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Thursday 29 October 2009

Jeudi 29 octobre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 29 October 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 29 octobre 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

VISITOR

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to welcome the member for Huron–Bruce's daughter, who is here today.

ONTARIO LABOUR MOBILITY ACT, 2009 LOI ONTARIENNE DE 2009 SUR LA MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 175, An Act to enhance labour mobility between Ontario and other Canadian provinces and territories / Projet de loi 175, Loi visant à accroître la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre entre l'Ontario et les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Bill 175, the Ontario Labour Mobility Act, at one level, is intended to implement Ontario's obligations under the Agreement on Internal Trade, which is an agreement among the provinces and territories to remove labour mobility barriers within Canada. At its most basic, the bill would permit certified workers in professions and skilled trades to move among jurisdictions or choose to live in one of the provinces or territories yet practise their occupation or trade in another. This includes certain residency restrictions imposed at the municipal level. The bill would apply to a vast range of occupations, from lawyers and accountants to motor vehicle dealers to tradespersons under the Apprenticeship and Certification Act.

However, there are reasonably good grounds to question that motive and see this legislation as yet another step to deregulate the labour market and to lower skills standards in the long term. Section 8 prohibits Ontario regulatory authorities—trade and occupational colleges etc.—from requiring an individual to be a resident in the province as a condition of being certified in a regulated

trade or occupation and being able to work in Ontario. Municipalities are also under restrictions when it comes to hiring individuals in their catchment area. Section 9 of the act obliges the regulatory authorities to recognize skills and occupational certificates when it comes to licensing out-of-province workers to work in Ontario, even if the standards of out-of-province workers are lower.

I have been saying for a long time that the regulations and certificates should be country-wide, not different in different jurisdictions, because it definitely has a negative impact on the quality of workmanship. Over the years, I've seen many projects in my city that non-union, non-certified labour has put together, and within 10 or 15 years there are problems with marble installation, problems with plumbing, problems with electrical on these types of buildings on which they've used cheap labour, non-certified labour and the quality of workmanship is terrible. At one point we even had to repair city hall because the marble was falling off; it wasn't installed properly. Century 21 in Hamilton: another construction nightmare.

Whether they're unionized or non-unionized, these workers should all have the same qualifications and be certified. I feel that the union situation has always turned out quality craftsmen, because they go through strict regulation and strict training. It's similar for everyone, and makes it a lot more coordinated and makes for a lot more quality of workmanship in the end.

Section 8 prohibits that from happening. First, it's not clear that there are sufficient interprovincial labour mobility barriers to justify the legislation requiring regulators to recognize occupational certifications given in other provinces with more modest standards, and will likely create pressure to lower the standards in our province over the long run. By prohibiting residency requirements as a condition for certification to work in Ontario, Bill 175 will likely increase competition for skilled jobs in Ontario at a time of high unemployment and create downward pressure on wages and benefits in our province. While certain exceptions to 175 are detailed, these exceptions may be challenged before private tribunals that are neither transparent nor accountable.

There is no demonstrable rationale or need for Bill 175, as virtually all significant labour mobility issues have been successfully addressed over recent years through interprovincial co-operation and other voluntary initiatives such as the red seal program for skilled trades. Requiring Ontario regulators to recognize occupational certifications given in other provinces with more modest standards will create pressure for them to reduce their

own standards to a lower denominator. The requirement for regulatory authorities to harmonize their standards with those of other jurisdictions will add to this already large pressure.

Bill 175 has imposed and will continue to impose significant resource demands on Ontario ministries and regulatory authorities that must now take informed judgments about the efficacy of occupational certification standards and practices in other provinces, and justify any higher standard requirements they wish to maintain and apply to those seeking occupational certifications in our province. However, neither the provincial government nor non-governmental regulatory authorities have the capacity to monitor the licensing and certification practices of other jurisdictions.

This is also problematic in light of the increasing role being played by private training and certification companies that may provide poor training or even fraudulent certifications. We've already seen this happening in the province, where people find that their certifications from some of these private colleges don't quite cut it, and people won't hire them because they don't feel they are qualified, and they're following the rules, as they should.

Under Bill 175, municipalities and regulatory authorities, such as the college of nurses and the association of early childhood educators, are exposed to monetary sanctions as high as \$5 million for each instance of non-compliance with either Bill 175 or the AIT labour mobility agreement, or both. Moreover, the nature and extent of this liability may be extended by the Premier or his minister if they choose to enter into new or amended agreements under the AIT.

By prohibiting residency requirements as a condition for certification in Ontario while lowering the bar for certain certifications, Bill 175 will likely increase competition for jobs and employment in Ontario, which, in the context of relatively high employment, would create pressure on wages and benefits. I have to reiterate that because, speaking from a trades perspective, I know that when you go to other provinces, the local tradespeople are what they call "booked out" first before any people from out of the province can get a job, and they have to work under what's called a permit, to work in that local in a unionized situation.

This is going to create some problems locally, as was witnessed in Cornwall, Ontario, when they contracted out for the local hospital. The lowest bidder took it, but the lowest bidder happened to be from Quebec, and the Quebec contractor decided to hire Quebec tradespeople to work in Cornwall. The local trades were very upset and actually went around with a petition through town. Most of the people in town were upset too, because their brothers and fathers and sisters were unemployed while people in Quebec were taking their jobs and spending their money back in Quebec. The local economy took a hit because the people in the area weren't working. Not a good suggestion.

0910

Bill 175 will do nothing to enhance the competence, skill or integrity of Ontario tradespersons and profession-

als. It is, in fact, likely to have an opposite effect: By ensuring certification to those trained in a lower standard, Bill 175 will unnecessarily put at risk public safety and the health and well-being of Ontarians. The mobility scheme that would be established by this is also likely to undermine the quality of a myriad of services offered by teachers, health care professionals, accountants—even taxi drivers—and other skilled workers and professionals.

The fact that people come from other jurisdictions and other countries doesn't mean that we should lower the level of qualification. It doesn't mean that we should lower our standards. If they're the highest in Canada, so be it; the higher the better. If those people can meet those requirements and pass those tests, they're more than welcome to have those skills used in our province, but I am not going to stand here and listen to people say we should lower the standards or accept lower standards from other provinces or people coming into Ontario just because they're from another country or province. That's nonsense. If you're qualified as an ironworker or welder or electrician, then you should be qualified and recognized throughout our country and North America—anywhere else in the world, for that matter. High training and high qualifications are what's best for Ontario and best for our safety.

