspended licences.

The reason for that resolution was to emphasize how important this issue is for the ministry, to emphasize that uninsured drivers are not only an increased safety risk, but they are costing millions of dollars to consumers in this province.

Will the minister agree to come to this Legislature with a specific plan, with specific timelines, to address—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to inform the member that we are currently at the table with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the insurance industry, and we're working to create an automated insurance verification system, which I think he advocates.

We recognize the importance of this issue. An effective solution must meet the needs of the many law-abiding motorists on our roads, the insurance companies and the government. MTO, ServiceOntario, the Ministry of Finance and the Insurance Bureau of Canada are working on this initiative. We're all committed to delivering on this project. While there are some technological challenges in an information exchange between the ministry and the Insurance Bureau of Canada, we are working with the industry to resolve these issues, including the impacts to Ontario citizens.

Also, we should note that there is a fine of up to \$25,000 for a first offence and a fine of \$50,000 for a second offence and the —

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

MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY SECTOR JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Two years ago the Tembec pulp mill in Smooth Rock Falls closed. After the mill closed,

the community created a co-op and came up with a plan to reopen the mill and provide good, green, well-paying jobs. All they needed to make a go of it was a fibre allocation, which the province had the legal authority to grant but didn't. Why did the province refuse to allocate fibre rights to the Smooth Rock Falls co-operative?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member for the question. We've been working very closely with the mayor and the councillors of Smooth Rock Falls as they move forward with their intention to look at some alternatives because Tembec had moved out. As Smooth Rock Falls had other partners that were involved and as those discussions moved forward, they moved forward with Tembec.

Certainly the Ministry of Natural Resources was prepared to work very closely and indicated that many times, as I sat at the table with them—probably four or five times that we met over this particular issue—with our question always to the Smooth Rock Falls folks, “How can we help you?”

Timber allocation was not an issue, from my understanding, as we worked with them, as we moved forward. Smooth Rock Falls, in fact, determined that they themselves would withdraw from the project.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here are the facts for the minister: The community came up with a creative plan that would have resulted in a facility that could easily shift production from pellets to lumber to biofuel, depending upon market demand. This would have resulted in job stability and saved the community from the boom-and-bust cycle of so many resource-based towns. All it needed was the fibre rights, which this province had the authority to grant under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. Why did this government dash the hopes of an entire community?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: In fact, the folks at Smooth Rock Falls determined themselves to withdraw from the negotiations. We received a letter from them indicating that. There is no question that we were prepared to sit at the table with them as they moved forward.

This is a very difficult time for northern Ontario. We appreciate that there were issues around the fibre. There were also issues around financing. There were discussions, of course, with Tembec in terms of the facilities themselves.

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As I indicated before and I indicate now, this ministry is more than prepared to sit down with anyone as we move forward to help the folks in the north dealing with this very significant issue of forestry reduction. Biofibre and the biopellets are certainly one aspect, but there are many opportunities for the far north when it comes to the allocation of fibre.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The economic

situation we find ourselves in in this past year has made the problems of poverty and the lack of affordable housing even more acute than they ever were. The investments our government announced in the 2009 budget will make a significant impact in meeting our affordable housing needs, but a main aspect of this investment was also to stimulate the economy and help to create jobs to help get Ontario moving again. Minister, how is our investment in affordable housing helping to stimulate the economy and, in particular, create jobs?

Hon. Jim Watson: Let me begin by thanking the honourable member, who is a former chair of Toronto Community Housing, under whose watch we saw the wonderful beginning of the revitalization of the Regent Park development. The honourable member should be congratulated for his leadership role in Toronto.

I was very pleased when the McGuinty government committed \$622 million in funding for the affordable housing initiatives that our government has undertaken, and that money is matched by the federal government for a total of \$1.2 billion. This investment will see 4,500 new affordable housing units being constructed over the course of the next two years. In addition, 50,000 existing units will be renovated or rehabilitated. As a result of this co-operative approach between the federal and provincial governments, 23,000 individuals will be employed due to this \$1.2-billion investment. It's a good investment in jobs and people in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, I know that your ministry and you personally have been travelling across the province consulting community leaders, housing providers and other interested advocates in developing a long-term affordable housing strategy. One of those consultations was here in Toronto. The turnout was overwhelming; over 300 people came out to the Toronto consultations alone, and over 1,000 Ontarians have participated in those consultations province-wide.

Minister, what is the status of those consultations to date, and what have you been hearing about the affordable housing issue?

Hon. Jim Watson: Obviously, when you have close to 1,000 people who have come out to the 12 formal consultation sessions, you know there's great interest. I want to thank those members of provincial Parliament who also held their own consultations in their own ridings.

What's been pleasantly surprising for me is the cross-section of individuals who are coming to these meetings with open minds and good ideas—people from the home building industry, landlords, tenants, anti-poverty activists. They're all coming together in a spirit of co-operation to bring forward specific ideas that we can build into our affordable housing program that we hope to release in the late spring.

Our final public housing consultation that I'm going to be participating in will take place later this week in Thunder Bay. I thank those close to 1,000 people who participated. Individuals can still submit their ideas and

their background from specific examples through the Ontario government website.

I thank the honourable member again for his dedication—

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

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. I'm sure everyone in the north today will be overjoyed at the minister's earlier statement, with the success of opening the hair salon and a dog team in the north. Maybe this is his solution for the Greyhound problem up there.

Who has sovereignty in Ontario? If Ontario has sovereignty on our lands, why was the Platinex mining company forced to get a court order to enter those lands? And despite this court order, Platinex was stopped from entering their land in August. Minister, do you understand the concepts of justice and the rule of law? And, Minister, who has sovereignty on crown land?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I trust that the member was not truly picking on the young entrepreneur program in terms of being a wonderful thing for northern Ontario.

Interjection.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It certainly did sound a bit like that.

Certainly, as I think the member will know, our government and Platinex have agreed to engage in confidential mediation to discuss possible options to resolve the ongoing litigation between the parties. We think that's a good step forward. At the same time, our government continues very much to pursue positive, ongoing efforts to build a stronger relationship with KI First Nation as well. So we feel, indeed, that this is obviously a sensitive issue in the province and northern Ontario. We are pleased that things are moving forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, of course we all know that a year and a half or so passed before we could get any discussion. I understand why people have called for your resignation, Minister. Platinex has stood down for a year and a half while you tried to sort out differences between your government and KI First Nation. KI First Nation stated publicly on many occasions that you never approached them during this time.

Minister, does Ontario own this land or does KI First Nation? Why have you failed in and ignored that duty to consult?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We take our duty to consult very seriously, and we have certainly met that standard and more. The fact is that throughout this process, we made it clear—and certainly I did, personally—that we felt that the best possible way forward was to bring people together to voice their concerns and to have those discussions. Again, as I pointed out in the original answer, we have come to an agreement to engage in

confidential mediation to discuss possible options in terms of resolving the litigation with Platinex.

Certainly our relationship with KI First Nation is an important one. I know that my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will be going up to visit the First Nation later this week. Again, this is a delicate matter, one that we continue to pursue. In terms of our duty to consult, we take that very seriously.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé. On December 4, this Legislature passed Bill 124, a bill to ban candy-flavoured cigarillos. The bill received royal assent, also in December, yet in stores across this province, any youth with \$1.25 in his pocket can buy a candy-flavoured cigarillo. My question is simple: Why has the minister not enacted Bill 124?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I thank the member opposite for her question. I did speak with the member opposite yesterday about this matter. I am well aware that this bill was passed on December 10, 2008. The legislation will be proclaimed, on a date yet to be confirmed, by the Lieutenant Governor.

This particular legislation amends the legislation that we have in effect now, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act: Cigarillos will be packaged in packages of at least 20. The amendment mirrors proposed changes to the federal Tobacco Act.

I also advise the member opposite that I am in touch with the federal member, and I am trying to ascertain what their position is and where their legislation is going at this point as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today the Canadian Cancer Society held a rally right here in Toronto called Join the Fight. Everybody knows that every three minutes, a Canadian is diagnosed with cancer. We need to do everything to fight this disease and this minister needs to do everything to fight this disease. I would have thought that the Minister of Health Promotion would like to prevent cancer. Instead, your ministry seems to be blocking this law that was passed by elected representatives. We voted in favour of this.

The Ministry of the Environment was able to go forward banning pesticides from hardware stores in a couple of months. Why are we not able to ban flavoured cigarillos here in Ontario 10 months after this Legislature voted to do so?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: We, the government of Ontario, are committed to the health of Ontarians, and we are well aware that cigarette smoking kills 13,000 Ontarians every year. We continue to work to address the issue. The Ministry of Health Promotion continues to address this issue and so does the government of Ontario.

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We are moving as quickly as we can to pass the legislation and we continue to work with our federal counterparts because they also have a similar piece of

legislation. We are going to continue to work to address the issues that concern us and the people of the province. We have a number of different programs aimed at addressing the issues relating to smoking. As a matter of fact, in this province we have—

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

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Pat Hoy: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I have heard several stories from my constituents over the past few years regarding violence and harassment in the workplace. It is clear that violence and harassment have emerged as serious issues in these workplaces. A recent Statistics Canada study suggests that one third of nurses working in hospitals or long-term-care facilities were physically abused by patients over this last year.

Both physical violence and harassment can have tremendous consequences not only for their workers but for families and society as a whole.

I know that your ministry has tabled legislation that, if passed, would require employers to put in place policies and programs to address workplace violence and harassment. Would the minister tell us more about this proposed legislation?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I want to thank the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex for the question on this very important matter. I know that violence in the workplace has had a devastating impact on that member's community. I want to thank him for his advocacy and his help in helping us inform and shape the legislation that we have before this House.

Violence and harassment have no place in the workplace, and I want to reassure this member and all Ontarians that our government takes this issue very seriously. That's why we had a consultation that started in September 2008, with my predecessor. Through that consultation we heard the thoughts, the concerns and the need to bring this legislation forward.

Some of the champions who spoke out: Elaine Mac Neil, the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, says, "The government is to be congratulated for making changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act regarding workplace violence and harassment."

This is the right thing to do, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is taking action on this very important issue.

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

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from—

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Leeds–Grenville.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Leeds–Grenville. I was going to say the leader of the official opposition. My apologies.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to defer this, and really, on the suggestion of the House leader from the third party, to have a bit of time to review some history related to these issues.

As I indicated yesterday, the point of order relates to the provisions in standing orders 23(h) and (i) and 37(a) and your interpretation of those orders. Speaker, as you well know, standing orders 23(h) and (i) allow you, the Speaker, to call a member to order at any time in this House if you feel that a member who has the floor “makes allegations against another member” or “imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.” The wording is quite specific.

Standing order 37 speaks to your disallowing questions that you do “not consider urgent or of public importance.” We very much appreciate the latitude afforded to you in your responsibilities as Speaker in terms of interpreting standing orders. But as well, Speaker, I’m confident that because of your years spent on the opposition benches, you very much appreciate the limitations the current rules place on our ability to effectively hold the government to account; hence the increased importance of how you interpret and apply those very restrictive rules.

I think we all share a common goal in this House to effectively serve the people who put us here. As Ontario’s official opposition, the members of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus are obligated to hold this government to account using every tool available, and the most important one is question period. I would argue that Ms. MacLeod’s question yesterday dealt with a very serious issue of both urgent and public importance: Liberal government accountability of the public purse, based on public accounts information released this past Friday. We believe the taxpayers have a right to know why and how people with such clear ties to the Liberal Party of Ontario received such lucrative contracts, and they have a right to know right now.

Standing order 23(i) notes that a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she “imputes false or unavowed motives”—not in general, but specifically—“to another member” in the House. After reading yesterday’s transcript, I see that Ms. MacLeod’s comments in her supplementary were directed at the Liberal Party rather than any specific member of the Legislative Assembly.

We’re obviously concerned that the interpretation of standing order 23(i) is being broadened to the extent that it will hamstring our ability to serve as an effective opposition. We need to get answers that Ontarians deserve in a parliamentary democracy, and we can’t get answers if we can’t ask the right questions.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the enormous burden placed on your shoulders during question period, given the latitude you are allowed in rulings on the propriety of

questions. Marleau and Montpetit’s House of Commons Procedure and Practice spells out options that make your job more difficult. Under the heading “Role of the Speaker During Question Period,” this parliamentary reference guide says, “In ruling a question out of order, the Chair may suggest that it be rephrased in order to make it acceptable to the House. Or, the Speaker may recognize another member to pose the next question.” That’s what happened yesterday.

Marleau and Montpetit further state, “In cases where such a question has been posed, if a minister wishes to reply, the Speaker, in order to be equitable, has allowed the minister to do so.” This didn’t happen yesterday. Minister Duncan didn’t give any indication that he wished to reply to Ms. MacLeod’s question.

Speaker, based on the choices available to you, I’m seeking common ground for consistent rulings on similar questions in the future. I know it won’t be easy, so I thought I would offer a few past examples from this House for your consideration.

I’ll start with a question raised in the House on November 2, 2000, when Speaker Carr was in the chair. This was, I think, interesting because no ruling was even required. Ms. Lankin, in asking former Solicitor General David Tsubouchi a question about an OHIP matter under police investigation, suggested that King’s Health Centre was not being investigated because it had donated \$22,000 to the PC Party. She even named two specific MPPs who had allegedly received donations. No one objected. The question and supplementary went through and were responded to. Since Ms. MacLeod mentioned yesterday in her supplementary that Allard Johnson Communications donated money to the Liberal Party, I thought this particular example was quite fitting.

For my second example, I reference a ruling made by Speaker Edighoffer on April 30, 1987. One day earlier, on April 29, the members in the House were debating a motion to set aside the business of the House for an emergency debate. Mr. Harris rose on a point of order alleging that Mr. Nixon had imputed false or unavowed motives to an NDP member. Here’s what Mr. Nixon had said to prompt the point of order—I’m quoting Mr. Nixon from Hansard—“There would be those who would say—and they would be out of order and they might be attributing motives—that his motives are something less than pristine and that the generalissimo of the New Democratic Party, who actually signed this motion and who was not in the House when the time came for it to be presented, is calling the shots over there.”

Speaker Edighoffer ruled that Mr. Nixon’s remarks did not offend the provisions of the standing order that applied in those days. I realize that standing orders have changed somewhat over that time, but I don’t believe in reference to these specific provisions.

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Almost three years later, on April 5, 2000, Mr. Hampton tried to ask the chief government whip a question, saying he was bribed with money for his support of a candidate. Speaker Carr asked Mr. Hampton if he

would like to direct his question to “anyone else,” since the whip couldn’t answer the questions and can’t answer questions in the House. Speaker Carr further noted that questions “need to be related to provincial issues.” Mr. Hampton then asked the Speaker if he could put the question first, to let the Speaker decide if it was in order. The Speaker allowed the question and the supplementary, which included a few differently worded descriptions of the cabinet minister being offered a bribe. None were prefaced with the word “alleged.”

Last, but not least, I reference a ruling from Speaker Curling. On December 8, 2003, Mr. Wilson was ruled out of order when he asked the Minister of Finance when he was going to repay the \$35,000 in severance pay that he “took from the public purse in this province.” Mr. Wilson was allowed to ask the very same question to the very same minister in spite of being warned several times by the Speaker about the direction of the initial question.

In New Zealand, the Speaker also apparently gives second chances. If you visit the website for the New Zealand Parliament, you can access the following Speaker’s ruling. Quoting, again, from the website, “It is perfectly proper on a point of order for a member to deny a statement or action that is attributed to oneself in a question. Such a denial must be accepted and the question rephrased.”

Mr. Speaker, after hearing the examples I just provided, I hope you can appreciate our desire for clear direction from you on the phrasing of questions that relate to standing orders 23(h), 23(i), and standing order 37. This is critically important, as I know you appreciate, in terms of the ability of opposition parties today and in the future to do their jobs and hold the government of the day accountable.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I want to thank you as well for permitting this point of order. It’s a rather broad interpretation of what constitutes a point of order, and I think it’s a very valuable exercise. It’s as a result of things like this and the discussion that flows that all of us can learn at least a little bit and perhaps become better members of this Legislature.

I join with the government House leader. However, Speaker, I say to you upon carefully reading the question that Ms. MacLeod put, in particular her supplementary and your intervention, and reading numerous references, I’m satisfied that you made the correct decision, and I’m going to explain why in just a minute. And that’s where I say we can all learn from this.

If I can first refer to Griffith and Ryle on Parliament, page 777: “A different approach to the question of Parliament’s effectiveness is to ask oneself what difference it would make if Parliament did not exist at all. Parliament is not directly involved in the process of governing the country or providing the system of public administration. It has the secondary task of sustaining in office the government of the day while simultaneously performing its essential role of holding the executive accountable.”

We’ve had a fair amount of discussion the last couple of weeks in here about a distinction between ministerial responsibility and ministerial accountability. Ministerial responsibility is the individual action of that minister in response to issues that arise. Accountability is what takes place right here in this chamber, first and foremost, and can well take place via the media in the public venue.

I took a look at Beauchesne, of course; Marleau and Montpetit include the same references to the 1964 special committee on procedure, federal Parliament, and the guidelines for questions; and then an updating of that in 1986. Speaker, I think all of us understand, and you certainly do, that this is fluid. Nothing is static. Things change. Because in 1986—and I’m referring to Beauchesne at the sixth edition, on page 121:

“In 1986 the Speaker put forth further views in light of more recent conditions and precedents....

“(5) The primary purpose of the question period is the seeking of information and calling the government to account.

“(6) The greatest possible freedom should be given to members consistent with the other rules and practices.

“(7) Brevity both in questions and answers is of great importance.”

We’ll deal with that, I trust, over the course of the coming weeks and months.

But another speaker observed that the reason for brevity is to maintain the cut and thrust of question period. Literally, the language used is “to maintain the cut and thrust.” It isn’t a Rosedale tea party. It’s not an intellectual academic discussion. It’s a concentrated one-hour—perhaps many perceive it as theatre, but it’s one hour of cut and thrust, of hard-hitting questions, and I tell you, an opposition that doesn’t ask hard-hitting question isn’t doing its job because it’s not holding government to account.

I feel a need to caution about over-reference to standing orders 23(h) and (i): “Makes allegations against another member”—but I’m going to follow that up—and “Imputes false or unavowed motives to another member”—false or unavowed, Speaker. It doesn’t prohibit the directing, basically, j’accuse.

So where are we at with Ms. MacLeod’s question? I put to you that a member should not be punished for being creative in how they put a question, for being novel, for even being dramatic. Far be it from anybody in this chamber to ever try to import drama into their presentations.

Ms. MacLeod’s supplementary, “Again for the Acting Premier: The Liberals gave \$1.3 million in the past two years to the Premier’s former chief of staff at Pollara. Allard Johnson Communications, of Adscam fame, received \$3.5 million as a quid pro quo, one could assume, for donating \$20,000 to the Ontario Liberal Party—”

This, Speaker, I tell you, is where I believe you’re correct in finding that question unacceptable. Because I’m reading it—Speaker, you introduced me to David McGee and Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand, page 552. I know the Speaker spent a lot of time with David

McGee's text over the last couple of weeks. "A member cannot hint at something (whether disreputable or not) in the text of a question." I put to you, sir—and again, no disrespect for Ms. MacLeod, for whom I have the greatest regard—that what she did was hint at something. Page 552, McGee, New Zealand: "The member must come out and say what is meant, and then the question can be judged on the grounds of necessity, accuracy and authenticity." I take great guidance from McGee's statement in that regard. Sometimes we try to pull our punches so as to avoid the intervention of the Speaker, but McGee suggests that it's the very pulling of punches that makes a question out of order. A member cannot hint at something. The member has to spit it out.

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Here we are, McGee page 189, in terms of the orderliness of statements in the House: "A fine line has been drawn between suggestions that a party has been influenced in the policy it is pursuing by an outside body, which is in order, and a suggestion that it is being dictated to by that body, which is not in order." McGee would lead to us believe that it's entirely acceptable to state to this government, in an effort to hold them accountable—or to any government in any parliament—that political contributions have permitted the contributor to exercise influence. It's out of order to suggest that they are dictating policy. But McGee says it's perfectly in order to talk about exercising influence.

I, too, had staff people go through some questions over the course of years. They didn't go back to Patti Starr because I thought that would be loading this up a little bit, and I didn't want to. I was here during that period. You can just imagine what question period was like during Patti Starr. If it weren't for tough questions of the very type that Ms. MacLeod put, Patti Starr would still remain a relatively unknown north Toronto socialite.

Phillip Gillies to Sean Conway, June 15, 1987, regarding government contracts, Hugh Edighoffer—my first Speaker; I have great respect for him: "I wonder if the minister might be able to tell us a bit about one of them particularly. The Ministry of Government Services on July 17, 1985, awarded an untendered contract in the amount of \$55,000 to a company called CCA Canada. Can the minister confirm that CCA Canada was actually a subsidiary of a company known as Graham, Schwartz and Partners Ltd., whose founders and directors were Abe Schwartz and Terry Graham, and that this untendered contract for \$55,000 was awarded days after Mr. Schwartz ceased to be a director of the company and during the time that Mr. Schwartz was in the minister's office advising him on computer-related matters?" Some things never change. That was 22 years ago.

May 1998, Hampton to Premier Harris of the day on casino gaming: "The minister introduced David Nash into this. The public needs to know who David Nash is. David Nash was a fundraiser for Dianne Cunningham, who sits in the Conservative cabinet. He was a fundraiser for someone who sat in the Mulroney cabinet: Tom Hockin"—I've got these for Hansard—"In fact, he was Tom Hockin's chief of staff.

"We have a Conservative political hack deciding that casino operations are going to go to other Conservative political hacks, because it's very clear that Michael French was involved in telling your government how to set up casinos. Now he's involved on the other side in getting the casino franchise."

May 26, 1998, Howard Hampton to Chris Hodgson: "We wanted to know how a third-ranked casino bid by the Falls Management team got bumped up to become the successful bidder. The bid doesn't contain a substantial convention facility, it's not what the people of the Niagara region want, and it doesn't recognize the importance of tourism to the Niagara region. However, the part-owners of Falls Management are the Latner family, who gave \$48,000 to your party in the last election. This has the appearance of influence-buying."

I could go on, Speaker, but I'm not going to belabour the point.

Mr. Frank Klees: That was ruled in order.

Mr. Peter Kormos: These were all ruled in order, the latter one by Speaker Chris Stockwell.

I appreciate the incredibly difficult job and task you have, especially during a short and fast-flowing question period, in your efforts to introduce civility here. As I say, I respect your ruling on Ms. MacLeod's question yesterday because, I think based on my reading, in a very technical way, it was bang on because Ms. MacLeod should have spit it out. She shouldn't have just hinted at the fact of corruption.

The fact is that the detection of inappropriate political influence on a government is such a critical role of the opposition parties. The government's not going to acknowledge it; they'd be damned fools if they were to. They may be fools, but they're not damned fools. I'm prepared to acknowledge that.

There are things that go on in government, especially governments that mature and become complacent and settled and established. Regard begins to get dropped, and it happens of governments of all political stripes. The opposition has to be vigilant, and the opposition has to be fearless. The opposition has to abide by the rules. So does the government.

I say to you, there are some interesting rulings and precedents out there that I hope will assist you, Speaker, in determining that while Ms. MacLeod's question may have been out of order in that very technical sense of merely hinting—and I'm prepared to spit it out from now on, to call a spade a spade—I hope that the Speaker will respond with some assistance to us. Again, we want to work with the Speaker. We want to work with other caucuses in creating a more effective Parliament. But part of the effectiveness is that important role of opposition in question period.

Thank you kindly, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Government House Leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: At the risk of keeping members here that much longer into their lunch hour, I will endeavour to speak briefly to the point of order. I

would like to thank the member for Leeds–Grenville and the member for Welland for their contributions. I would note, however, that the member for Welland did acknowledge that this was a broad interpretation of a point of order, and I would in fact say that there are two issues here before the House today and before you, Mr. Speaker.

We are responding to a point of order regarding a question that was ruled out of order, and standing order 38(a) states that “The Speaker’s rulings relating to oral questions are not debatable or subject to appeal.” In fact, what we have seen here today—and while we were delighted to see the member for Welland in all of his eloquence—is simply that we are appealing a decision that you made, which I would argue is not appealable, given standing order 38(a).

There are at least five precedents for this, and I will just give them to you briefly: April 1, 1982, debates, pages 369, 441 and 442, Speaker Turner; June 25, 1984, debates, page 2840, Speaker Jones; May 25, 1987—and this may have been one of the precedents that Mr. Kormos was also referring to—debates, page 712, Speaker Edighoffer; June 8, 1988, debates, page 4212, Speaker Edighoffer; and February 9, 1989, debates, page 8107, Speaker Edighoffer.

Ms. MacLeod’s question was out of order. You ruled such because the Speaker—as you are entitled to—was using your discretion under the standing orders to rule a question out of order because the member opposite was in danger of violating standing orders 23(h) and (i), which are the privileges enjoyed by all members of the House; which protect all members of the House from being subject to allegations being made by another member or being subject to allegations by another member which impute false or unavowed motives to another member—and in this case, a minister.

I would point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Welland went to some length to focus on the words “false” and “unavowed.” I would ask you to focus on the word “imputes.” I think it goes a long way in this discussion.

I would also note that the member for Leeds–Grenville tried to suggest that it was a defence that she imputed false allegations to the entire caucus as opposed to just one member. I would suggest that the standing orders do not allow for that either, and that if it’s a member or members, I think the interpretation is still the same. Nor is it a defence, as the member for Welland seemed to indicate, for allowing hard-hitting questions. I don’t believe that there is actually any standing order anywhere that indicates the need for hard-hitting questions.

You, Mr. Speaker, ruled on the question. You ruled that it was out of order. It was your right to do so, and you moved on. Further, in the piece yesterday during question period, I should point out that you also ruled that a minister of the crown’s response to a government member’s question was out of order. There was no point of order raised on that particular question made by the government, and we moved on.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue that I think we are dealing with here today is the opposition’s dissatisfaction with your rulings. I would submit that standing order 13(a) states, “The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum” in the House “and shall decide questions of privilege and points of order.”

Standing order 13(b) states, “No debate shall be permitted on any such decision, and no such decision shall be subject to an appeal to the House.”

Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that the opposition continues to raise points of order, not on conduct in the Legislature, necessarily, but rather on your rulings. While it is absolutely the right of the opposition to raise points of order, once you have ruled, I would contend that the opposition should move on and that there should be no further debate on your ruling.

Thank you for allowing me to make these submissions, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable members from Leeds–Grenville and Welland and the government House leader for their comments.

I ruled yesterday and the ruling stands.

Notwithstanding the comments that were just made, as Speaker I recognize that for every ruling I make, somebody is going to be satisfied and somebody is not going to be satisfied. I appreciate the points that were made because, having had the opportunity to sit on both sides of this House, I think it is important that, as Speaker, I do provide clarification on rulings and on important issues, and I do consider this to be an issue of importance to all members of this House.

I will take the points that have been made under advisement. I will respond with clarification, and I’m prepared to do that.

I will respond, but I would just say this: I would welcome the opportunity for all members of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to take a look at some of these issues. I think one of the points that the honourable member from Welland made on the issue of brevity within this chamber and with questions is a valid one for all members. I think one of the challenges that it causes the Speaker—and we hear constantly in this House references to another standing order. I think it would be good for all members to take a collective look at what we do, but that’s an issue that I trust the House leaders may take a look at.

As I say, the ruling stands from yesterday. I stand behind that, but I am prepared to provide some clarification and look further into the points that were raised by all honourable members.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): With us today in the Speaker’s gallery are the 2009-10 Ontario legislative interns. They are Maegan Baird, Leslie de Meulles, Paul

Di Ianni, Christiana Fizet, Matthew Gray, Yuliya Khraplyva, Aviva Levy, Beesan Sarrouh, Jonathan Trentadue and Natalie Tutunzis.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRANCO-ONTARIAN FLAG

DRAPEAU FRANCO-ONTARIEN

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: On September 25, 2009, I had the opportunity to attend the raising of the francophone flag at École élémentaire catholique Samuel-de-Champlain, located in the city of Orillia. The school opened in 1991, offering the community the opportunity of a French education. Every year since 1977 it has been a tradition for all francophone schools in Ontario to honour the rising of the francophone flag. This flag was officially recognized by the Ontario government as a symbol of the francophone community in 2001.

The colours of the flag are white and green. The white represents our winters and the green represents our summers here in Ontario. Two symbols are displayed on the flag. The green fleurs-de-lys represent the unity of the French population worldwide and the white trillium represents the province of Ontario.

For the French community it is not only a flag but a way to identify the French-speaking population and the living spirit of their history throughout the years. It is a true symbol of solidarity.

Le drapeau franco-ontarien manifeste la solidarité des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes et leur volonté d'occuper en Ontario la place qui leur revient dans les secteurs économique, politique et culturel.

It was an honour for me to see such a gathering of French-speaking students. Their participation in the singing of the song *Mon beau drapeau* was not only a cultural experience but also a community demonstrating their pride in their French culture.

DURGA PUJA

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to bring awareness to all members of this House of a very important event I attended in my riding last weekend. Last Saturday, my wife and I walked a short distance from our home to enter what was previously an abandoned warehouse. The warehouse has been transformed now into a temple and festival location for Scarborough's Bengali Hindus. They were celebrating Durga Puja.

Sharodiya Durga Puja is a great festival widely celebrated in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Tripura, where it is a five-day annual holiday. Not only is it the biggest Hindu festival celebrated throughout the state but also the most significant socio-cultural event in Bengali society.

This festival celebrates life, culture, popular customs and traditions. The festival is a time for coming together, of reunion and rejuvenation, of the rebirth of piety, and the season of love, sharing and caring and worshipping the Hindu goddess Durga.

My wife and I learned a great deal about Durga, and I won't go into the details about it today, but simply put, she is an embodiment of the creative feminine force known as Shakti and exists to provide patience, have a sense of humour and be able to battle spiritually in times of great stress.

I welcome this temple into this riding, I welcome the community in the riding and I look forward to attending future events as the member from Scarborough Southwest.

WORLD SCHOOL MILK DAY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to inform my colleagues in the Legislature and the people at home that tomorrow is World School Milk Day. This morning, students from Warren Park public school in Toronto were here at Queen's Park to milk life-sized "cows" to draw attention to this important initiative. I had the pleasure of attending and milked one of the cows myself.

I was particularly interested to see awards given to schools that have participated in World School Milk Day since its inception and schools that have had 100% student participation.

Across Ontario, there will be close to one million students who'll receive free milk. I think it's great to introduce students and parents to the elementary school milk program and to teach students about good nutrition and the benefits of milk. Some of the schools in Oxford are participating, and they're very grateful to the dairy farmers. As you know, Oxford county is the dairy capital of Canada, producing the most milk of any county in the country.

I'd like to thank and recognize the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Dairy Council for supplying the milk for World School Milk Day. I would also like to congratulate the volunteers who have made the elementary school milk program a success in Ontario. More than 3,000 volunteers worked with individual schools and milk distributors to provide milk to students each and every day. They have made it much easier for parents to provide a healthy option at lunch and they are benefiting our schools by contributing to nutrition and helping every child learn about the world's most perfect food.