It's important to note that only 20% of Canadian workers are employed in regulated occupations or trades, most as professionals, skilled technicians or people who work in compulsory trades. Under our federal system, provinces decide what occupational standards are needed to ensure workers are properly qualified and will not put—I'll reiterate—will not put their clients in a position of possibly being sued for liability for lack of workmanship or lack of quality in their buildings. It also puts pressure on heavy equipment operators, paramedics, accountants and other skilled workers who deal with the public on a regular basis and work in those situations where safety is of the utmost importance.

To ensure that provincial standards do not unduly impede labour mobility, the provinces have established various programs to reconcile competing standards where they're appropriate. In fact, several federal-provincial bodies have mandates to address labour mobility issues, including the forum of labour market ministers, which was established in 1983 to facilitate interjurisdictional discussion and co-operation on labour market issues. The FLMM has responsibility for implementing the labour mobility chapter of AIT and has developed detailed—I repeat—detailed guidelines for complying with these AIT rules.

In addition, the labour mobility coordinating group of the FLMM monitors and reports on progress with implementation of the AIT rules concerning labour mobility. The primary focus of the LMCG reports has been on 50 regulated occupations, many of which are the subject of mutual recognition agreements that are already in place among provincial regulatory bodies, under which the qualifications of workers from other provinces are recognized. So we do recognize other qualifications if it falls within our mandate in Ontario. It's already there.

Mobility in the trades is primarily addressed through a parallel process, the red seal program, which allows qualified tradespersons to practise their trades in any province or territory without having to write additional examinations. One of the problems in the past was that if I had my welding qualifications—which I did—in Ontario under the Canadian Welding Bureau, CWB, and I went to Alberta or Saskatchewan, I'd have to rewrite my test, which is absolute nonsense. If I'm qualified in Ontario, which has high standards, I should be able to practise my trades—plural—in other provinces without having to rewrite an interprovincial test. That was the big stumbling block for people moving out of province. That has been removed. You do not have to do that now.

It is apparent that labour mobility issues have been given considerable attention by Canadian governments and that significant progress has been made to address whatever mobility problems may have—may have—existed. Support for the notion that few real impediments exist to labour mobility can be found in the record of disputes that have been filed under the AIT labour mobility agreement since its inception 15 years ago. The AIT website documents only 23 such complaints from 1996 to 2009—under the act are not subject to the administrative penalties that may be imposed on other regulatory authorities, as in sections 18 to 20 of Bill 175, they may be compelled to pay penalties assessed against the province arising from mobility disputes proceeded with under AIT mobility and dispute rules.

Consequential amendments are also proposed to the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act, the Social Work and Social Service Work Act and several other statutes in our province. These amendments warrant scrutiny and analysis, particularly by those who will be directly affected by them. To underscore the importance of this analysis, it is worth noting in regard to the application of the mobility rules to social workers that in response to a number of cases of the deaths of children, Ontario created the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, which required all registered social workers to hold a university degree—another high standard set by this province in the past.

We do not want to play around with the high standards. We want to continue them, and whoever comes here from whatever country or province will fall under those guidelines. Also, it will protect them from any liability situations. It also protects them and makes them as qualified as anyone else in this province to practise their trade with no questions asked—best way to go.

In conclusion, the foregoing provides an overview of the key elements of Bill 175, which demands more thorough assessment than is permitted here. As the bill is now in second reading, it is important that those who will be directly affected by its sweeping provisions quickly take up the challenge of assessing its prospective impact on the regulated occupations and employment in our province. Beyond these impacts, there are also potentially highly problematic impacts on public safety, consumer protection and the quality of a broad diversity of services

provided by the skilled trades, professionals and other workers in these regulated occupations.

The notion of increased labour mobility may be expected to have a general appeal and may not provoke much interest or reaction. However, as the analysis reveals, Bill 175 has much less to do with resolving largely nonexistent labour mobility problems than it does a program of labour market deregulation largely driven by federal policies that favour reducing the role and capacity of government and public bodies to regulate in the economic sphere. Unfortunately, and for reasons that remain largely obscure, the Ontario government is seeking to implement these policies of deregulation by applying them to standards governing the training and qualifications of a diversity of workers and professionals that provide important and often vital services to our society. In our view, there is a pressing need for the province to step back from its commitment to such an agenda until there can be a full and public consideration of its true purposes and effects.

If I was drafting a bill like this, I'd be having tradespeople—union, non-union, construction companies, people who do this every day—the people in the trenches would be coming to committee, which I hope will be more than one or two days, like the present government always does; it should be at least a week to discuss a major bill like this that's going to affect hundreds of thousands of professionals and tradespeople in our country. They should take the time, and also take the time to listen to people who know the trade. Some of us have been in it for over 30 years and might have some good suggestions for the government in committee. But unfortunately, when I go to committee, half of them from the government side don't read the bill, they don't look at it and they vote whatever they're told to vote, which is terrible, because there are a lot of good suggestions that come from the official opposition and the third party that could make this bill stronger and a lot better.

I know that my Bill 6, which was good for the people of Ontario—not only did they not read it, they just went through the motions and voted against it and didn't even take the time—absolutely terrible. I think that if people really knew how much involvement their representatives have in these committees when there's a majority government, they'd be disgusted.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: To the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek: I listened to you very carefully when you spoke on this bill and I think you agree with the majority of the concept of the bill. I know you talk about the criteria and the standards. Of course this bill is not asking to lower the standards for the people who come to the province of Ontario. We're talking about eliminating all unnecessary barriers facing many skilled workers who come from different provinces. This is what we're talking about.

Also, yesterday I had the chance to speak on this bill, and when I talk about people who come from different

nations with different skills and professions, I never said, and I will never say in the future, that we should lower the standards, because it's very important for us as the province of Ontario, as the people of this province, to make sure that all the standards stay in place in this province.