GLOBAL STICKS

Mr. Bill Mauro: Last week, in my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, in the community of Oliver Paipoonge, I had an opportunity, along with Mayor Lucy Kloosterhuis, Councillors David Hearn, Allan Vis and Koen Grootenboer and my colleague Michael Gravelle, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, to announce a new, value-added wood products facility that will be

establishing itself in that community of Oliver Paipoonge. This particular facility will create about 15 to 20 construction jobs, I will tell you, on property owned by Bruce Hynes, from Hood Logging. Once complete, the facility will house and create approximately 80 jobs in a facility and a company known as Global Sticks, with general manager Earl Metcalf.

I want to let people know that our government was very instrumental in the establishment of this facility, providing almost \$5 million in financial assistance for the establishment of Global Sticks in Oliver Paipoonge: \$1 million from the northern Ontario heritage fund loan, \$225,000 for an energy-efficient wood-burning boiler, and from the forest sector prosperity fund a \$737,000 grant and a \$2.9-million loan guarantee—many synergies in this project.

The facility will utilize white birch. What was very interesting to note was that Earl Metcalf, from Global Sticks, mentioned in his remarks that this product used to be produced in China. It is now unaffordable for him to do it in China. Ontario is more competitive from a cost structure. That's why he's here. That's why it's in the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

TOWNSHIP OF UXBRIDGE

Mr. John O'Toole: This Saturday, October 3, the township of Uxbridge will declare itself the trail capital of Canada. This event is scheduled to start on Saturday, as I said, at 10:30 in the morning at Elgin Park in Uxbridge. I'd like to congratulate John McCutcheon, chair of township trails, Mayor Bob Shepherd, Uxbridge council and all of those who support the pathways to health and fitness.

It celebrates Uxbridge township's outstanding network of local, regional, provincial and national trails. The festival includes information, free demonstrations and a community picnic. Uxbridge can take pride in its 220 kilometres of managed right-of-way trails for cyclists, hikers and skiers. Uxbridge township is at the convergence of the Trans Canada Trail, the Oak Ridges Trail, various trails in conservation areas and eight in-town trails.

Trails encourage good health and fitness. They support tourism and green business. They foster an appreciation of our natural environment. To demonstrate the importance of trails, the township has received permission from the federal government to name itself the trail capital of Canada.

I would urge all members to participate in this event this Saturday at Elgin Park in Uxbridge. It is an event where you should bring your boots and be prepared to walk.

RAFFAELE MONTEMURRO

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise in the House today to honour the passing of a remarkable Canadian, Mr. Raffaele Montemurro.

Ralph came to Canada from his hometown of Pisticci, Italy, choosing to settle in Ontario. Ralph was a world-class bricklayer and builder. Like so many immigrants from Italy, he helped build this great city block by block. He was a co-founder of the Medi Group of companies, which has been involved in the construction of housing and condominium projects across the GTA. He even founded and operated the Panemonte banquet hall in Etobicoke with his brother-in-law Joe Panettieri.

Mr. Montemurro loved the opportunities Canada gave him and was also a great friend of the iconic Canadian, Johnny Lombardi of CHIN radio, and worked on many volunteer charitable projects with Mr. Lombardi, who was also from Pisticci.

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Ralph also had a great love for St. Michael's College School, where four of his sons attended and graduated. He was also eventually honoured and given the Order of St. Michael for his remarkable charity towards St. Michael's College School.

He was married to his wonderful wife, Graziella, for 52 years. A wonderful family man, a builder, a lover of higher education, Ralph will always be remembered for his willingness to work, to be generous and to have a great and big heart. Ralph Montemurro, riposi in pace.

RIDING OF SAULT STE. MARIE

Mr. David Oraziotti: In recent months, we have been working together with the federal government to deliver a number of significant infrastructure projects in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Our government is continuing to take action to improve the economy and help ensure that this province and my community are well-positioned to be successful when the world economy recovers.

We are helping to attract and retain talented young workers to participate in the knowledge economy with a new \$16-million biosciences and technology convergence centre at Algoma University. We are protecting the biodiversity of our species and further establishing Sault Ste. Marie as a national leader in forestry research with a new \$24-million invasive species research centre. We're also improving health care delivery with the construction of a new Algoma public health building worth \$22 million, as well as a nurse-practitioner-led clinic at Sault College.

We're improving transportation through a \$10-million extension of Third Line that will allow the entire community to have greater access to our new Sault Area Hospital, which is nearly completed. And we're making Sault Ste. Marie a healthier place by supporting tourism and active living with a \$5-million expansion of the Hub trail and waterfront walkway and over \$3 million to improve local recreation facilities in our community, as well as the YMCA.

While Ontarians have had very little to do with starting the recession, we've all been affected. That's why our government is making investments that will help local families by creating and supporting jobs during this

construction season and the next while giving our community renewed infrastructure and stronger public services that will serve our area for years to come.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Last week, the community of Smooth Rock Falls had to take what was a very tough situation and try to put a good face on it. As we know, we lost the only employer in town some three years ago. Tembec, the pulp mill that had been there for a number of years, closed down. At the time of that particular shutdown, the provincial government said to the community of Smooth Rock Falls, like they said to others, “You need to go out there and you’ve got to find other ways to utilize the forest so that you could have an employer establish themselves in your community for your future financial viability.”

The community did. They first went out and found someone who was prepared to invest in building a cedar mill in their community. What was the problem? The government was not prepared to intervene and use the sustainable forestry development act and the authorities under the act to give the allocation of timber that that particular community needed in order to attract that investment. So the investor walked away.

Last week, another investor walked away. Fifty-five million dollars was put on the table on the part of five investors who got together and said, “We have a project that would allow us to be able to sell into markets based on what’s going on in the current economic situation.” When the price of dimensional lumber is high, they would sell dimensional lumber; when it’s low, they would sell pellets or biofuels—an ideal situation to utilize fibre in the community of Smooth Rock Falls.

Yet again, what has happened? Fifty-five million dollars has walked away from that community because this government refuses to utilize their powers under the sustainable forestry development act that would allow them to make the wood allocations for that community’s viable future.

OKTOBERFEST

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I rise today to highlight a good-news item, an event that has become a cultural icon across Canada and North America and takes place each year in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. That’s right, it’s that time of year again: Oktoberfest is here. I invite you all to attend this wonderful event. It begins on Friday, October 9 and it concludes Saturday, October 17.

Please come and have a great time in KW—that’s the Oktoberfest experience. Around Kitchener–Waterloo, it’s called *Gemuettlichkeit*, or good cheer. Friendly staff wearing traditional German tracht serving chilled beverages, sausage on a bun, baked pretzels, schnitzels, sauerkraut and of course beer nuts will show you why a visit to Kitchener–Waterloo during Oktoberfest is a must.

Link arms and join with your newly found friends in the Festhalle singing *Ein Prosit*. To help celebrate this

wonderful cultural event, I’m hosting the second annual taste of Oktoberfest right here in the Legislature at Queen’s Park—Rod’s over there doing the chicken dance. Please come and join me tomorrow in room 230 from 5:30 to 7:30. Oktoberfest sausages are cooking.

I would like to highlight some people who we need to thank. Our Oktoberfest partners: President Paul Buttinger; Executive Director Larry Blundell; Molson Canada; Joseph’s Estate Wines; Piller’s meats; and J.M. Schneider.

Help bring the Oktoberfest experience here to Queen’s Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the September 29, 2009, report of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek 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 96(g), notice for ballot item 33 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CORONER’S OFFICE

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I rise in the House today to update all honourable members and the people of Ontario on initiatives this government has undertaken to respond to the recommendations of the Goudge inquiry and to address additional measures that will further strengthen Ontario’s death investigation system.

Forensics and pathology are very clinical and exact sciences which set out to answer five basic questions:

Who died? How did they die? When did they die? Where did they die? By what means did they die? Only by answering those questions can the Office of the Chief Coroner determine whether recommendations are needed to prevent similar deaths or whether the death requires the additional scrutiny of a public inquest. We must also remember that at the heart of every investigation are loved ones who have suffered a great loss.

Significant progress has been made in the 12 months since Commissioner Stephen T. Goudge delivered his recommendations. The majority of provisions contained in the Coroners Amendment Act have been proclaimed. These include establishing the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service and establishing in legislation the chief forensic pathologist as head of the new service.

Ontario now has legislation that clearly defines the role played by the pathologist in a death investigation. Ontario's chief forensic pathologist will be responsible for registering forensic pathologists and maintaining that registry to ensure consistent, high-quality standards for forensic pathology across the province.

The Coroners Amendment Act, 2009, represents the first modernization of legislation governing the Office of the Chief Coroner in more than 30 years. It ensures a higher standard of oversight and accountability, it delivers greater public accountability and transparency as well as accessibility throughout the entire death investigation, and it establishes a framework to advance and ensure the quality of Ontario's death investigation system. Furthermore, the Coroners Amendment Act has gone a considerable distance in helping to restore public confidence in a system that once appeared closed and uncaring.

But we're not finished. One provision remains to be proclaimed: the establishment of the death investigation oversight council. This oversight council is to be made up of qualified judicial, medical and government representatives with the knowledge and expertise to advise on standards of practice and to ensure these standards are met. Both the Ontario chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist will be accountable to this council. I will have more to say on this in the coming weeks.

The Coroners Amendment Act serves two purposes: It is the remedy to correct what was wrong with the death investigation system of the past, and it is a road map for the future.

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In the weeks ahead, the government will be proposing new regulations to govern the retention, storage and disposition of tissues. We will also be working with our First Nations partners and others to ensure that communities in the north receive adequate death investigation in a timely manner. Only by building a stronger death investigation system for the future can we finally say we have made restitution for the mistakes of the past.

Death can never be a pleasant subject. However, the death investigation system must be uncompromisingly vigilant on behalf of the deceased, as well as accountable

and sensitive to the loved ones who are left behind. I don't think there is a time or a jurisdiction in North America where a government has worked harder or done more to establish a higher standard for death investigations than right now and right here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to be able to respond to the minister on the Coroners Amendment Act and the recommendations of Commissioner Stephen Goudge. I wanted to say that in my opening remarks when we did first and second reading of the bill, I had a family in here, the Tim and Barb Farlow family, on Tuesday, December 2, 2008. I raised the concerns of this family and they wrote to me, and I read their letter as follows:

"Mr. Dunlop, we feel the coroner's office failed us. We are of the supportable position that the coroner is deliberately withholding the truth. With the scathing conclusions of the Goudge inquiry, all Ontarians are left with justifiably shaken confidence in the accuracy of the coroner's office reports.

"We feel the coroner's office has proven to be incapable of policing itself and ask that you propose adequate checks and balances are installed to ensure the coroner's office can meet its mandate."

This family counted on two cornerstones of the Coroners Act, which would enable the ministry to use checks and balances in cases where the minister did not feel comfortable with the chief coroner's decisions. As it turns out, the Goudge inquiry highlighted just why those checks and balances are needed. The two cornerstones of the Coroners Act that this family relied upon were sections 22 and 24.

"Minister may direct the coroner to hold inquest

"22. Where the minister has reason to believe that a death has occurred in Ontario in the circumstances that warrant the holding of an inquest, the minister may direct any coroner to hold an inquest and the coroner shall hold the inquest into the death in accordance with this act..."

This section has been repealed. The minister no longer may direct a coroner to hold an inquest.

The second part is with respect to section 24.

"Minister may direct that body be disinterred

"24. Despite anything in the Cemeteries Act, the minister may, at any time where he or she considers it necessary for the purposes of an investigation or an inquest, direct that a body be disinterred under and subject to such conditions as the minister considers proper."

This section has essentially been amended, and this power has been removed from the minister and granted to the chief coroner. The minister can no longer direct that a body be disinterred.

Earlier, I referred to the sections as checks and balances. I ask the minister—the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario was largely responsible for wrongfully sending innocent Ontarians to prison. The coroner's office proved to be, at a minimum, unable to police itself. I therefore ask, now that sections 22 and 24 have been

rewritten to remove the oversight powers of the minister, should Ontarians feel more secure today, knowing that the coroner's office has more internal policing powers than it had before and that the minister has distanced himself from the coroner's office that Mr. Goudge was so critical of?

I'd like to turn the remaining time over to my colleague Mr. Runciman.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I want to say, with respect to the legislation that removed the government's own responsibility for oversight, that obviously, we're hopeful that this new death investigation oversight council will have real impact, and I want to suggest to the minister perhaps the first case that we can put before this council—and I look forward to his coming statements in the next few weeks with respect to this initiative—is the case of the death of John Connelly, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Connelly of Ottawa. Their son died in Toronto a number of years ago, and the police determined it was a case of suicide. They've subsequently indicated, through a range of their own investigations, that there is significant evidence to point to another conclusion, that his death was through murder, and they've been frustrated at every turn over the years with respect to getting an appropriate investigation conducted. They believe and I believe—and the CBC's *The Fifth Estate* did a significant investigation into this as well and reached the same conclusion as the Connellys—that this merits at least an inquest, if not a renewed police investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mr. Connelly's death.

Certainly I would hope—and I will have more to say about this in the coming weeks as well—that this could be the first case that could be undertaken by this new death investigation oversight council with respect to how the coroner's office failed to discharge its public duties with respect to this matter, I think clearly ignoring evidence that contradicted its original, patently rushed conclusion as to the cause of death of young Mr. Connelly. So I look forward to working with you and seeing how this council works out and hope it is not just another accountability dodge on the part of your government but turns out to be real and effective.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Let's put this all in context. The Goudge commission, Judge Goudge's inquiry, came about as the result of the exposure of one so-called Dr. Charles Smith, heralded as a renowned pathologist, found to have made questionable conclusions of foul play in 20 of the cases, 13 of those resulting in convictions. We're talking in the largest part about babies being murdered. I don't know if you know, Speaker, what kind of jail time a person does who murders a baby, but it's called hard time. It's about as hard time as you can get. But these are 13 innocent people, many of whom did years, wrongly convicted because of Dr. Charles Smith.

Judge Goudge said that Smith “actively misled” his—Smith's—superiors. Judge Goudge said that Smith “made false and misleading statements” in court and exaggerated his expertise in trials. Far from being an expert in forensic child pathology, “Smith lacked basic knowledge

about forensic pathology,” wrote Judge Goudge in his report.

“Smith was adamant that his failings were never intentional,” Judge Goudge wrote. He concludes, “I simply cannot accept such a sweeping attempt to escape moral responsibility.”

But let's not isolate Dr. Charles Smith, testifying in 20 cases, 13 of them resulting in convictions. We had 20 cases of crown attorneys who I'm sure were delighted with the evidence of Dr. Smith, 20 cases where we had police officers investigating the child deaths—a horrible thing—who I'm sure were delighted at the evidence of Dr. Smith, 20 cases presided over usually by reasonably senior judges, not one of whom stopped to pause and say, “Hmm. Are this man's credentials over-exaggerated?” Crowns are supposed to be dispassionate. Their goal isn't supposed to be to convict somebody; it's supposed to be to make sure justice is served. This remarkable indifference to the concept of presumption of innocence and to the need to have fair trials without doctored-up evidence by a Dr. Smith should cause all of us great concern. Dr. Smith didn't work in an isolated little office removed from any of the other medical professions. He worked out of a hospital. He was surrounded by his peers.

Judge Goudge delivered a remarkable report. But what hasn't been addressed is the culture: one, the prosecutorial culture in which investigators and prosecutors acquire tunnel vision, focusing only on their zeal to convict somebody regardless of whether or not they're innocent, and to use perjurers like Smith. The other, quite frankly, is a medical culture wherein Dr. Smith could survive for so long. How come nobody, none of his peers, turned him in? It was just remarkable: Smith was bang on every time, every time, every time; not a doubt in his mind. I find that very, very concerning.

1530

During the hearings we heard from family after family of deceased who were treated by the local coroner's office with indifference, arrogance and rudeness, and who were basically told to mind their own business. There was a haughtiness, a superiority, from these local coroners' offices. Unfortunately, this legislation doesn't address that either.

There's still a whole lot to be done when it comes to the role of the coroner's office in this province, and it can't be addressed by legislation.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by people from all over my riding: Hanover, Walkerton, Stayner, Port Elgin, Gorrie.

“Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will

raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

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

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

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

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I have signed this and will give it to Helen.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the good people of Elliot Lake and Espanola, who are asking for a PET scanner.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... 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 support this petition from the people of Algoma-Manitoulin, will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks’ table with page Tony.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a thousand more signatures from concerned residents, led by Her Worship Mayor McCallion. We stand united on a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the interim 24-hour ministry ambient air quality criterion for PM10 was exceeded on several occasions; and

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

“Whereas annual average 24-hour nitrogen dioxide concentrations were found to be among the highest when compared to provincial air quality index stations in the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas; and

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

“Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

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

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

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

I affix my signature and present it to Kingsong for delivery.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 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 Liberals’ watch at eHealth Ontario;

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

“That the McGuinty government immediately stop its ill-advised attack on rural health care and on rural communities who need financial incentives to successfully recruit and retain doctors.”

I’m pleased to sign that.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I’m pleased to present this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly and to thank the members of the Islamic Society of North America for

having collected some of the signatures, in particular Mohammed Ali, Khazeena Ashroff and Mustafa Iqbal. 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” better “be 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 pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jacob to carry it for me.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty’s new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services we use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

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

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

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Joe Dickson: I’d like to present a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas current changes to ServiceOntario will expand and improve access to licensing, registration, health card renewal and other services, it will also close effective and service-oriented local businesses and cost us local jobs, such as the licence office that the Donald

family has owned and operated in Whitby and Durham region for over 50 years; and

“Whereas we recognize the quality of service provided by the Donald family to be rated above the 100% efficiency level, including extended hours;

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

“That the Donald family be maintained as a licence bureau of the highest quality in the region of Durham.”

I affix my signature to it and pass it to Carlos. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I have petitions with hundreds if not thousands of names on them addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas ServiceOntario will be terminating existing contracts with the approximately 60 independently owned and operated driver and vehicle licence-issuing offices in Ontario, we request that the Legislative Assembly stop the closures of these offices.

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

“The most efficient method of delivering driver and vehicle licence services to the public of Ontario is through privately owned facilities. Independent operators have an incentive to provide prompt, courteous service to their customers, many of whom they have been serving for years. Replacing experienced private issuers with ServiceOntario (government) employees will, at minimum, incur unnecessary training, salary and benefits, and facility costs which must be passed on to the taxpayer. Please keep our current issuers in business and their staff employed, providing the excellent service to which we are accustomed.”

1540

I’m affixing my signature in support and I am expressing my concern about this dumb, dumb move. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just to remind people to read what is in the petition. Thank you.

SHARK FISHERY

Mr. Mike Colle: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 100 million sharks are being brutally killed, mutilated and butchered by the abhorrent practice of shark finning, which involves the removal of the fins of live sharks and then throwing the finless, immobile, live shark back into the ocean, where it is destined for a slow and torturous death;

“Whereas sharks are a vital component of the ocean’s interconnected ecosystem, leading ecologists to warn that rapid decreases in shark populations will disturb the ocean’s equilibrium and upset the ecosystems of the oceans of the world;

“Whereas the practice of shark finning can have disastrous effects on other fisheries;

“Whereas the United Nations General Assembly ... has noted that the decline in the shark population could have ‘an impact on broader ecosystem functions’;

“We, the undersigned, urge the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the prohibition of shark finning and to call upon the federal government to support the prohibition of this cruel act ... in light of the unconscionable, wasteful and inhumane methods used to obtain shark fins” in this country.

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Durham.

TAXATION

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, on a personal level here. I read a petition from the riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families” are struggling “and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas by 2010, Dalton McGuinty’s new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovation and home services;” condominium fees, “veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes and funeral arrangements”—to end it all;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn’t raise taxes in ... 2003.... However, in 2004, he brought in the dreaded health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising ... taxes again;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and give it to Ava, one of the best pages here in the Legislature.

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I would like to read a petition that was handed to me by members of the Peel Fountain of Youth Seniors Club. I especially thank Rupert Kydd, Selwyn Roberts and Margaret Austin for having collected the signatures. It reads as follows:

“Whereas a retail sales transaction in Ontario should not be subject to two separate taxes, at two different rates, under two sets of rules and payable to two different levels of government; and

“Whereas Ontario will implement a comprehensive package of income and business tax cuts in 2010, which

will especially benefit working families and retired seniors; and

“Whereas the income taxes of Ontarians will be cut permanently, seniors will receive double their former property tax credit and other permanent savings will flow to Ontarians; and;

“Whereas the cost to businesses to produce goods will go down permanently as embedded sales tax is permanently eliminated from the business cycle, enabling these businesses to lower business costs and pass savings along to their customers; and

“Whereas these measures represent the most comprehensive tax reform in a half century, enabling Ontario to be the most competitive place in North America to create jobs, move, grow and operate a business;

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

“That the government of Ontario and the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly swiftly enact Ontario’s comprehensive tax reform measures, including the move to a single sales tax in Ontario, as proposed in the province’s 2009-10 budget.”

I’m pleased to sign and support that and to ask page Elizabeth to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I have petitions with thousands of signatures on McGuinty’s sales tax, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I present this petition and sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from some good people in the great riding of Thornhill.

“Dalton McGuinty’s plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“This new tax, which we are calling the DST (Dalton sales tax), will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to the provincial sales tax including:

“—electricity, home heating oil and gas at the pump;

“—haircuts, newspapers and magazines, Internet and cable;

“—home renovations, heating and air conditioning repairs;

“—accounting, legal and real estate fees;

“—condo fees and new home sales; rents will also go up;

“—minor hockey registration fees will increase; green fees and gym fees will also be taxed;

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

“That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I agree with this petition and affix my name.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 201, An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector, when Bill 201 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, October 1, 2009, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 30, 2009. On Thursday, October 1, 2009, at no later than 5 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, October 5, 2009. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall

be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order shall be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the second or third reading votes shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d just ask if the honourable member would clarify the fourth-last paragraph: “which order”—you said “shall.”

Hon. Monique M. Smith: “Which order may be called that same day”? Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that.

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 138.

1550

Mr. Bill Murdoch: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I listened intently to what the member said, and I noticed at the end there’s only an hour left for just the recognized parties. At one time, it used to be recognized parties and others in the House. I wonder if they removed that. Have they removed that from it again or not?

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: It’s a clarification, because it was there at one time. I know that the government of the day did add that, and now I’m just wondering if it has been taken out again.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for the point of order. On those occasions when we have had an independent member sitting in this House, that clause has been added. But as we, at this time, do not have an independent member sitting in the House, that clause is not contained in the motion.

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I’m a little shocked, I must say, to listen to the rules of the game on this particular time allocation motion, because it sounds to me, if I can distill what we just heard into 10 seconds or less, like we’ll be back here on Monday with one hour between all parties to figure this thing out on third reading. What I’m hearing today is that I can’t debate Bill 201 in the way that I’d like to, with a full 20 minutes. So I’ve got eight minutes to talk about a closure motion, a time allocation motion which really does nothing more than add insult to

injury as far as I'm concerned and as far as my party is concerned.

The government loses control on expenses; it feigns concern about losing control; it changes the rules of the game on oversight by handing it over to the Integrity Commissioner's office, and then it stifles debate. So what's the point? It's going to pass at the end of the day, and we really don't have very much to say about it. This bill, as far as I'm concerned, is not about public sector expenses review. This is about, and we should have called it this too: Closing the Barn Door After the Horse Has Bolted Act, or It Wasn't Me Act, or Good Cop Bad Cop Act—and guess which one of those cops Dwight is. It is patently ridiculous.

I was there at the news conference, the media conference called by Minister Duncan in late August, and I remember his words very well when he talked to the media about what had happened at the OLG. The three salient words were: "I am disappointed." He said, "I am disappointed." You're darned right he was disappointed. I think he was disappointed in the fact that his party was found out—found out about the fact that they were out of control and still are.

As much as I respect the Integrity Commissioner's office, I don't think that what we're debating here today, either the time allocation motion or the bill itself, is going to change very much. I think that is sad for Ontarians and sad for me.

The whack-a-mole game continued the next day as the Premier popped up and said, "I've got the fix. We're going to change the rules of the game," and we got Bill 201. Who are they kidding? You fix things like this before they happen.

I didn't spend most of my life in private business, as a senior executive, looking to an office of some commissioner somewhere to decide on whether the expenses that the people who reported to me were being accurately reported or not, whether things were being tendered properly or not, whether people were buying a coffee on the company or not. I relied on their integrity, and the rules of the game were clear. That's not what has happened here.

They got caught. It's that simple. The Liberal government is off-loading responsibility and accountability to the Integrity Commissioner's office, but first let's cut off debate on that. That's what we're doing here today. We know the Integrity Commissioner's office, and I say what I'm about to say with no malice. I respect Ms. Morrison and her staff, small though it may be. We all know this office, because we just had a deadline pass by in which we, as members of provincial Parliament, had to complete our own reports on our own self-worth. I've had that proctoscopic examination now; all of you as well.

I would remind people that we, at our level—which is relatively small compared to some of the people who work in the boards, agencies and commissions of the provincial government—don't have any significant expense reimbursement. We can't have so much as a glass of wine with a normal dinner. We earn about a buck and a

half an hour if you take all of the hours we work and you divide them into the salary that we're paid. I'm not complaining, but if that's the case for us, and we have to go through the Integrity Commissioner, and that Integrity Commissioner can do that or is doing that with a staff of approximately eight, what is the government's plan that has not been elaborated to us? How many people have to be hired in order to look at and review expenses and all of the financial machinations that go on at the level of approximately 80,000 different employees in all of these boards and commissions and so forth?

In ministries, the minister and a boatload of deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers have control and they have procedures, and they blew it. We're talking about Minister Caplan and Minister Smitherman and Minister Duncan, and we're talking specifically about the OLG and eHealth, and more to come.

The Premier wants this office of a scant eight or nine to oversee the expenses of practically all employees of provincial boards, agencies and corporations, and we can't even debate it further than to say this simple truth, and the truth is that this bill is nothing more than a band-aid. They will tailor the injury that the band-aid is going to cover sometime later on.

In the private sector, department heads are responsible for the expenses of their subordinates. They're held to strong account, and it's done in a very transparent way. There are forms on file, electronically and on paper, and they are responsible for their subordinates to their superiors, to their vice-presidents, to their boards and to their presidents and CEOs. When this same transgression occurs, as it undoubtedly will at some time in the coming months and years within some board or agency or commission in this government, and the Integrity Commissioner is bypassed, what kind of legislation will we see then?

A similar pattern to what goes on in private industry ought to be followed in government where the buck stops with the Premier, or at the very least with the minister. The minister is, in the context of provincial affairs, the same as the head of any corporation. You could call a minister a CEO and you wouldn't be wrong. So you start to ask yourself, what is it that they do? Instead, the Premier and his ministers don't want the buck. They are passing it to the Integrity Commissioner. And now we're being told that we have 40 minutes in total per party to address this, and that's it. That's all.

Outside firms are often hired to investigate irregularities that come to light in companies and to make recommendations that prevent their recurrence in the future. The summer of scandals and the bill debated show that Premier McGuinty and his government have a different system in mind, a system that allows for uncontrolled spending, a culture that encourages irresponsibility and legislative manoeuvring that will allow them to weasel out of accountability for the agencies that they have been entrusted to oversee. They do so by invoking the Office of the Integrity Commissioner and providing no details whatsoever on how that office is going to be modified so as to deal with this huge and very daunting task.

In closing my portion of this debate, I just want to repeat that this adds insult to injury in my mind because I've had a very few minutes to speak my mind on the issue of the bill. I am appalled that we are looking at closure, much less third reading, come Monday for one hour for all parties combined. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good to have the opportunity to speak again on this bill. I had 10 minutes. I just want to elaborate a little more. I want to welcome the citizens to this parliamentary channel. It's Tuesday, September 29, and it's 4 o'clock.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: For those watching, for the future and those who might just want to know the time and date and so on.

I was listening to the member from Thornhill and I do agree with a lot of what he said, but I disagree with another fundamental part of what he talked about, and that is how much faith he puts in the private sector, because I don't have that kind of faith. I look at what has happened in the United States with the subprime economic fiasco. The whole world is suffering as a result of it. This is the private sector in whom we put so much faith. They're above reproach. They can do no wrong. In fact, they fill out the forms and they fill out the expenses real nice. Everything is clean, no problema.

1600

They caused the financial fiasco for the whole entire universe in the US, through the subprime mortgages. Who was watching those people? Who was minding the store there? Where are the people, where are the governments that should keep an eye on these people while all of our pensions, most of the working men's and women's pensions, whatever they had, disappeared in a couple of days, a couple of weeks, a couple of months—gone. And we worry about tidbits and tea and stuff. It's embarrassing. I understand people ought to worry, to care, to get angry about the tidbits and the tea.

Who was minding the store in the subprime mortgage scandal? Were these people willing—hungry for money, because these investment folks want money in their pockets for themselves—to allow the free market system, an entire economic system, to collapse in a month or two? Who's watching them? Where are the watchmen and watchwomen, watching the private sector as they fill out the forms for the tea that they have, and the biscuits and so on. Nobody.

I get awfully agitated when I hear comments about why the private sector is so great and the public sector, of course, is subject to so many wrongs and so many ills. It's that kind of debate that infuriates me a little bit, because I worry about how we manage our economies and how people are affected by those decisions.

I even became concerned that Bush—your Republican friend, my Tory friends—became a socialist in a month. I couldn't believe it. And then Harper embraced Bush, no problem, when he had to say, "Yeah, we've got an

economic problem." He became a socialist in a month or two, too. He said, "Yeah, yeah, we've got to spend, we've got to spend on this." Bush says okay. Obama now says it's okay. Harper says it's okay. Everybody else says it's okay.

Even Harper, who is a fine Conservative, is okay on spending on infrastructure all of a sudden. He never wanted to spend a cent until his financial friends across the border collapsed the system, and all of a sudden we've got to bail them all out. We've got to bail them out. They have a trillion and a half in deficits. We've got to bail out all of the financial friends Conservative folks have—and many Liberals, of course, too.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The NDP doesn't have any friends.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We don't have friends at that level, with the big, big trillion-dollar buckets—you know, the kind of bucket that has a trillion dollars in it. We've got little buckets of quarters and dimes and stuff. Those are the kinds of friends we've got.

It was a funny thing to see Bush become a socialist in a month. I roared with laughter. It cracked me up. I just couldn't believe it, that they have so much faith in the private sector. And then all of a sudden, "We've got to bail them out. You understand it, because if we don't bail them out, everyone will suffer. Everyone will suffer if we don't bail them out."

Then we rehire these people, the very same people who collapsed the financial system, rehire them so they can get their bonuses and they can get the big paycheques. We wouldn't want to hurt their financial interests, you understand, because these people are good at what they do. We need them. We've got to rehire them, because these people know what they're doing—the very same people who collapsed the system. I'm telling you, it just drives me wild.

So yes, then I get to these public sector indiscretions. I understand that taxpayers get really angry; citizens get angry too. I understand, I really do. They get angry over the little things. They don't even get angry on the big stuff; they get angry on the little stuff.

Me, I get angry over paying some consultant \$25,000 for writing a speech. What the hell is that? What kind of a speech? Is it laced with gold or something? Do they write with a gold pen, with real gold? How can you pay anybody 25,000 bucks for a speech? I would fire somebody just for doing that. I would fire the deputy, the assistant deputy, directors, and then I would fire the minister on top of that as well. I would fire a minister who needs somebody to write him a speech for \$25,000. Fire him—gone. That's what I would do. That's egregious, I am saying to you. It's an egregious—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The private sector does it better, yes. They write their own speeches. They don't hire consultants at the private sector level; they just do it themselves because they're good, right? They're good. They know what they're doing. Yes, of course.