The most important thing is that when people move from Alberta or British Columbia, in terms of immigration levels, they have no issue. They can move any time; they can go and come back and live in Ontario. If somebody graduated from British Columbia with a certain degree, it's shameful to have them in the province of Ontario—even though they have the same standards and the same qualifications—and not be able to use his or her qualifications in this province because they have graduated from a different province. I think this bill talks about creating some kind of mobility and flexibility in the system, not by lowering the standards, but by eliminating all unnecessary barriers facing the people of this great nation.

Everyone around this province is talking about the shortage of skilled workers in Ontario. Why not? Since we have a lot in this nation, we can share the wealth, we can share the knowledge and we can share the experience, on one condition: if they have the same qualifications and they have the same criteria which are required in the province of Ontario in order to work in this province. That's what we are talking about, and hopefully when this bill goes to the committee, we'll see a lot of recommendations from the opposition and hopefully we'll listen to them too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I had the opportunity to listen intently to my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, and I think he raises a number of points which people across Ontario should be considering very carefully. There are at least a few legal opinions that have been written which analyze not only this bill but analyze some of the rhetoric which lies beneath this bill. My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has correctly referred to those legal opinions. What this bill intends to do is to begin the rush to the lowest common denominator; to, in effect, lower the standards for apprenticeships, lower the standards for training of tradespeople and lower the health and safety standards. In effect, we don't think this is good for Ontario workers. We don't believe this will be good for the public of Ontario and we don't believe it will be good for the economy of Ontario.

I think the member was quite correct to point out the fiasco that happened in Cornwall. The McGuinty Liberals boast about a new hospital, but the workers who work in Cornwall and who pay taxes in Cornwall ostensibly had to watch while that structure was built by someone who really had no stake in the community. That's an example of where this is taking us. People who live and work in Ontario, people who contribute to the community and who pay taxes in Ontario ought to be able to count on something—not a race to the bottom, a race to the lowest common denominator.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to comment on this bill. It's interesting to note that the provincial and federal governments have been working on this whole issue of labour mobility in Canada since 1994. I really take exception to calling this simply rhetoric. I remember when I was going door-to-door in 2003 and knocked on a door and ran into a mother who was very distraught. Her son had gone to McGill—not an unusual thing to do in Ontario, to go to McGill. He had applied not just on his undergrad but he had applied to go to medical school. He was going to medical school and was about to graduate and realized where this was all leading: He would be licensed to practise medicine in Quebec, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario wasn't going to accept that he could practise medicine in Ontario. I can't imagine anything sillier than a doctor who has been educated at McGill being rejected for practice in Ontario.

This bill will fix this. It will say that if you have a legitimate qualification in another province—it could be anything from a doctor to a carpenter; whatever it is that requires regulation or some sort of certification—you can transfer your skills from province to province. There is an exception clause, which we don't expect will be used a lot, but where there are clearly very wide gaps in qualifications, a province can register those gaps. What this does is give Ontario workers the ability to work elsewhere and workers from other places to work in Ontario, and that's a very good thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Seeing none, the honourable member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Paul Miller: All I can say is that I've listened to my colleagues and I'm sure they're trying their best to understand the bill and to make sense of it. But if you spend most of your life in the trades and crafts, as I have with two trades, I think maybe walking in someone else's shoes applies here. Maybe we have some good suggestions.

With all due respect, people who have never used a hammer or saw can try to dissect this and try to understand it, but to live it, to work it for many years, to deal with the people in the trades and the construction groups gives you an insight and understanding of how they feel and what they'd like to see.

These people have come forward to us to tell us what they'd like to see. I'm not sure that the government took the time to talk to some of these people who have such good insight into these types of bills. In the future, when they draft bills, they might want to take under consideration talking to the people who really know what's going on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ça me fait un grand plaisir de pouvoir participer au débat ce matin.

Il faut se rappeler que les premiers ministres se sont rencontrés pour discuter de la main-d'œuvre canadienne.

Je dis bien « canadienne » parce que je suis, en premier lieu, Canadien, je suis Ontarien et je suis un Franco-Ontarien. Laissez-moi vous dire que c'est un projet de loi qui touche très bien toutes les provinces de ce grand pays, mais surtout les communautés qui longent la frontière des provinces du Québec et du Manitoba.

Je me rappelle qu'en 1996, j'ai déposé un projet de loi concernant la main-d'œuvre de la construction, la mobilité des travailleurs de la construction. Ça nous a pris 10 ans. Le 2 juin 2006, nous sommes finalement venus à une entente avec la province du Québec afin de pouvoir faciliter l'accès aux chantiers de la construction au Québec. Nous nous rappelons que les résidents du Québec avaient accès à l'Ontario, mais nous avions des restrictions pour se joindre au marché de la construction du Québec. Il faut se rappeler qu'au-delà de 10 000 travailleurs de la province du Québec venaient travailler en Ontario, mais nous avions environ 400 Ontariens au Québec.

Nous sommes venus à une entente le 2 juin 2006 lors d'une présentation avec le premier ministre Jean Charest et notre premier ministre, qui a travaillé très fort afin de résoudre ce problème. Du temps, nous avions comme ministre du Travail de l'Ontario l'honorable Steve Peters, qui est aujourd'hui le Président de la Chambre. Nous avons conclu des ententes qui ont pu vraiment satisfaire aux gens de la construction.

Mais aujourd'hui, nous voyons que nous devrions maintenant regarder à la grandeur du pays. Après tout, comme j'ai dit, nous sommes tous Canadiens. Pourquoi aurions-nous des restrictions pour aller d'une province à l'autre pour travailler?

0930

La fin de semaine dernière, avec mon collègue Dave Levac—nous avons aussi Peter Shurman, Bob Bailey, France Gélinas et Steve Peters—nous avons discuté, à la réunion de l'APOQ, l'Assemblée parlementaire Ontario-Québec, des points frontaliers. Laissez-moi vous dire que les discussions étaient très, très bonnes et je suis convaincu que nous allons avoir des suivis.

Mais laissez-moi vous dire que pour nous, les communautés longeant la frontière du Québec et aussi celle du Manitoba, nous avons plusieurs domaines. Ce document ici nous réfère à 60 métiers et professions dont nous aurons maintenant la mobilité d'une province à l'autre à travers le pays. Je sais qu'à date, seulement deux autres provinces ont déposé des projets de loi afin de venir à une entente avec toutes les autres provinces pour que nous puissions travailler n'importe où au Canada. Aujourd'hui nous avons la Colombie-Britannique qui a déposé un projet de loi le 12 mars 2009 et ensuite le Manitoba, qui a déposé un projet de loi le 21 avril.