I'm saying to you, is shuffling this thing to the Integrity Commissioner going to solve the problem of the

\$25,000 speech? I don't think so; I just don't think so. Do I believe the minister should do a better job of it? Yes, I really do. I really do believe accountability—and the member from Thornhill and others said this as well. I agree with that part. I really believe ministers are charged with the responsibility to do that job well and they are charged with the responsibility of oversight of boards, agencies and commissions. They might have an arm's-length distance; I understand that. But you are ultimately responsible as the minister and you are ultimately responsible to make sure that people spend wisely, because it belongs to the citizens of Ontario and, yes, to the taxpayers of Ontario.

When the system fails, you are responsible. There are times when you might have to fire a minister or two to teach the whole cabinet a lesson, to teach the whole government a lesson, to teach all MPPs a lesson. You may have to do that from time to time if that's what it takes. If you have not taken preventive actions to tell your deputy minister that many of these things, these abuses that have happened, will not be tolerated, then the abuses continue.

My view is that we haven't done that job. These abuses, as I said to the member from Brant the other day, happen under all governments; they do. That's why I hate to just attack the government that is there at the time. You happen to be there as Liberals now and you've got to take the abuse because you're in charge, but everyone has done it. Every government has been guilty of these things. And rather than take responsibility for that, we run from it. So now we create a bill, Bill 201, called the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, and we charge the Integrity Commissioner with having oversight over 23 agencies, boards and commissions. All right.

My sense is that most of you Liberal members don't have a clue how many more bodies the Office of the Integrity Commissioner is going to need to be able to do this job. I suspect you don't have a clue, but I suspect some of you will admit they're going to need people. But why do you do that and why would you do that rather than saying, "You, Ministers, take responsibility for this and do the job"? The reason you don't do that is because you're afraid to accept the responsibility for the failure of these abuses. Rather than saying, "It has happened under our watch and it will not happen again," the way you protect yourself and shield yourself is to say, "We're going to give more responsibilities to this body. Now they're charged with it and we are free, we are absolved of responsibility, because this responsibility is no longer ours; it belongs to the Integrity Commissioner." And if it doesn't work, then who gets attacked or blamed? It's the Integrity Commissioner, not the government.

My point is, we should be brave enough, tall enough—or short enough—and strong enough to be able to accept responsibility for the problems that happen under our watch. It happens all of the time. When fear sets in, we find ways of avoiding responsibility and shrugging it off to some other office. I just think it's a profound mistake. So I'm going to be put in a position by some Liberal who's going to say, "Yes, but do you

support this bill or not?" As I said yesterday, this is a reductionist argument. It doesn't help to say, "Do you support it or not?" That's not the argument for me. The argument is not whether or not this is the right way to do it, and if you don't support it, you're not supporting public scrutiny. That's not the argument. Public scrutiny should happen, and it should happen under the surveillance and the responsibility of ministers.

1610

I would have preferred, if you had to do something, to give more responsibility to the Ombudsman than the Integrity Commissioner, with all due respect. This is not something they should be doing. The Ombudsman could have easily done this job if you wanted to hand it over to someone, but you're afraid of the Ombudsman. That's why the Liberals are not doing that, and so they hand it off to another office. If you really wanted a watchdog, a watchman or a watchwoman, the Ombudsman's office is the place to go, because every time that he, this officer, has dealt with an issue, he has dealt with it in a way that brings respect to the job, that opens up the books in a way that says to the minister, "Here are the problems." Then it's up to the government to say, "Yeah, this is good. We're going to do it. We agree." Or you might disagree and say, "We're not going to do it." But the Ombudsman has delivered incredibly good reports that make us all accountable. It's about making us all accountable. Unfortunately, it happens to make the government more accountable than the rest, and that is why you're afraid of the Ombudsman. But that would have been the place to go, and it's a shame.

I find it often repugnant to have to either vote for a bill or against, and to be put in such a position with this kind of bill. You are put in a position that if you say no, they say, "Ah, they're against scrutinizing people's expenses." And if you vote for, it's as if to suggest that what has happened before should be forgotten. If you say yes, it's as if you are saying that this is the right place to do it and everything will have been done correctly and you need not fear or worry any longer. I hate to be put in that kind of position. That's the politics of these kinds of bills, and the bills do this over and over again. When they do little things, they put many of us in a position to have to say, "What do we do with that? How can we appear to be against something that appears to be good?" all for the sake of expediency and getting this thing out of the way. I find it abhorrent, often, and repugnant to be put into those positions. But that's the nature of politics and I'm a bit saddened by it.

Others have commented that there are a number of other agencies that have not been added to this list, and they wonder why. If you do support this as Liberal ministers and MPPs, why haven't you put in the Ontario Securities Commission? That's a question that one of my colleagues asked. It's a good one. This is a good one that you might want to put in there as well, and for many different reasons, because I've got to tell you, we have a bone to pick with this Ontario Securities Commission, because they lay 200 charges a year for abuses for insider

trading. We're talking about big bucks, right? This is where people in the know exchange information about what they should be investing in, and it's crooked and they should be charged. The commission lays very few charges on these people who make a whole lot of money on inside knowledge that involves big, huge amounts of money, and so if you've got that kind of knowledge, you can let a few friends know what they should do in order to be able to make more. Very few charges are laid. Every now and then there is a fine, a little slap on the wrist, and bye-bye, it's gone. I would love to see a little more scrutiny on that one in terms of how well they're doing the job. It might not be such a bad idea, given that you're going to do this, to scrutinize their expenses as well. Why not add one like that?

So the omission offers questions for us in terms of why you did that and why you would not have included it. I'm not sure whether any one of you has answered that question by way of the omission, but it would be good to listen to any Liberal who might speak to that.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sorry, Michael. Michael, are you speaking?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm talking to my friend.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, your friend, yeah.

So these are my comments on the bill. I'm not quite sure whether this will solve some of the questions I raise. I don't think it will. I think it's a way of shrugging it off and hopefully, in the minds of the Liberal government, this problem will disappear. I'm not quite sure.

I'm going to leave time for my friend from Timmins—James Bay, who will be speaking in a very short while. Madame la Présidente, thank you for listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm happy to continue the discussion this afternoon in relation to the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009. If passed, it would empower the Integrity Commissioner of the Legislature to review the expense claims of senior officials.

I think it's important to remind people that the Integrity Commissioner is an independent officer who reports not to the government but back to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and would be in charge of, should this legislation pass, 22 of Ontario's largest public agencies, boards and commissions.

We've heard a bit about, unfortunately from both parties that have spoken so far, the implication that this task would be significantly onerous and perhaps beyond the scope and ability of the Integrity Commissioner's office to perform. The member from Thornhill referenced it and the member from the third party just spoke about it as well. The member from Thornhill I think used numbers somewhere approximating 80,000. His colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka this morning I think used a number in the hundreds of thousands.

These are 22 of the largest agencies in the province of Ontario that will be affected, should the legislation pass. I'm told that the number is somewhat closer to around

400 individuals who would be affected, should the legislation pass, who would have to file their claims with the Integrity Commissioner. I don't stand here knowing for sure that that will be the number, but that's the range and approximation that have been given to me. So the continued use of language in either the hundreds of thousands or the tens of thousands, or just by implication, saying, "We don't know how many it will be," and that the Integrity Commissioner's office wouldn't be able to handle it, I think is a bit misleading.

This legislation will require those officials of those 22 agencies to abide by the same level of accountability that cabinet ministers and political staff must follow under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act. Senior officials in these 22 agencies would be required to pay back expenses if the commissioner determines that all or part of any expense is not proper. The commissioner could also recommend other remedial action if she determines that it is warranted in any particular case.

We're not wasting any time in putting the act into force, should it pass. The act would apply to expenses that were incurred on or after September 1, 2009. As part of the legislation, the commissioner will prepare an annual report on her review of these claims, and that report will be made public for all to see—transparency and accountability.

Since coming into office, our government has taken many steps in law to make the workings of government in this province more open and understandable to the public. Yesterday, during my 20 or 30 minutes, I had an opportunity to reference some of these, and I think they're important to repeat: In 2007, we implemented the requirement for the Ontario government to report on the province's finances before elections are held. Those of us who have been around since 2003 remember very clearly why that's an important amendment that we brought forward. Before people vote in an election, they will know exactly what the finances of the province of Ontario are, not like what we found out when we came to government in 2003, after being misled that in fact the books were balanced, and we found and inherited a structural deficit of \$5.6 billion.

During the years 2004 to 2006, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, the province's public universities and utilities were all brought under Ontario's freedom-of-information laws. In 2004, the government passed the Audit Statute Law Amendment Act, which broadens the powers of the Auditor General to review public sector organizations. The Auditor General has a crucial role as the impartial investigator of government actions and policies. These are all things that we brought into force and expanded before this particular piece of legislation.

The government is well aware that Ontario is facing many new economic challenges these days and that every dollar counts and should be used wisely. The government has always required its public servants, whether they are elected, hired or appointed, to act responsibly with the public money that is entrusted to them.

The Premier has made several public statements recently on this subject and has introduced a number of new requirements. Expenses for senior management in the Ontario public service, cabinet ministers, political staff and senior executives at Ontario's 22 largest agencies will be posted on a website for everyone to see. The number of random audits of expense claims will be increased to ensure that the rules are followed. External auditors who examine the books of Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions will be required to review the expense practices of those entities to ensure that the rules are followed and that good controls are in place. As many know, there are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 630 or 650 agencies in the province. The government will develop mandatory online training for all OPS employees and staff at the 22 agencies to educate them about filing expense claims properly.

1620

Regarding Bill 201, the government consulted with the Integrity Commissioner as the legislation was being drafted, and the commissioner has taken up the cause. Under the act, the commissioner would review and approve the expenses for senior executives at each of the government's 22 identified largest agencies. While this will increase the workload of the Integrity Commissioner—that's acknowledged—we know the office will be up to the task, given it's expected that it will be about 400 filings, or in that range.

The commissioner's office has been reviewing the expenses of cabinet ministers, opposition leaders and staff since 2002 and is well qualified and experienced to assume these new duties. Currently, the commissioner is responsible for five key areas in the province: the integrity of members; public service disclosure of wrongdoing, commonly called whistle-blowing; review of expenses filed by cabinet ministers and opposition leaders; the ethical conduct of staff employed by ministers' offices; and the registration of lobbyists.

The vast majority of Ontarians who are employed in the public service act responsibly as regards their expenses, but unfortunately, a few have not, and that's why we're taking the steps outlined in Bill 201. Perhaps when the other parties are speaking, they can tell us, when they had their terms in office, what pieces of public accountability and transparency they brought forward: the Conservatives in their previous eight years and the NDP in their five. I'd be interested to hear some of that discussion.

These actions are designed to shine a light on any inappropriate expenses so Ontarians will know who exactly is spending what and how. The steps that our government is taking will make it easier for everyone to know what the rules are for claiming expenses and harder for those rules to be broken with impunity. Each person who works for the taxpayers of Ontario must take responsibility for knowing the rules and following those rules, and our government will continue to take this responsibility for improving and enforcing those rules very seriously.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It doesn't give me any pleasure to rise today and speak of this closure bill. Once again, we're debating closure, time allocation, and not Bill 201, and it's clear to me that this Liberal government certainly will not allow democracy to interfere with their agenda.

As I watched and listened to the government House leader introduce this time allocation motion, I wondered and thought and looked at just how depressing that must be, to be a member of this Legislature and to bring in a motion that is harmful to your constituents' scrutiny and harmful for democracy. It really must be a depressing lot in life to have to bring in legislation and motions that harm democracy.

I'd like to start just on this closure debate and read a little something from the former chief justice of Ontario's high court, the Honourable James C. McRuer. He said:

"The theory underlying democratic government is that when legislators make the law, the rights of the individual" and society "will be safeguarded through the public debate and public vote in the Legislature." However, "When subordinate bodies, such as Lieutenant Governor in Council or commissions or boards legislate" and administer those safeguards, "the rights of the individual" and of society "provided by public debate and public scrutiny are removed."

That was from a former justice of Ontario's high court. He chaired a royal commission back in the 1970s about agencies, boards and commissions and what we ought to do to protect society and protect those democratic underpinnings.

Clearly this Liberal government doesn't read much, except for maybe the funnies or whatever is in today's paper, maybe the headlines, but we have seen a clear understanding of how things ought to be working. This closure bill on Bill 201—let's remind ourselves: Bill 201 only affects 22 agencies, boards and commissions out of 650. Now, the government says they are 22 of the largest, but they have forgotten, of course, to include things like the local health integration networks, who have their hands on a significant amount of public resources for health care.

What's common with all these agencies, boards and commissions is that they are unelected, they're unaccountable, and this Liberal government refuses to provide any direction. Whenever the opposition—as soon as we begin to open a door and shed some light on the activities of these ABCs, the Liberals rush to closure and slam the door on public scrutiny.

Here's a list: 650 agencies, boards and commissions, and none of them have ministerial oversight. Just as I read earlier, that removal of public scrutiny diminishes and undermines democracy.

I'd like to say a few other things about what is happening here. The Liberals really have raised this ability to hide to a new level, to a new art form. This ability to slough off and hide behind these agencies is something that I've never seen the likes of. And we can see that this

summer of scandals by the Liberal Party is certainly turning into an autumn of secrecy now, with closure bills and this rush to hide behind closure.

I'd also like, for the members opposite, just to read one other little comment that I think is appropriate. It was written by a French parliamentarian in the mid-19th century. It goes like this: "In the" political "sphere an act, a habit, an institution, a law produces not only one effect, but a series of effects. Of these effects, the first alone is immediate; it appears simultaneously with its cause; it is seen. The other effects emerge only subsequently; they are not seen; we are fortunate if we foresee them.

"There is only one difference between a bad" politician "and a good one: the bad" politician "confines himself to the visible effect; the good" politician "takes into account both the effect that can be seen and those effects that must be foreseen.

"Yet this difference is tremendous; for it almost always happens that when the immediate consequence is favourable, the later consequences are disastrous, and vice versa. Whence it follows that the bad" politician "pursues a small present good that will be followed by" a greater evil, "while the good" politician "pursues a great good to come, at the risk of a small present" danger.

That's what I see with the Liberals, this Liberal government: They have no foresight; they have no hindsight. They are too busy looking at their feet, and this is why they continue to trip and stumble from scandal to deficit to closure. This Liberal government is pursuing a course to hide immediately, to have that immediate benefit to themselves without care for the consequences of their actions.

I find it atrocious that this Liberal government, faced with scandals, instead of standing up and protecting the citizens and protecting the taxpayers' money, hid to closure and appease people with this, so insignificant that 22 agencies and, as the member from Thunder Bay said, possibly 400 people will come under scrutiny. These Liberals ought to be ashamed of that motion they brought in the House today.

1630

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's a privilege, I guess, to get a few words on the record this afternoon. When you look at the history of this country, you go back, of course, to the 1870s, and there was the famous specific scandal with Sir John A. Macdonald and the railroad contracts. The government of the day was put under close scrutiny because of that activity. Then you look toward the 1920s, and there was the famous Beauharnois scandal involving the King government, dealing with public works contracts in the province of Quebec. I just remind myself today that one of the greatest scandals in Ontario political history was in the mid-1950s, the famous NONG scandal, the northern Ontario natural gas pipeline that cost two ministers in the Frost cabinet their jobs, because those two ministers were holding shares in NONG. That, of course, was part of the great pipeline debate in Ottawa, as

the pipeline was going to go through northern Ontario to provide gas service to northern Ontario.

So this is not something that any political party that has had the privilege of government has been immune to, and none of us, of course, take the situation last summer with eHealth, and of course the Ontario Lottery Corp., lightly. We all find that very disturbing—certainly when somebody who makes \$400,000 a year feels that it's the right thing to do to charge \$1.28 for a coffee at Tim Hortons.

Bill 201 is of course a response to that: to provide the Office of the Integrity Commissioner—I know I had dealings with the Honourable Coulter Osbourne, who was the Integrity Commissioner, and certainly the acting one, Lynn Morrison, who I think does a terrific job and will bring 22 agencies, boards and commissions, approximately 400 people, under the scrutiny of that organization.

Indeed there was reference earlier, when agencies, boards and commissions were reviewed in the 1970s in the province of Ontario, and that came about because of the proliferation of agencies, boards and commissions that occurred in the 1950s, into the 1960s and 1970s. We fail to realize that such bodies as the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, the Niagara Parks Commission and other agencies of that sort were created in the 50s and the 60s, and there was a review of them in the 1970s. We certainly expect them to be accountable.

My goodness, the other day I was reading an article in the Globe and Mail. It was the 10th anniversary of the sale of the 407, prior to the 1999 provincial election. Well, if there was any deal in the province of Ontario that should have been reviewed, it was that deal, because we know today that the people in the Spanish consortium that own the 407 are enjoying their piña coladas today in Madrid and reaping their rewards from the sale of the 407. We know that that wasn't scrutinized in depth in the province of Ontario.

We believe on this side that it's important to get Bill 201 into place, to provide that increased scrutiny, because at the end of the day I think we've all been disappointed from time to time. When we put faith in public officials to do the right thing, from time to time a very small group of those public officials that we put our confidence in betray that confidence. We've witnessed that with eHealth and with the Ontario Lottery Corp., and on two occasions we have now taken, I believe, decisive action through Bill 201, and we will be adding, of course, resources that will be necessary to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner to make sure that we review those 400 individuals who hold the top positions in those agencies, boards and commissions.

We just feel that it is the right thing to do. I know my constituency office in Peterborough had a number of inquiries dealing with the activities at both eHealth and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. It's interesting. One of the people who I served with at Peterborough city council, Councillor Jack Doris, is now putting through a motion at Peterborough city council to have the mayor,

councillors and senior staff of the city of Peterborough post all their expenses online so that the citizens have an opportunity to scrutinize the expenses of their city councillors and senior staff. We see that this is a way to increase accountability and scrutiny for people who are filling our positions of leadership within these 22 agencies, boards and commissions that you and I and the taxpayers of the province of Ontario indeed put faith in.

When that trust is betrayed, certainly they should pay the price of that betrayal. I think one of the ways that will increase scrutiny is through the elements of Bill 201, and through the time allocation motion, we will make sure that we implement this bill as quickly as possible to improve the scrutiny. It's something that, when I get to the East City Coffee Shop in Peterborough—it's on Hunter Street. I know the member for Durham knows where it is. When you have the opportunity to sit down and chat with folks there, they're certainly very concerned about this issue, about eHealth and about the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. They also mentioned some excesses that occurred with the government of Canada—the privacy commissioner, Mr. Radwanski, who certainly had some very questionable expenditures in his office, and other agencies, boards and commissions in the government of Ottawa.

It is certainly incumbent upon us to bring in the necessary mechanisms to increase scrutiny of expenses that are made by these senior officials in the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., eHealth and other agencies, boards and commissions. It's something that needs to be done as quickly as possible, and I think all of us will indeed benefit when this bill is passed and we can get this process in place.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. The member speaking prior to me, from Peterborough, said that we'll all benefit from quick passage. I think what he's talking about is the Liberal Party of Ontario benefiting—from the political fallout related to the spending scandals associated with the Liberal government, the McGuinty government, and the fact that we heard about \$25,000 for a speech, an expenditure by the CEO of eHealth. But I think what's even more serious with respect to this is the untended contracts. We're talking about millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars, in the midst of a recession, going to Liberal-friendly consulting firms across the province.

What's really behind the debate here today is the government's rush to close down discussion, to shut off debate with respect to these scandals that have occurred under their watch as government, and the culture of entitlement that has grown within their government and infected their agencies across government, as reflected by the scandals at OLG and at eHealth. That's what this is all about. They're eliminating our opportunities to put those concerns on the record with respect to debate in this place, and as well, when the committee reviews the legislation, they're very strictly limiting the amount of

time that the committee can consider these important issues.

That's what this is all about, shutting down the opposition. We talk about accountability. I mean, this is to laugh about. Accountability—what they're doing is cutting off accountability. They don't want to be accountable for this mess. They should be held accountable, but they're trying to eliminate opportunities for the opposition to point out and emphasize their accountability for what's happened in the past six years under this Liberal government. This is what it's all about.

1640

I talked in question period with the Speaker on a point of order related to the limitations placed upon the opposition to hold the government accountable in question period. There are so many rules in this place which really hamstringing our ability, and one of them, of course, with a majority government, is that they have a hammer, and that hammer is time allocation. They're using it more and more frequently to shut down and close off debate on important issues that matter to each and every Ontarian. That's what's happening here.

There are a whole number of issues related to this, accountability being just one of them. I know that one of my colleagues, during discussion yesterday, raised the principle of ministerial responsibility, which is a long-standing principle within Parliaments across the world. But we have seen that principle not only eroded by the McGuinty government but really put into the garbage can, eliminated completely. Ministers are no longer held responsible for anything.

We've seen the Minister of Health, Mr. Caplan, who has been responsible for scandals at OLG and at eHealth, and he's still sitting in that chair, with the car and driver, the comfortable extra salary, all the perks that go along with being a minister of the crown: no responsibility whatsoever, apparently, for what goes on in the ministries that he had carriage over. He's the guy who appointed the new boards at OLG, the new chairs. He's the guy responsible for the appointment of the eHealth board, the people who were supposed to provide that oversight. The buck should stop at his desk, a minister's desk. But in this government they avoid all responsibilities. They shove it off to some other agency and say, "We wash our hands. We're not at fault here." And of course, if scandals occur in the future, they'll be able to say, "Well, again, you know, this wasn't our responsibility. The Integrity Commissioner failed to do his job, or someone else failed to do their job"—never a minister of the crown, never the Premier of the province, responsible for any of the failings or scandals that have occurred over the past number of years with this Liberal government.

I know they are quick on their feet to criticize the former Conservative government, but I'll tell you, when it came to ministerial responsibility, the Premier of the day, Premier Harris, was very clear: If there was a question about ministerial responsibility and an activity that occurred within that minister's area of responsibility, he or she stepped aside until the matter was clarified. I was

one of those ministers who stood aside, so I can get worked up about this issue, because we did the correct thing, the responsible thing, in keeping with the history and traditions of parliamentary democracies throughout the world. But this McGuinty government has just tossed that principle, that tradition, out the window.

And to add, I would say, insult to injury, we take a look at who has carriage of this legislation. Who is the minister responsible for this so-called accountability legislation? It's the Minister of Government Services. And just who is the Minister of Government Services? Well, he is the only member in the history of this chamber to have been censured by the Integrity Commissioner for breaching the Members' Integrity Act.

Can you imagine the lack of common decency within the Premier's office when they came up with this brain-storm: "Let's get this out of our bailiwick, shovel it off to the Integrity Commissioner, and put it in the lap of Minister Takhar," the one man who has been censured and reprimanded by the Integrity Commissioner for breaching the Members' Integrity Act? What gall. What an offence, not just to this place but to the people of the province of Ontario—a true and deep insult.

I can tell you we are certainly going to vote against this legislation. We think it's wrong-headed. We think it's irresponsible on the part of this government. It offends us on so many levels that I personally get very emotional about this, given my history in this place, and with respect to the whole issue of ministerial responsibility.

I think it's shameful on the part of the government and some of their backbenchers who stand up here and support this. They are doing their "Yes, ma'am. No, ma'am" role here instead of doing the right thing for a change and standing up on behalf of hard-working, taxpaying Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to speak to the motion today, and I'd like to start off with some comments about our government's approach to accountability, because when you listen to some of the comments by the opposition, you would think that this was a whole new topic that we've just come to lately.

In fact, one of first things we did when we came into office was amend the Auditor General Act—as you well know, Madam Speaker, because you were on public accounts for many years. We amended the Auditor General Act to give the Auditor General increased responsibility to audit the accounts of transfer partners like school boards, universities, community colleges, hospitals, and also some of the major agencies, places like Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation.

The auditor, in his annual report, has been working his way through a number of these transfer partners, a number of the agencies. What's interesting is that as he has passed through these various transfer partners and agencies, the thing that he has most often looked at in his first pass-through has actually been their purchasing

policies. What the Auditor General has found is that many of these agencies, in fact, do not have purchasing policies, procurement policies, that are up to the standards of the Ontario public service.

For example, we dealt with school boards, and when we reviewed school board purchasing policies, found that they were not up to government standards and had quite a back-and-forth conversation with the public accounts committee and school boards getting those policies up to standard. That has gone on with a number of agencies and transfer partners; Hydro One, we looked at their purchasing policies and had the same conversation at public accounts and the same directives to improve their purchasing policies and bring them up to government standards. So this has been an ongoing conversation.

I must say that I want to note that sometimes, as those transfer partners have fallen into competitive procurement policies, in fact there has been negative feedback from the community. I think of my own local school board that, following that direction, went to a competitive procurement policy for school buses. It's interesting that what happened was that some of the local folks were quite offended that you would do this on the basis of best price and that some of the contracts for buses moved from firms in a rural part of the county into a Guelph firm, and there was a major kerfuffle. I know that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, who was speaking yesterday about how dare we not make sure that all contracting was competitive, actually spoke out against competitive procurement in our own neighbourhood. I just want to emphasize that this is an issue that we have been dealing with since we took government, but, in fact, some of the opposition members have spoken out against it when we actually enforced that.

If we then move on to this spring, it became quite clear that there were some things going on at a specific agency, eHealth, in terms of expensing practices and procurement practices—that is, hiring consultants without any sort of a competition—that were clearly unacceptable. Nobody is saying that what went on at eHealth was acceptable. We know that what was happening at eHealth was clearly unacceptable. I think I've been in the House now about three times when this topic has been debated, and it has been debated on a number of other days as well. There's been quite an expansive debate. What I heard a number of the opposition members say is, "You know, you're just doing one piece of this. You're not dealing with the procurement issue." The biggest issue at eHealth was the fact that eHealth gave a consulting contract without there being a competitive bid, what we call sole sourcing a contract for consulting. If you just listen to the debate in this chamber, you would often think that we haven't done anything about that particular problem. Well, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth, because back in the late spring, early summer there was a directive that went out to all government agencies saying, "You must follow Ontario public service procurement policies, you must have competitive procurement and, in particular, you must not have sole source consulting contracts."

1650

So, in fact, contrary to what a lot of the opposition members have said, we've already dealt with that. We dealt with that back in June and July. At the same time we were dealing with that, we also dealt with expense policies. We said to all the agencies, "You must follow the Ontario public service expense policies," which are much stricter than the policies that eHealth was following and, it turned out, that a number of the other agencies were following. But we've already said to all these agencies, "You must follow Ontario public service expense policies." We said that months ago.

So why is this particular bill here? Why is Bill 201 before us now, the bill that we're actually debating? The problem is: Who's going to double-check that those expense policies are being followed? What happens in the Ontario public service is that managers check managers, or at least check the people who work for them, and the directors check the managers, and the ADMs check the directors, and you work your way up the management chain. People approve the expenses, vet the expenses of the people who work below them and make sure that they are following the rules. In fact, that's what will happen now that we've said to all the agencies, "Follow the rules. Here are the rules." That's what will happen in the major agencies, too.

But when you get to the top of the heap, the question is: Who's going to vet the expenses for the people at the top of the heap? The Integrity Commissioner, if I can put it this way, has already been given the responsibility of vetting the expenses of the people at the top of the heap. That would be cabinet ministers, people like me, parliamentary assistants, the ministerial staff, because the political staff of ministers don't report to the deputy minister. So for years the Integrity Commissioner has been given the responsibility of vetting the expenses of the people at the top of the heap.

That's what this bill does. We cleaned up the rules back in June and July. All this bill does, really, is say that somebody needs to check the people at the top of the heap. So for those 22 agencies that are quite significantly large agencies, the senior management at those agencies will have to have their expenses vetted by the Integrity Commissioner. To make that happen, we have to change the law. That's why the bill is here. It's pretty simple. It doesn't need weeks and weeks and hours and hours of debate. The Integrity Commissioner will have the authority, so we don't have to come back to the Legislature again, to expand that responsibility to other agencies, if necessary, over time by regulation. So we've taken care of the question of if in the future you need to think about more than just those 22 agencies. There's also a responsibility that all these expenses, both the cabinet ministers', the political category, and those of the senior people at the agency, will go online so that the public can see what's going on. So this is an open and transparent process.

There is no reason that you would give this to the Ombudsman, as some of the members have suggested.

The Ombudsman's mandate, as you well know, Madam Speaker, is to look at the services that are offered by government to the public. This isn't a service that is being offered by the government to the public; it's not in the Ombudsman's mandate. It is in the Integrity Commissioner's mandate to check the expenses of people who are senior in our government and who don't report to deputy ministers. We are simply following through and being totally consistent with the way things are being handled. I support the motion before the House. I support the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Toby Barrett: In addressing this time allocation on Bill 201, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, I start off by stating the obvious: the respect that we in our caucus have for the work of the Integrity Commissioner, certainly my own confidence in the role that office would play in ensuring accountability. However, under our system of responsible government, a system that has been in place since the 1840s, there's never been a requirement to have another body take over responsibility for cabinet ministers or the Premier. There's never been a need for cabinet ministers to abdicate responsibility in this way.

Just to back up for a minute, I have to say that there's little doubt in my mind that this bill and this time allocation to me represent yet another knee-jerk response or reaction to further the distraction away from the recent summer of scandal. I feel that I speak for members of the opposition when I say it's disturbing, on our return to Queen's Park, to see government bungling of not one scandal but two scandals in which millions have been squandered, not only by eHealth but by OLG, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. I find it disillusioning. It's disillusioning for many members; it's disillusioning for voters, for us as Ontarians. When political office is sullied by scandal, it furthers that disconnect between government and the grassroots represented in our local ridings. Every member in this chamber gets taken down a notch with respect to public esteem, especially when the Premier tolerates a politician such as the Minister of Transportation, of reputation known, identified as being egregiously reckless a number of years ago; and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Minister of Health getting themselves involved, getting their ministries involved, in these kinds of scandals.

This is a price that we all pay. We all pay under this government. It's a price I'm not willing to pay, not for this Premier and not for this government. So I do regret the low levels of respect for elected members that this engenders, respect that has declined because of this recent indication of a lack of responsibility within our historic system of responsible government.

Despite the bad reputation unscrupulous ministers give elected representatives, I feel very strongly about some of my boyhood heroes. Many were politicians. One was the Lone Ranger, of course, but I think of my grandfather, who was a federal MP after the war. He assisted several

federal MPs who had been held in very high esteem in my area. I think of the Knowles boys, Evans Knowles and Bill Knowles, and of course of someone who spent many years in this Legislature, the Honourable Jimmy Allan. They were politicians who took full responsibility for their book of business.

1700

We do recall a few years ago the then Minister of Transportation. He got caught running his business on government time. At that time—and I will do this again today. I refer members to a large bronze plaque that is on the wall just outside the two main entrance doors to this Legislature, strategically located for government members to view as they enter their lobby. The title of this plaque: “Robert Baldwin, 1804-1858.” I’ll just quote in part: Baldwin, as many will know—I made reference to this yesterday—“devoted his entire career to a single cause.” He was a member of this assembly as an executive councillor, a Solicitor General and as co-Premier. He “remained true to his vision until the second Baldwin-LaFontaine administration established the principle of responsible government...” I suggest that members opposite take a close look at that plaque.