Les choses vont très bien, mais nous, étant la première province du Canada—je suis fier de dire que je suis Ontarien—devons démontrer du vouloir. Et c'est pour ça qu'aujourd'hui on arrive avec ce projet de loi qui va bénéficier à tous les Ontariens aussi bien qu'aux Canadiens d'autres provinces. C'est très, très important.

Oui, le 2 juin nous avons signé cette entente. Nous rappelons aussi que le 10 septembre dernier, nous avons

eu une rencontre ici dans l'édifice de l'Assemblée législative avec une partie du cabinet du Québec et avec les membres du cabinet de l'Ontario pour discuter de la main-d'œuvre et aussi de l'échange de services.

Lorsqu'on est porté à blâmer les dépenses qui sont survenues pour le projet « eHealth », dont le vrai nom est les dossiers santé électroniques, laissez-moi vous dire que je suis un qui en a bénéficié à date, parce que mon dossier médical est déjà informatisé. Je l'ai appris lorsque je me suis rendu chez mon médecin. L'avantage de ça est, lorsque je veux demander à mon médecin de faciliter une chirurgie plus rapide—parfois nous avons des listes d'attente—il va communiquer avec un médecin du Québec sans difficulté. Nous venons à une entente. Cela survient très, très souvent avec les gens de ce que j'appelle souvent le « Far East », les régions de Hawkesbury, Sainte-Anne-de-Prescott. Je leur dis : « Pourquoi ne pas communiquer avec votre médecin afin d'avoir accès à un hôpital à Montréal, qui est à la porte de notre frontière? » Le tout fonctionne à merveille. Très souvent, mes commettants vont au Québec.

Maintenant, la construction, comme j'ai dit, se déroule très bien, mais nous avons d'autres difficultés qui longent vraiment les frontières lorsqu'arrive le temps de signaler 911. J'ai ici une lettre du ministre Rick Bartolucci qui est parvenue à l'honorable Jacques Dupuis, ministre de la Sécurité publique du Québec, concernant un problème qui survient très souvent aux frontières des autres provinces. Je vais vous donner un cas très simple. Le 4 août 2008, un accident entre une motocyclette et une auto est survenu dans ma région à Wendover au pont de Jessups Falls. Le passant a pris son téléphone cellulaire et a signalé 911; on a répondu à Montebello. Lorsque l'appel est entré à Montebello, ils ont dit : « La route régionale 17 n'est pas dans notre région. Voulez-vous appeler 677? » Ça ne fonctionne pas avec un téléphone cellulaire.

La jeune dame est décédée. Je ne dois pas dire que c'est dû au fait qu'on a eu de la difficulté à rejoindre quelqu'un, mais c'est quelque chose qu'on doit vraiment regarder afin de faciliter les discussions avec les autres provinces. La même chose survient le long des frontières du Manitoba.

Mais une autre chose aussi, c'est que lorsque nous utilisons le 911 ou notre téléphone cellulaire dans la région de Cornwall pour appeler à Toronto, l'appel passe par les États-Unis. C'est donc quelque chose qu'il faut regarder à l'intérieur de notre pays en premier lieu.

En fin de semaine, nous avons discuté de points très, très importants qui affectent la province. Nous perdons au-delà d'un milliard de dollars de revenue de taxe sur le tabac par année. Je regarde les statistiques qui nous ont été fournies à Québec, et puis je dois dire qu'en 1991, d'après la GRC, les pertes ontariennes étaient de l'ordre de 419 \$ millions. Mais laissez-moi vous dire qu'aujourd'hui, avec cette entente, nous pouvons continuer à poursuivre des démarches pour des arrestations en travaillant aussi bien avec la Sûreté provinciale du Québec et la Police provinciale de l'Ontario et la Gendarmerie royale du Canada.

Actuellement, comme j'ai déjà expliqué—je disais à Point-au-Chêne; c'est plutôt Pointe Fortune. Dans ma région, le long des frontières, lorsque la police veut poursuivre une enquête, elle doit arrêter aux lignes. Comme les policiers me disaient, « Lorsque je traverse le pont du Long-Sault à Hawkesbury, je devrais jeter mon arme à la rivière. » Puis j'ai des maisons, vraiment, qui sont sur les frontières, telles que celles du Pointe Fortune et Chute-à-Blondeau; la personne couche au Québec et prend son repas en Ontario. J'ai été visité après en avoir discuté quelques semaines passées, et il y avait un autre endroit qui était dans le bout de Saint-Eugène qui est semblable.

On parle de sécurité, mais aujourd'hui lorsqu'on regarde tous les métiers ou les professions qui vont pouvoir bénéficier, j'ai trouvé cela très, très intéressant. Tout d'abord, la partie 1, l'interprétation, qui est très important—je pourrais appeler cela un projet de loi omnibus—couvre 60 différents métiers et professions. Je ne vais en nommer que quelques-uns : je regarde la loi intitulée « Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario Act »; nous avons the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering—that is a very important trade—and the Ontario Building Officials Association Act, just to name a few. There are 60 of them in there, and I believe it's a good start.

As I said, that came out of a meeting when all the Premiers met a few months ago to discuss this very important issue. Today, this is exactly what we are doing, and we have to congratulate Premier Dalton McGuinty for having asked the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to come up with Bill 175, which will be a great help for all Ontarians and for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add comments to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Unfortunately, I don't speak French, so I missed most of what he was talking about, but we are certainly interested in Bill 175, the Ontario Labour Mobility Act.

In theory, our party is in favour of labour mobility. I think this is the kind of bill where there are a lot of different groups out there that will have an interest in it. So far, to be honest, we haven't heard too much from any of them, although I had a meeting with the certified general accountants the other day, who also said they're in favour of labour mobility, but mentioned that they're excluded in this bill; there's some provision that excludes them in the bill. So they weren't really very happy about that.

0940

I also note that historically, Ontario has probably had the most challenges with labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec, where often Quebec restricts our labour from working in the province of Quebec, whereas we've—most of the time—had fairly open doors. So this bill does not affect Quebec, as far as I understand, and I would say that's certainly a problem.