Let’s take a look at some of the history. There are many examples of Robert Baldwin resigning—this was in the 1840s—rather than compromising his values or compromising his character and ultimately his honour: “Baldwin commanded respect and exercised moral leadership by reason of his character. In a society that revered the code of gentlemen, he embodied the cherished virtues of adherence to honour, duty, and principle. Each time he gained office he left it by resignation rather than compromise his principles. In 1841, Baldwin resigned when the governor refused to implement responsible government” at that time.

This was an honourable man resigning out of principle. This is part of our history. Perhaps honour in this day and age and in this government is merely considered a footnote to history, but I can’t help but wonder how Robert Baldwin would have reacted if he had been sitting in this Legislature this fall, how he would have reacted to a Premier condoning such serious and offensive breaches as we have seen in the past with the Minister of Transportation or the minister who’s responsible for eHealth and the scandals at OLG. Baldwin did not need an integrity act. Baldwin did not need a public sector expense review bill.

I look back to the day when men like Robert Baldwin blessed this House of Assembly, in this case the Upper Canada of the 1840s, and I see in him a beacon for all of us. A man of his stature, of his integrity, would never have been accused of egregiously reckless behaviour; if he had been, he would have resigned on the spot. We simply must be willing to do whatever is necessary to rebuild people’s faith in the Legislative Assembly. We need to rebuild faith in our institutions. We need to rebuild faith in the various agencies that have just been mentioned this afternoon. We need to rebuild faith in those elected representatives and cabinet ministers who are essentially here to serve the public.

How do we do this? We do this by taking responsibility, admitting mistakes and doing what is honourable. Do the honourable thing and accept consequences for those mistakes. This is not an issue of partisanship; it’s an issue of integrity, it’s an issue of honour, and it’s an issue of ethical behaviour.

As I mentioned, I have the utmost respect for the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. I feel we’re not accepting—in a sense, we all are abdicating responsibility by going down this road, by handing over the reins with respect to the expenses of agencies that represent something like 80,000 public sector workers, handing this over to a staff of nine.

Here we are. We’ve got a mess with OLG, a mess with eHealth. Not one elected member has stepped up, let alone stepped down, to take responsibility for what I consider a very sorry state of affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It’s a pleasure to be able to speak to this legislation today, the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, Bill 201, as the government accountability critic for the Progressive Conservative Party.

Obviously this piece of legislation has been created to enable the Integrity Commissioner to review the expense claims of those who are employed by or appointed to public entities.

As the Vice-Chair of the government agencies committee—from time to time we review those who are intended for public appointment. We often see—for example, today Deborah Coyne was appointed to a review panel on health care despite the fact she has no expertise or knowledge of the health care field.

We’re starting to see that Liberal appointees to these agencies, boards and commissions are becoming the norm. That’s certainly what we saw with the examples in eHealth and the OLG.

My poor friend there, the minister for corrections, Mr. Bartolucci, is having a very difficult time. I can imagine it’s difficult, sitting in the government benches, after what we’ve seen in recent days rife with scandal. Of course, the summer of scandal has just ended.

Mr. Toby Barrett: There goes another reputation down the drain.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: As my colleague Toby Barrett points out, the reputations of some hard-working individuals have gone down the toilet, and you wonder why. It’s because there hasn’t been ministerial accountability. This piece of legislation, Bill 201, is before us in this chamber because ministers, and in particular the Premier, aren’t interested in their own responsibility.

I had a discussion earlier today with a well-known colleague of mine in the Progressive Conservative caucus who mused that this bill might actually override the Premier’s decision-making. What a good point that was. I must say that that individual was a very astute individual because, again, should the buck not stop with the Premier, the government and the ministers who are in power?

Interjection: Name names.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll name names. Premier Dalton McGuinty was elected by the people of this province twice. He holds the public trust. Yet what we have found in his government, particularly this summer, are two scandals, one at eHealth, where we were finding out that one speech cost the taxpayers of this province \$25,000. That's \$7 a word.

We looked further, into the Ontario Lottery and Gaming commission, and we've seen not only that public tax dollars were paying for big, nice, expensive trips but also for gym memberships. That's unacceptable.

But instead of going to the minister responsible, the current Minister of Health, Mr. Caplan, and holding that person to account in presumably both cases, we see this bill here, which is going to create an entirely new bureaucracy to look at public expenditures.

Right now the Integrity Commissioner—for whom, I am sure, all of us in this chamber have great admiration and respect—is going to have to look at the expenses of some 80,000 public servants and public appointees in this province.

Instead of creating a culture where there is accountability, starting with the minister, we have now created a culture of fear with our bureaucrats and public appointees, because Mr. McGuinty would rather have heads roll at the tops of these agencies than in the people who sit in this front bench.

We've got a bill here that takes responsibility away from him and his ministers and places it with an officer of this Legislature, which begs another question: Does the officer in question, the Integrity Commissioner, have authority to review the expenses of other independent officers of the Legislature, whether that's the independent child advocate, the Fairness Commissioner or the Ombudsman? And what if they disagree? Who then has the ultimate responsibility to bear, accountability, in this province? Is it then the Speaker of this Legislature?

1710

Mr. Dave Levac: Yep.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My colleague from Brant says that yes, it is. He is now suggesting that the Speaker of the Legislature is actually the person, not the Premier of the province, who deals with bureaucrats, who deals with ministers who are not doing their job. We on this side of the House believe that the buck stops with the Premier of the province. Unfortunately, my colleagues opposite are more interested in saving their own hides than saving dollars, precious dollars that the taxpayers of this province have provided to them. Not only is that the greatest insult of all, that they're not accountable to the people they're taking money from, they're also going to raise their taxes by implementing the HST, or, as we like to call it on this side of the chamber, the Dalton sales tax, which is going to increase Ontarians' taxes to 13% at consumption.

Not only that—not only have they passed the buck and not only are they going to increase our taxes—the final insult, in my opinion, was when this chamber, specific-

ally myself and a member, Howard Hampton from the NDP, requested an independent probe into eHealth, the Liberals stonewalled. Not only did they stonewall, they offered us no explanation in the government agencies committee why the Minister of Health could not come before us to explain himself, his bureaucrats and his public appointees.

We can't support this bill. We can't support this bill because they don't support the work being done in this chamber and in committees to enhance public accountability. Enhancing public accountability in this chamber means that the Premier of Ontario and all of his ministers are going to be accountable to the public. This bill doesn't do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: I want to speak to the closure motion here and some substance of Bill 201, but I do want to comment on what in my opinion is the disingenuousness of the opposition Conservative Party on this issue.

When this expense account issue broke, there was a lot of huffing and puffing from the Tory opposition benches about what should be done. There was outrage, there was anger and there was all of that sort of stuff. But in essence what we've done as a governing party is that we have moved very quickly to come up with a remedy to address this issue, to address those very issues that the opposition parties were huffing and puffing about. So what is their position when we as a government present a method, a solution, a remedy to this issue of the expense accounts claims? Well, lo and behold, Bill 201 comes before this chamber, and they want to delay the remedy. How can they delay the remedy? They can delay the remedy by endlessly and endlessly debating this issue.

The whole idea of time allocation was brought forward, and it's commented on in Marleau and Montpetit at page 564. Here's the premise of time allocation. It's a procedural mechanism which would formally structure the time of the House to facilitate the efficient conduct of debate. "Members recognized that the amount and complexity of House business was increasing and that measures were necessary to ensure that the business would be expedited within a reasonable amount of time." Now, what piece of business should we all be more interested in expediting than this Bill 201, which provides a solution, an answer, a remedy, to this question of expense accounts?

Bill 201 is not complemented. Here's what it does: The proposed Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009, would give the Integrity Commissioner the legal authority to review senior management expense claims made within Ontario's 22 largest agencies and take appropriate action should irregularities be discovered. Staff at government agencies will be required to abide by the same level of accountability and oversight that cabinet ministers and political staff must follow under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act. This is very important:

The act gives the Integrity Commissioner the discretion to make recommendations for other steps as appropriate. For example, this could include a suggestion that CEOs or others require pre-approval of expenses. The proposed legislation goes on: It would require the Integrity Commissioner to prepare and make public an annual report on the review of expense claims. Under the proposed legislation, the government has the power to require any other government agency, board or commission to abide by these rules.

What Bill 201 does in a very quick, efficient and direct way is bring financial accountability to the expense claims of a whole host of agencies that weren't previously covered. What is the complexity in that very simple and clear piece of legislation that requires days and days and days of debate? It's a clear remedy to address a specific problem. I think that the intent of the opposition on this issue is really to delay the remedy. Why would they want to delay the remedy, the simple and clear remedy in Bill 201? Because they want to play politics with this issue. What Bill 201 does is specifically address a mischief, if you will, with a very, very clear remedy. It's simple; it's clean; it's direct. Let's get on with it and vote on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Hopefully, members will pardon my voice today. I'm coming down with a bit of a cold.

I want to add to this debate a couple of things. First of all, just to remind people who are just watching this debate, this is a time allocation motion on the bill. So just to be clear here, we're dealing with basically truncating the time that we're going to have to debate this bill in the House. The government is doing that for the reasons that were enunciated by the member who just spoke. He was saying that he does this because it's urgent that we remedy and we fix the problems that we saw at eHealth and that we saw at OLG. I don't think anybody on this side of the House argues that we should not be trying to fix the problems at the OLG and at eHealth, but to argue that somehow or other this is so important that we have to time-allocate the bill I think is a bit beyond the pale. We have spent probably about three to four days on debate on this particular piece of legislation. If you take a look throughout the British Commonwealth, when you look at Parliaments, there are bills that have gotten far more time in debate than this one. For the government to argue that somehow or other the world is going to come to an end if they don't all of a sudden move time allocation on this debate I think is quite, quite a stretch of the imagination.

He makes a point that time allocation is the efficient disposition of business. Well, I've heard all kinds of government explanations as to what time allocation is about, but for the parliamentary assistant to say that it's the efficient disposition of business is a little bit like saying that dictatorship is better than democracy because democracy is kind of tough: You've got to go through elections, people have to stand for election, you've got to

put together some committees, you've got to go out and knock on doors for 30 days, you've got to raise money. Then you have to have an apparatus to count the ballots and then you have to be able to count the ballots and then you've got to be able to post the results. Why don't we just do away with that and be more efficient, and we'll just appoint legislators?

1720

Well, give me a break. Democracy is not maybe the most perfect system of government in the world, but it's certainly one of the better ones. To argue that somehow or another time allocation is about efficiency of disposition of business—well, if we brought that argument forward to everything else we do in this democracy, I think we'd be in a whole lot of trouble. Quite frankly, many nations in the world have seen that kind of trouble as a result of so-called leaders—I call them dictators—who say they have to be a little bit more efficient. I think of people like good old Joseph Stalin, who thought it was really efficient to kill millions and millions of people within what used to be the old Soviet Union. I think of people like Adolf Hitler and others who were trying to be efficient in the running of their nation. So don't come and give me this argument that time allocation is the efficient disposition of business in the House, because, yes, democracy is sometimes slow, democracy sometimes means to say you have to have a debate, and sometimes it means, yes, that debate can take some time. But there are sufficient rules within our Legislature to deal with allowing members an opportunity to express themselves on a bill that they have some serious reservation about. Clearly, the Conservative caucus has raised some issues that I think—I do not agree with all of them, but I agree that it is important for them to be able to put those issues forward. So let's not argue that time allocation is an efficient disposition of business.

Now, what is the bill about? Probably in about 20 minutes or so we're going to be in a position where we're going to end second reading because of the time allocation motion. There's going to be a vote about 20 minutes from now on the time allocation motion itself, and that will be the end of this debate except for one hour at third reading. Wow. Talk about efficiency. You know, Joseph Stalin would have been happy with these guys when it comes to being efficient. Anyway.

But next time this bill comes to the House, we are going to debate the issue of what the government is doing to deal with the excesses of what people have done at OLG and the excesses of what people have done at eHealth. What has happened is that you have certain people who have run amok, and they have decided that you can issue an untendered contract for hundreds of thousands of dollars and that somehow or other that's okay. I just say, listen, where I come from—I don't care if you work in the private sector, the public sector or whatever sector you want to call it, you have an accountability either to your shareholders, the people who own the company, your customers or the constituents at the end. For those people to have done what they've done

and to somehow or other think it's a good thing leaves a lot to be desired.

It was interesting to watch because the finance minister and the Premier had press conferences this summer, and they said, "Oh, my God, this is awful. This is terrible. Imagine that. What has happened? We're going to get to the bottom of this." Who the heck appointed these people? Was it the Conservative caucus? Was it the New Democratic caucus that appointed these people to eHealth and OLG? It was the Liberal caucus. It was the Minister of Health, Mr. Caplan, under the Ministry of Health, who appointed the people who went to eHealth. Guess what? It was the same minister who appointed the people to OLG.

To come in here and say, "We're going to fix it by punishing those people, those people who took the excesses," and that that somehow washes our hands of this situation and then everything is all right—give me a break. I have listened to people in this Legislature talk about a thing called ministerial responsibility, and I have great respect for the minister as an individual. I have sat in this chamber for a number of years. He has been here about four terms, I believe, or three terms; I've been here for five. So we've sat at least 12 or 16 years together in this House, whatever amount of time he has been here. Any time that I have dealt with him, I rather liked the guy. He's a good individual, he is a person who cares about what he does, and I don't take away from his personality whatsoever. But good Lord, once you've messed up, you've got a responsibility to say, "Oops, I messed up," to do the right thing and to say, "Listen, I'm going to stand aside because I can point a finger at the officials at eHealth and I can point my finger at the officials at OLG, but at the end of the day, where does the buck stop?" It stops with the minister and then with the Premier. It's like what old Mr. Truman said. Remember the guy who was the President of the United States? He put that sign on his desk and it said, "The buck stops here."

So, yes, those people at eHealth and OLG have got to be dealt with, and rightfully so. They did wrong. There are processes of discipline to deal with that. Yes, we need to do something in this Legislature in order to set up a structure that allows us to make sure that those types of excesses don't happen in the future. I have no argument with that, but for the Minister of Health somehow to remain unscathed out of this I find a little bit disturbing, because there is something called ministerial responsibility. If we forget that in this Legislature, I think it demeans the entire Legislature.

It's not just about the Minister of Health; it's about every member in this assembly. We have a responsibility as elected officials to set the example to our constituents. I've had it happen in opposition, as I've had it happen in government, where I've erred, and I've gone public and said, "I have erred and I apologize," because I thought that was the responsible thing to do. Do you know what? We're all human beings and we make mistakes.

I'll give the Minister of Health some benefit of the doubt. Did he want this to happen? Probably not. I would

hope not; I've got to say he didn't. But at the end of the day, it happened under his watch. I say that for the Premier to deal with this by making the officials at OLG and the officials at eHealth the scapegoats, to somehow deflect the political attention and the political flak that they're getting at their government off to them, as the only ones who are going to pay for what happened and to bring this bill in as a way of saying, "We fixed it. We can wash our hands," quite frankly is a disservice to all of us.

I have been a member of a government where cabinet ministers had to resign. I'll tell you it's not a fun thing when you're sitting in the government, and all of a sudden one of your colleagues has to resign. I can think of a number of them who had to resign as a result of things they said in the House that they shouldn't have said, mentioning names of people and documents that were private information. I remember Evelyn Gigantes having to resign because she said the name of somebody that was in a briefing note in a question in the House. If she can resign as a result of a person's name, certainly to God a minister who oversees two scandals, one at the OLG and the other at eHealth, should have some ability—I wouldn't say ability, but decency—to do the right thing.

I remember Mr. Runciman when he was in the government. There was an issue—we're not going to go through all of the details—a kind of similar thing that he got caught in. He could have tried to hide behind, "Oh, it wasn't me. It was my bureaucrat friends over there who did it." He did the right thing. He resigned. That's what you do in this place.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's my point. That's why they call them "the honourable member," because the public expects us to hold a certain standard. If people don't feel good about politicians, and "politician" has become a bad word, these are the instances that fuel that. Again I say, to allow that to happen is a disservice to all of us because, do you know what? We are all diminished by it.