But this is a bill that definitely would benefit from committee hearings, so we will look forward to extensive

committee hearings. I hope it's publicized in a way that all those who would be interested in making comments and suggesting improvements or changes to it will have an opportunity to do so. I shall look forward to that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I listened intently to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and the problem is, there are already rules in place. For instance, let's take the nursing profession: If I'm not mistaken, they come up to Canada on a regular basis recruiting our nurses and doctors to go to the States. Their qualifications are more than welcome in the United States and anywhere else in the world.

It's not about whether it's mobile or not; it's about the qualifications. If someone is practising a trade or profession in Nova Scotia—and their standards are lower than ours—and they come to the province, the province simply is saying, "Raise those standards so that person can be competent in the province of Ontario." If our standards are the highest in Canada, so be it. That's better for the public, it's better for safety, and it's better for people in general.

I fail to see the relationship between the medical profession and this bill. If you are a qualified doctor in Canada, you can practise anywhere in Canada. If you come from another country and you may fall short in one area, you can be trained up to the level in a local hospital to get that thing that you need.

The thing is, it has been protectionism. It has been the old boys' clubs that have stopped people being hired. It's not about qualifications; it's about the old boys' clubs in every profession protecting their turf and territory, and that's why some of these people from foreign countries and other provinces have trouble getting in.

So with all due respect, there are a lot of things that if you make—I'm a welder in Ontario and I can weld anywhere in Canada. So I don't understand what the barriers are that they say are so big. They're not so big. It's because we have a high standard in Ontario, and when people come here, we expect them to be able to meet that standard. And that's basically, I think, a good thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I want to also weigh in on this discussion, and I want to first of all commend the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He certainly is very familiar with the issues that have been very predominant in the construction industry, especially as mobility of labour goes from Quebec to Ontario and back.

It's ironic in many ways that we have freer movement of labour—and of many things—internationally than we have interprovincially. That's where the agreement on interprovincial trade and internal trade is so important, because these are issues that we haven't been able to wrestle to the ground yet. It certainly has required of many people a bit of research to find out if they're able to practise their trade in a different province.

As was pointed out earlier, in some cases even a doctor moving interprovincially has to go past the College of Physicians and Surgeons in order to do that. I know that, because as a former chair of a hospital board, we had recruited a doctor from Newfoundland. We did finally get him into Ontario, but the board had to wait while that doctor went through the college to be able to qualify to practise in Ontario.

It made absolutely no sense. We had a doctor shortage in Strathroy; we needed the doctor to come. He was Canadian, he was trained in Canada and yet we still had to get him through the whole issue of moving interprovincially in order to have him to come to the community. It was crazy, because we could have gotten a foreign-trained doctor easier than we could get a doctor from another province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Seeing none, the honourable member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I just want to make sure that everybody has a chance to read Bill 175; it consists of 37 pages. But let me tell you that accountants are part of it. Section 8 covers the accountants of Ontario.

There's another point that is very important for border communities, like in my case and also on the Manitoba–Ontario border. We have doctors and nurses practising on both sides, and we know the experience we have gone through. The doctors like to come to work in Ontario, and since 2005, over 1,900 new doctors have received licences in Ontario and we have created 852 spaces in university.

Let me tell you also that item 25 would definitely be of interest to my dear friend from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, because in there they even recognize musicians and instructors in music—we know that our member from that sector is a good musician. So it does cover a lot of areas, and we will benefit from this. Let's hope that the three parties will recognize the work that has been done through negotiations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate, coming from a border community as I do, and representing a constituency that everywhere borders the province of Manitoba.

People who live in the constituency of Kenora–Rainy River have much experience with what this bill purports to be about. I want to say to all those tradespeople who used to work in the paper mill in Kenora and the paper mill in Dryden and the sawmill in Kenora and the sawmill in Sioux Lookout and the sawmill in Ear Falls; and to all those people who used to work on the nine paper machines in Thunder Bay that are now closed down, and who used to work at the pulp mill in Thunder Bay that is now closed down, and who used to work on the Red Rock paper machines—two of them are now closed down—and the plywood mill in Nipigon and the waferboard mill in Longlac and the particleboard mill in Long-

lac and the sawmill in Longlac and the sawmill in Nakina and the two pulp mills in Terrace Bay and the pulp mill in Marathon and the sawmill in Dubreuilville—all of you who are now working in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—this government wants you to believe that you're not doing that.

I see you just about every weekend, either in the airport in Thunder Bay or the airport in Winnipeg, getting ready to fly off to Saskatoon or Calgary or Edmonton or Fort McMurray or Fort St. John, British Columbia. This government wants you to believe that that's not happening, that there are these huge barriers to interprovincial employment and you're not actually working in Manitoba, you're not actually working in Saskatchewan, you're not actually working in Alberta and you're not actually working in British Columbia. Honestly, what this government says from time to time really does test the limits of reality.

But it's not just those people who are all working outside Ontario. All those nurses who went to Red River College in Winnipeg, who went to the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, who went to the University of Winnipeg in Winnipeg and went to Brandon University in Brandon, who are now working in Red Lake, in Kenora, in Rainy River, in Fort Frances, in Atikokan, in Sioux Lookout, in Dryden and in Thunder Bay—the McGuinty government wants you to believe that what you're doing is not real; it's not possible for you to be trained in Manitoba and come and work in Ontario.

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All those nurses who were trained in Manitoba and worked in Kenora for a while and in Fort Frances for a while and in Dryden for a while and in Thunder Bay for a while and then went back to Manitoba to work—the McGuinty government wants you to believe that you're not real either; that that didn't happen. All those physicians who work at the hospital and at the health centre in Kenora and at the First Nations health centre and at the hospital and the clinic in Fort Frances and who work in Red Lake and in Dryden and in Sioux Lookout and in Thunder Bay—the McGuinty government wants you to believe that you're not real either; that this isn't happening.

All those electricians who are now getting ready to head up to northern Manitoba to work on the power projects there, and the cement workers, the steel and iron workers, the millwrights, machinists, welders and carpenters who are getting ready to head up to northern Manitoba to work on those very significant construction projects—the McGuinty Liberals want you to believe that what you're doing is not real; it ain't happening.