We are going through some of the most difficult economic times that this country and this province have seen in a long, long time. This recession is worse than what I saw in 1990, when I arrived here, and there were tens of thousands of jobs being lost. My friend Mr. Murdoch was there; he remembers well. It's worse than the Depression that our parents had gone through in the 1920s, in many ways.

If people are going to have confidence in the elected officials of Canada, Ontario and their municipalities to be able to steer us through these very difficult times, to make the tough decisions—yes, the tough decisions—that have to be made in order to deal with the effects of a recession, to reach and to do the bold things that need to be done in order to make our province a better place and to build the basis that's going to be so important for us to be at as we move out of this recession—people gotta have confidence in us. We're going to be asking them to do things that, quite frankly, they won't want to do, but if they don't have confidence in us as elected officials,

because certain members won't take the responsibility and do what is right by the issue of ministerial responsibility, how are they expected to have confidence in us when we're asking them to do the things that we're all going to have to do as we work our way through these very difficult times?

1730

So I say to the government across the way, part of what's in this legislation I take no exception to. I think you have a problem when it comes to how you're going to make this work, but that's a whole other debate. But in the end, I think you have to agree with me that if it was you who was the minister responsible for two scandals, which are central to the issue we're debating here today, you would probably do the right thing and resign. I further say—and I don't like to say this, because, again, I have respect for the Premier. He may not be of my party, but he is the Premier of my province and he holds the office for which I have respect. But it doesn't do the Office of the Premier any good to sit there and say, "Oh, well, Mr. Caplan has nothing to do with it. I'm going to go out and chop off the heads of the bureaucrats and the people we appointed as a way of fixing this. By the way, we have a bill here we can bring to the House to fix everything in the future." It goes to the Premier as well and his office, and doing what is right for the people of this province—and to have confidence not just in the Premier of Ontario and the name of Dalton McGuinty, but in the institution of the Office of the Premier and the institution of this Parliament.

So I say again, I think the minister responsible for both the OLG scandal and the scandal we saw at eHealth should really be thinking about not only what he's doing that harms all of us as legislators, but what he is doing to his own government and his own Premier. I don't think it does any good.

Now to the bill: The government says, "Oh, well, we're going to get the Integrity Commissioner to review all of these expenses." Well, I want to say something right up front. As I looked at the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Sun and the Timmins Daily Press and they listed the expenses of many of the things that were supposed to be excesses, I had to kind of scratch my head, because somehow we were saying it was a scandal for somebody to go buy a coffee at Tim Hortons. My God. How many people, both private sector and public workers, are on the road as a result of their job, and they walk into Tim Hortons and say, "I'll have a double-double, along with a ham sandwich," and it happens to be lunchtime? God, we're getting off cheap. Why is the public getting excited about an appointee or a civil servant who bills a Tim Hortons coffee and a ham sandwich? I think this debate has gotten a little bit crazy. There were some instances where people had what appeared to be fairly excessive expenditures, but when you looked at them in detail, they were probably fairly well within the line of what you would see anybody else do in the private sector for the same thing. The real issue was the untendered contracts. Yes, there might have

been—and I don't know because I haven't seen all of those expenses that were submitted—those who had excesses, but to ask the Integrity Commissioner to be responsible for looking at every expense of those agencies and the people appointed to them and the people working for them? My God, we're going to have to buy another office for them. Do you know how much work that is?

Look in this Legislature; just look at ourselves. We are how many, 108, 111, whatever we are, here in the Legislature? All of us travel home on the weekends, and we submit airline—I just did my expenses: \$17,000 worth of airline tickets for the last number of months. I'm pretty slow at submitting, by the way; I should have done that back in June, but that's a whole other story. But the point is, there are 103 or 108 of us, whatever the number is, and we travel on a weekly basis—airline tickets, taxis from the airport, but no booze because we can't charge booze. We can't even charge a meal in this job. People don't realize that. But we do charge our travel expenses—mileage in our riding and all that stuff. How many people have we got working at the finance branch to process expenses for the number of members we have, the office expenses we have to run our constituency offices and the political staff who work here at Queen's Park? It's huge. They've got a whole building across the street to deal with finances for this assembly, and we're just 103 members. Can you imagine the day that the Integrity Commissioner has to say, "Hold it here. Let's see, now. Mr. X, at such and such a commission, had a Tim Hortons doughnut and a ham sandwich. Oh, what the hell is this: undisclosed amount, 37 cents?" And he's got to send a memo back to the finance branch saying, "We need that 37 cents back because they didn't disclose if that was salt or pepper that they asked for as an extra for their sandwich." Do you know how much staff it's going to take to do that?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: It was the moutarde.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was the Dijon moutarde for 37 cents. I must say, as a Frenchman, it had to be Dijon, but that's a whole other story.

But the number of people we're going to have to hire to work for our friend Madam Morrison, the Integrity Commissioner, is going to be a fairly serious amount of change. I sit on the Board of Internal Economy with some members of this House, and for those who don't know what that is, the Board of Internal Economy is the board that appropriates and oversees the dollars for this assembly to work. My friend Norm sat there along with Mr. Runciman, and we know what's going to happen. They're going to have to come back and submit us a budget. There are going to be revised estimates this year for the Integrity Commissioner, and the Integrity Commissioner is going to have to figure out, "How many staff do I need to figure out if Dijon mustard is an allowable expense for somebody who travels to Tim Hortons one day?" Can you imagine? How do you even decide how many people you need? She'll know that it's a large undertaking, but how large is it? "I'll estimate that I need to have X number of staff."

I'll tell you what's going to happen. The Integrity Commissioner is going to find out, "Oh, my God, this is a much bigger job than I thought." Why do I know that? Do you remember what happened with the privacy commissioner? I look at my good friend Mr. Runciman, who was on the Board of Internal Economy at the time with me, and I can't speak about the details, but we ended up in a similar situation because the government introduced legislation that gave the privacy commissioner more responsibility. We appropriated dollars from the Board of Internal Economy to allow her to do her job, and it was insufficient for her to meet her legislative mandate. We're going to be right back at the same place.

So I'm saying, okay, I agree, we need to have some kind of a process that vets the expenses in a way that basically we don't allow these things to happen. But what's wrong with the process we have now? When you submit your expenses as members, it goes over to finance branch. Finance branch looks at it, they have policies that they follow, and they say, "Oh, oh, hang on, Mr. Bisson. You were in Thunder Bay on such-and-such a day. You're allowed a hotel room, you're allowed a meal, but you put a glass of wine on there, so we're not going to allow you to recoup your wine." They do it automatically. The finance branch has really good people who work there, who know how to read a submitted expense report and basically are able to decide if something is to be paid or not.

But let's say they made a mistake. All of our expenses at the end of the day, where do they go? The auditors come in and check the books. The auditor goes in and looks at all the members' expenses in this place, along with their staff, and says, "All right, let's take a look over here. Mr. Bisson—oh, my God, he's spending more money than anybody else." That's the first thing they say when they look at mine and Mr. Bartolucci's and Mr. Hampton's and Madame Gélinas's. Why? Because we're northern members, and we travel more than others. Then they look at it and go, "Oh, it's because airline tickets went from \$900 to \$1,800 return from Timmins in the last six months—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, 1,800 bucks, believe it or not. I know they're going to be looking at that when they do the review, but they have auditors to look for that. So I say, why not use the institutions that are used in every other public sector operator.

And what do they do in business? My friend who talked about, oh, he comes from the private sector and they do it best—they would never hire an Integrity Commissioner to do this because it would drive them broke. They say, "Listen, we are going to hire people who manage our payroll, who manage our finances, who make sure that in the end the finances are well looked at and make sure that things are allowable and we pay them as they are, and at the end it goes out to the auditor."

Now, if it's a question that we don't think there are enough people to do it from the auditor's department, then let's talk about that, but then let's do what my good

friend the leader of the New Democratic Party, Andrea Horwath, suggested, what I thought was a very simple suggestion, to do in Ontario what we have in Ottawa, so that we have an agent such as the—what is it called, the budget officer or the parliamentary—somebody help me out.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Don't do it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: She says, "Don't do it," as somebody who was in Ottawa before. But it's one way to be able to have the oversight that's necessary to do it.

I say to the government, what I see happening here essentially is two things. The minister is not taking his responsibility to do what is right by way of ministerial responsibility and to do the honourable thing and to step aside. And number two, this legislation, quite frankly, is a deflection in order to give the government some political cover that they so much need, because all of the public knows when you see somebody charging \$37 a word to write a speech, they think to themselves, "Where can I get one of those jobs? Something's wrong in Queen's Park, and it's got to be fixed." So I say to the government, there are other ways of doing it, and I think this is a bit overboard.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the time allocation motion before us, considering Bill 201. In the last discussion that I heard, the member of the opposition finally gave the official opposition's position, which is that they will not be supporting the bill. That was nice to finally hear, whether they were in favour or not in favour of the legislation.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Was that a surprise, Dave?

Mr. Dave Levac: One of my colleagues opposite asks in a barking kind of way, "Was that a surprise?" Of course not, because we're in this chamber playing politics.

Quite frankly, the interesting debate that I've been listening to on an ongoing basis has been, from one member right after the other on the other side, a continuation of what I like to refer to as the rooster theory; that is, it's like the rooster taking credit for the sun rising: What they do is crow about how perfect they were in government and how they made it all right and how the other side is wrong. It's rather an interesting exercise, when the comparisons with the previous government have been forgotten in this place. What's rather interesting is that in eight years of comparison of time allocations, which is what we're talking about, they stand up and one of the points that each of them wanted to make was about this terrible, draconian government—I say chuckling, to make sure that the tone shows up in Hansard—that this government is such a meanie for democracy; they're stopping democracy from happening in the province of Ontario.

Well, let's take a look at past performance in the eight years that we had to tolerate that government's record on

time allocation. We're talking about the actual time allocation component. We did a comparison. I did a little chart; I had a little chart that was available to me. Not to let the NDP off the hook either, because we actually ended up on the bottom in terms of use of time allocation, in our time as government. In one session, the Tories used it 89% of the time—89% of the time they used time allocation. On top of that, they never sent a bill for third reading hearing—never. As a matter of fact, they also had a 54% rate that they never sent bills to committee. So, quite frankly, during that time frame we have the opposition—which is their job; they're supposed to do what they're doing today. They were supposed to point out how bad we are. But they have forgotten their performance and their history. But that's not their job. They're not going to stand up and say, "By the way, mea culpa. We were worse than the Liberals were. We were terrible at time allocation. We never did any of that stuff." As a matter of fact, they want to rewrite history, because a lot of the members who stand up who weren't there during that regime made comments as if they didn't know that they had a record of time allocating every bill that they dealt with, did not take bills to committee and did not have one of those bills at all do a third reading hearing—nothing. So there's a pot waiting to be called black many, many times over from the guys on that side.

I can tell you something else: What I find really interesting on this particular bill—and I'm glad to hear that they said, for the first time in this entire debate, that they were voting against the bill, and that was the last speaker. The very last speaker said, "By the way, in case you were wondering, we will not be supporting the bill," and it was really about the last three sentences of the presentation. Quite frankly, Bill 201 is doing exactly what these members opposite are crowing for, which is—what is it that we want to have done? Let's make sure that the exposed problem that exists in this Legislature—what, today? Yesterday? Only three times? Seven times? Historically, it has been ongoing in this place for a long time, and where was the legislation from the previous party? It didn't exist. So what happened?

So now what they're doing is crowing about the president of a corporation who would quit his job if he found out that somebody in his department was misusing their credit card. That's what they're asking. Would the president of the corporation quit the job, leave his job altogether, give up his company, if somebody in the mid-management range misused their credit card? That's what I think they're asking.

But on one of the points that has been made today, I stood up a couple of times and said, yes, there needs to be a cultural change, and, yes, there have been some comments from both the Tories and the NDP that talk about a cultural shift and starting to move towards what everyone has said: We've got to get out of that culture. I agree. That's what Bill 201 is trying to do, as a matter of fact, isn't it? It's trying to sit back and say let's put a little bit of a flashlight underneath that bushel, and if we

take that flashlight, turn it on and lift up that bushel, we will see some problems, so let's address them.

What have they done? Well, the bushel basket sat on top of that problem and it was never even lifted up to put sunshine under it. Now that we've got that, we're including more things that are being evaluated than ever before. In the previous pieces of legislation that this government has introduced—did they allow the Auditor General to take a look at some of the areas which we should have been looking at? No, no.

Interjection: Ontario Hydro.

Mr. Dave Levac: Ontario Hydro, Hydro One—no, no, no. They had an opportunity to bring some sunlight underneath that bushel basket, and did they turn the light on? Not only did they not turn the light on; they lost the batteries and they left the bushel down and they sat on it.

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Levac: You know what? I'm not going to get into individual names, for the very purpose that I don't disagree that we need to make a cultural change, and that's precisely what I believe the bill is trying to do. The bill is trying to make a cultural change here, and it's going to tell everybody very clearly that, you know what? The bushel basket has not only been lifted up and had a flashlight put on it; we're throwing the bushel basket away and we don't even need to use the batteries. We're going to save energy on the flashlight, because we're all going to be susceptible to making sure that that culture gets changed.

Madam Speaker, the reality of this particular debate is time allocation. Let's get on with it, let's move this forward, let's find out whether or not either opposition party is in favour of lifting up that basket and turning on that light and making sure that we shine it where that money is being spent, or whether we're going to simply try to say, "The status quo is quite all right, thank you very much." Well, I'm in favour of having this bill passed. I'm in favour of taking the bushel basket up and shining a light under it. Where either government had the opportunity to do it before, they didn't do it. They didn't do it. But they're very good at standing up and saying, "Bad government, good opposition." Bad government, previous government? "Uh, I forget. I can't remember. Don't talk to me about what we didn't do before, because today you're responsible." They are the ones who had the opportunity to change the culture, and did they change that culture? That's the question I want to ask.

The other thing I want to know: When did they make the contract available for their wonderful deal of the—are you ready, Speaker? I wasn't quite sure. Are you ready to—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Please finish.

Mr. Dave Levac: A contract that big for the 407: Did they let anybody know what was going on there? They took that big contract and shipped it over to Europe and said, "You go ahead and take that money out of our pockets and you keep charging us."

So I want to know whether or not they're willing to stand up and say, "You know what? The option that we

have is that we're going to take a look at this Bill 201 and we're honestly going to digest as to whether or not it's going to change the culture." In my humble opinion, this is going to change the culture. Not only will we not have to worry too much more about this, but the cultural slap on the wrist that was spoken to by a few of my NDP friends is going to take place, because when you do it right, the people are going to sit back and say, "I'm not going to charge those things anymore because the government is saying to us that we need to smarten up," and the cultural changes that are going to be asked of them are finally going to take place.

Quite frankly, I'm proud of the fact that this government has not used time allocation anywhere close to that world record that was set by the previous government, and of the number of sittings that we're doing during the years, and of the number of committee hearings that were had during the years, and of the amount of input from the public out there, and also the number of third reading debates that we've had.

So I look forward for us to be able to go out there and say, "You know what? We're changing the culture with 201." We respect the fact that we need to change that culture, and it's going to happen with this bill.

I thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? Seeing none, I'll put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 138. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour?

Opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have received a deferral slip.

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government motion 138 be deferred."

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

The ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1752.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Khalil Ramal
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Leeanna Pendergast
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Laurel C. Broten, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Amrit Mangat
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
David Oraziatti, Joyce Savoline
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Ernie Hardeman, Rick Johnson
Lisa MacLeod, Yasir Naqvi
Leeanna Pendergast, Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Jeff Leal, Dave Levac
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Khalil Ramal
Bas Balkissoon, Jim Brownell
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craiton, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Sophia Aggelonitis, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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