Labour mobility exists incredibly in Canada. It exists. And do you know what? It has existed for a long time.

If the McGuinty Liberals choose to ignore the reality of this in Ontario, take a vacation in Newfoundland and talk to all the Newfoundlanders who do three weeks in Fort McMurray and two weeks back to Newfoundland, who do three weeks in Edmonton and back to Newfoundland, who do three weeks in the gas fields in northern BC

and back to Newfoundland, who do three weeks in Yellowknife or elsewhere in the mining developments in the Northwest Territories and then back to Newfoundland.

But you don't have to even go to Newfoundland. You can go to Windsor, where the mayor, just six short months ago, was asking WestJet to implement a direct flight from Windsor, Ontario, to Fort McMurray, Alberta, so that all those people who have been laid off in the car plants in Windsor could get a direct flight to Fort McMurray, work there and yet retain their residence in Windsor. The McGuinty Liberals want you to believe that that's not happening either. But all these things are happening. They happen every day, they happen every week, they happen every month and they've been happening every year for a long, long time.

Are there differences in certification? Yes, there are. Any person going to trade school in Ontario knows that you can apply for a provincial ticket and you can apply for an interprovincial ticket. If all you want to do is work in Ontario, you can complete the apprenticeship and your work at the community college and apply for a provincial certificate. But if you want to work in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan or British Columbia, then you know up front that you want to qualify for the interprovincial ticket.

My nephew graduated from community college just a couple of years ago, completed his apprenticeship in Ontario, wrote his exam for his provincial ticket and then wrote his exam for his interprovincial ticket. Two weeks later, he got a call from a plumbing contractor in Whistler, BC, who said, "People who own a shed want to turn it into a one-bedroom apartment in preparation for the Olympics. People who own a garage, a basement, an attic all want to put in a shower and a toilet and turn it into a one-bedroom apartment. Come out to Whistler, and I promise you that you'll work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. You can pay off your Ontario student loan."

He had no trouble going to British Columbia. He recognized that he had to get his interprovincial ticket, and he wrote that as he was going through the apprenticeship program. But the McGuinty Liberals want you to believe that's not happening. It is happening. It happens every day, every week, every month, every year, and has been for a number of years.

So what is this really all about? What it's really all about is this: It's really not about labour mobility; it is about eroding things like health and safety standards, it's about eroding things like labour standards and it's about eroding things like training standards. It's about the race to the bottom. What this kind of legislation does is—it doesn't say it, but the effect is immediately to create a race to the bottom.

One of the problems we've got in Ontario—this government should be embarrassed to bring this legislation forth at this time—is we've had a number of private colleges out there handing out bogus diplomas and bogus training certificates. If this government can't regulate that in Ontario—I love the excuse of the minister. It's the

regular McGuinty excuse whenever they get caught doing something: "I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I knew nothing, and I wasn't smart enough to ask any questions," when bogus diplomas, bogus training certificates were being handed out by fly-by-night community colleges and fly-by-night training organizations.

I say to the McGuinty Liberals, if you aren't awake enough at the switch to stop this kind of bogus activity in Ontario, how do you think you're going to stop it if somebody presents with a certificate or diploma from a private institution somewhere else that isn't regulated in that other province? How are you going to do it? Are you going to say once again, "We saw nothing, we heard nothing, we knew nothing and we weren't smart enough to ask any questions"? Is that what's going to happen?

These requirements that we have in place—health and safety requirements—didn't just appear out of the sky one day. We have them because people died in workplaces, because people were seriously injured. We have them because there were coroners' reports that said over and over again that you must put these requirements in place to protect not only the health and safety of workers but protect the health and safety of the public.

There are provinces in this country, I regret to say, where the attitude toward early childhood education is, "You don't need much training"; they use words like, "Early childhood education is just glorified babysitting." So you have, unfortunately, people getting certificates in early childhood education that have very little to them in substance.

Thankfully, in Ontario, we have started to recognize—although we still have too many unregulated child care centres in this province—that early childhood education matters, it counts, and that early childhood educators should have a certain level of training, education, experience and certification.

This legislation would create a huge hole in that. Somebody could present with a certificate from I-don't-know-what training institute, with very little in the way of course substance or course content or very little in terms of experience or training, and say, "Well, I'm qualified."

I say again: If the McGuinty Liberals can't even properly regulate bogus training in this province, where students were ripped off to the tune of several thousand dollars and got a certificate that was meaningless, with this legislation in place, what are you going to do with somebody who presents a certificate from a training body that you've never heard of in another province and that you have no control over, but who says, "I'm licensed, I've got a certificate for early childhood education"?

This is not about protecting the public; this is not about labour mobility; this is about promoting the race to the bottom, and there are powerful forces out there who want to see a race to the bottom. They want to see a race to the bottom in environmental standards, they want to see a race to the bottom in health and safety standards, they want to see a race to the bottom in minimum wage and they want to see a race to the bottom in labour stan-

dards. They think this kind of deregulation is the way to heaven. In fact, I can refer you to many of George Bush's speeches over the last eight years where he basically said that if we deregulate and if we basically open it up, things will be wonderful. That's what he did with the US financial system: deregulate it and basically allow anybody to offer anything without any proof of the validity and the substance—and he said it would be heaven.

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I want to ask you: Do you think that the state of the American economy today is heaven? Ask all of those pensioners, all of those workers, all of those investors who put their money into this totally deregulated race-to-the-bottom system that was created in the United States. Ask them if they're better off today. Ask them if that system works. Ask them if it works that somebody can offer a financial product from country X and market it in country Y as being a grade A security because you are not allowed to question what went on in the other jurisdiction; you're not allowed to ask questions about the substance or the integrity. Ask them if that has led to honesty, openness, transparency and protection of the public. Ask them. No, you're afraid to ask them because you know the answer. You know the answer: It was and continues to be a financial disaster that has affected hundreds of millions of people around the world, where all sorts of illegal, shady conduct went on.

But that's what's happening here, I say to you, because I see it all the time: a student from Ontario from a high school in my riding goes to the University of Manitoba, gets a medical degree, passes the requirements and is allowed to come back to Ontario and practise medicine. Why? Because they've met the Canadian standard. All kinds of times, nurses who grew up in the north end of Winnipeg in poor communities go to Red River College in Winnipeg. They complete the diploma; they complete the practicum; they are recognized as nurses in Manitoba. They come to hospitals and community agencies in Ontario and they work. Why? Because they've met the standard that all of us in Canada recognize.

Don't try to pass off this which is in the interest of those people who want to deregulate the economy, who want to take away from municipalities the capacity to promote local economic development—don't try to pass this off as labour mobility. Labour mobility is incredible in Canada, and to the extent that there have been problems, most of those have been ironed out in the last 10 years. This is about creating the same kind of deregulated environment for investment and for those who want to see the race to the bottom that we just saw happen in the United States. Don't try to pass it off as anything else.

Steven Shrybman, who is a pretty good lawyer, has written a legal opinion. He has looked at this bill, and I just want to conclude some of the things that he says:

"There is no demonstrable rationale or need for Bill 175 as virtually all significant labour mobility issues have been successfully addressed over recent years through interprovincial co-operation and other voluntary initiatives such as the red seal program for skilled trades.

"Requiring regulators to recognize occupational certificates given in other provinces with more modest standards will create pressure for them to reduce their own standards to a lower common denominator." George Bush—deregulate; open it up; let it all go to the lowest common denominator—the race to the bottom. And what happens? Americans will tell you what happens. "The requirement for regulatory authorities to harmonize their standards with those of other jurisdictions will add to this pressure", the pressure to lower standards.

"Bill 175 has and will continue to impose significant resource demands on Ontario ministries and regulatory authorities that must now make informed judgments about the efficacy of occupational certification standards and practices in other provinces and justify any higher-standard requirements they wish to maintain and apply to all those seeking occupational certifications in Ontario."

Pressure to lower standards: health and safety standards, environmental standards, labour standards—all those things that I think a civilized society would want to promote and sustain.

"Under Bill 175, municipalities and regulatory authorities such as the college of nurses and the association of early childhood educators are exposed to monetary sanctions as high as \$5 million" when they do reject some individual or some applicant who they believe has substandard certification—again, the pressure for the race to the bottom.

"Bill 175 will do nothing to enhance the competence, skill, or integrity of Ontario tradespersons and professionals and is in fact likely to have the opposite effect. By ensuring certifications to those trained to a lower standard, Bill 175 will unnecessarily put at risk public safety and the health and well-being of Ontarians. The mobility scheme that would be established by the bill is also likely to undermine the quality of a myriad of services offered by teachers, health care professionals, accountants, taxi drivers, and" all kinds of "other skilled workers and professionals."

I wonder if the government has any legal analyses, a legal opinion, to support the nonsense that it has been saying about labour mobility in Ontario, labour mobility in Canada, labour mobility that exists every day, every week, every month and has existed for many years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate and to pass comment on the remarks we've just heard from the member from Kenora–Rainy River. Most of the remarks that I heard, while perhaps interesting and entertaining, were completely irrelevant to the purpose of this bill.

The intent of this bill, as those members of the House who have read the bill and understand the bill will know, will affect about 80 regulatory authorities and about 300 occupations. Some of the people who will be affected in a positive way under this bill will be nurses, teachers, architects, engineers, mechanics and many of the skilled trades.

The intent of this bill is to give greater freedoms to the people in our province and other provinces to be able to practise their skill or profession in other areas of the country.

When you talk about creating sinister scenarios, lower standards and risk to the public—they're completely unsubstantiated. What is substantiated is that by the passage of this bill and this legislation, Ontario will become a much more competitive economy, our country will be able to compete in a much more competitive way, and that is good for the working people of this province and this country.

We need to get back to the discussions that would actually perhaps improve this bill. If there are things that could be done to improve this bill, I think we'd be all ears for that.

Providing full labour mobility for these professions and trades we're talking about today is simply going to strengthen the competitiveness and productivity of our province. It's going to help industries address what we certainly see today, and that is changing labour market conditions.

To go off on a tangent, I think, does not do justice to the bill. I think there is obviously some room for debate on the bill, but to use scaremongering tactics on a bill like this is completely unnecessary. I'd ask all members of the House to keep that in mind and support the bill when the time comes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to make some comments on the speech from the member from Kenora–Rainy River on Bill 175, the Ontario Labour Mobility Act, 2009. Certainly, he brought up some issues to do with the north and the huge loss of jobs in the forestry sector that we've seen in the last number of years. Of course, we've also seen a huge loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector in the province of Ontario. This bill is about labour mobility. Unfortunately, what we've seen in recent years is people moving out of the province in search of jobs, and it has just been getting worse.

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Of course, we heard last week that the government is on the path for a record deficit of \$25 billion. They're accumulating \$2.8 million in new debt every single hour of the day. To this point, the McGuinty government has added \$13,500 per household of debt for the families in the province of Ontario.

We see lots of other problems that are restricting industry and growth in this province. In terms of this particular bill, the member talked about a Canadian standard—not in a positive way. I would say that our party is in favour, in theory, of labour mobility, and there's certainly some sense to having a Canadian standard, as long as that standard is set at a high enough standard that makes sense, so that you can then work anywhere in the country.

As I previously mentioned, this is a piece of legislation that a lot of people will have comments on. We

will be looking for extensive public hearings so that those people that are interested will have an opportunity to make comment to the bill and to improve the bill, and we shall look forward to that.

But there's no doubt that the problem we have in this province right now is people moving out of the province in search of work. We need to create those opportunities here in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to commend the member from Kenora–Rainy River for his factual—actually, reality; what's going on out there. I don't believe the government is really watching.

It really stunned me what the member from Oakville was saying about nurses. My youngest is graduating in four months from nursing and already the recruiters are circling the colleges and universities to recruit nurses for the States, for Texas, for all over Canada. I don't know what you're talking about, that mobility isn't there already. Twenty-five years ago, I was recruited to go to Labrador City in Labrador to be a welder in an iron ore mill, but I didn't take it. That was 25 years ago. There's no mobility? I don't know what they're talking about. There's been mobility for decades.

Do you know that our doctors, nurses and welders in Ontario have high standards that are in demand all over the world? They're in demand in the States. They come up from Texas to recruit us, from Louisiana to recruit us. If that isn't mobility, I don't know what is; and that's been there for 30, 40 years.

This is just a bill that they're bringing forward to keep some of their supporters quiet. That's all this is. It's got nothing to do with what has been going on. They've had their heads in the sand for 40 years because, I'll tell you, mobility has been around for a long, long time. It always will be and always has been. I don't really know what this is all about.

Laughter.

Mr. Paul Miller: The member from Rainy River is absolutely correct. If you want to lower the standards—laugh and lower the standards—go ahead, because that's where you're headed. You're on a race to the bottom to lower the standards for North America. Thank you very much, McGuinty government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions or comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I just want to reply. I listened carefully to the comments from the member from Kenora–Rainy River and did have the opportunity in August to visit Sandy Lake, Moose Factory, Moosonee and Sioux Lookout.

This issue was brought to my attention, certainly in detail, by my colleague the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. The example that he used with regard to a problem was when the Museum of Civilization was built in Hull. He brought to my attention, in detail, the fact that there were all these skilled people that were living in eastern Ontario who were effectively barred

from working on major federal government projects that were in the province of Quebec—part of the national capital region, but on the province of Quebec side. Mr. Lalonde clearly documented electricians, design people and other skilled trades that were indeed prohibited from working on these major projects, particularly in Hull, Quebec. He was eloquent this morning when he made his comments on the necessity of why the provisions of this legislation, Bill 175, would allow for many of those skilled individuals, particularly in his part of Ontario, to make sure that they would get a fair chance for an opportunity to work, particularly in the province of Quebec.

I essentially agree with the member from Kenora—Rainy River. I know that GE in Peterborough, over the years, have dispatched many of their people working in projects when they were setting up hydro-electric generation plants in British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba and other areas. They would certainly take their skills to do a lot of these set-up projects that would last for many months. But Mr. Lalonde clearly demonstrated where this legislation would help in his particular—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

The honourable member from Kenora—Rainy River has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I do want to respond, and I want to say to the member from Peterborough, that the reality is that Quebec, for good reasons, has chosen to establish their construction industry, such that there is in Quebec a drive towards unionization, training, and health and safety standards for their construction industry. If what you're suggesting is that you want to make it easier for non-unionized firms in the construction industry to operate, then I suggest that the McGuinty Liberals come out and say that. If that's what this is really about, to pave the way for non-unionization, for non-unionized construction workers and for non-unionized construction firms, then have the honesty to say that.

I ask the question: Do the McGuinty Liberals have a legal analysis, a legal opinion, to support their position? I don't think they do. I want to get from Liberal members: What is the motivation for this? Because there is absolutely no evidence that labour mobility is a problem. Canada is an open and free country. Ontario is an open and free province. People are free to move and live wherever they want in this country to work, and they do it all the time. Labour mobility is not the issue. What the issue is is this: We currently have a Prime Minister who believes, ideologically, in deregulation—and he has been very clear in that—and in the Agreement on Internal Trade. That agreement reflects an ideological commitment by the Harper government to reduce the role of government in regulating the economy. The question is, why are the McGuinty Liberals signed on to this full force?

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30 a.m., at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1018 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Joe Dickson: Today is page captain Rebecca Briell's day here in the Legislature. Rebecca is from Lester B. Pearson Public School in our riding of Ajax—Pickering. Lester B. Pearson is in Ajax.

Please join me in welcoming her parents, Julian and Sandra, and grandparents Gary and Anna to the Legislature today. Of course, Rebecca's beautiful sister is here with them.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to welcome to Queen's Park an outstanding constituent of York South—Weston, Mark DeMontis, who is here today in the company of Bonnie Taylor.

Mark is the founder of Courage Canada, and he has skated all the way from Toronto to Vancouver to raise funds for blind youth. He has just returned to Toronto. Please join me in welcoming him to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'd like to welcome one of our fine interns—one of 10 interns we have—in the members' gallery. It's Maegan Baird. She is from Wel-land, Ontario, and a graduate of McMaster University.

Let me tell you, she is the fourth intern that I'm getting, and we have the best.

Hon. John Milloy: I know all members will want to join me in welcoming Nathan Coschi and Shirley Halme, from my community, who are in the gallery today to join us at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton and page Timothy Choi, we'd like to welcome his mother, Samantha, his father, Brian, his grandmother Wha Sook Choi and his grandfather Jason Choi to the public galleries today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the finance minister. Yesterday, Minister Duncan said the sole-source deal he handed to H.H. Angus to operate the Windsor Energy Centre was “a temporary arrangement ... to facilitate keeping the lights on.”

I've looked at the Premier's July 20 news release and it doesn't say when this government's pledge to end sole-source contracts may be set aside.

Has a list of excuses for breaking the Premier's word been made available to the public?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, there is a commercial dispute going on between the OLG and the private company involved. The matter is before the courts. It's inappropriate for me to comment on the details of that dispute beyond what I have said in the House before.

Again, this government is committed to openness, to transparency. We have changed the spending practices that governments over the years and across political par-

ties have pursued in the context of how the government itself does business.

As I say, with respect to the energy centre at Casino Windsor, it is a matter before the courts. There is a dispute. We won an injunction, which allowed that centre to stay open. My understanding is, the arrangement which was done by the—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm not asking about a commercial dispute. The news release issued by the Premier does not qualify the ban on untendered contracts. In fact, the very first highlight of the changes listed is, "All new Ontario government consulting contracts must follow a competitive hiring process, regardless of dollar value." But Minister Duncan and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. have managed to sign off on at least two gigantic sole-source contracts since the Premier said there would be no more sole-source deals. Minister Duncan gave lame excuses in both instances. How many excuses are there, Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In terms of the situation that involved that specific contract, I do know that steps were taken well in advance of the new policy to provide for the emergency operation of that energy centre in the event that the legal dispute, which, as I say, is before the courts, got to a point where they would potentially not be producing the energy that was needed. It may in fact be that that was signed well in advance of the new policy as part of a response that would be dependent on actions that would be taken by the courts.

As the member opposite knows, OLG did win an injunction to keep—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: When the new rules came in, Minister Takhar said, "Taxpayers deserve to know that their money is being spent properly. The new rules make ministries and agencies more transparent and accountable." He didn't say "some ministries and some agencies"; he said it applies to all ministries and agencies. He promised transparency and accountability. Perhaps integrity czar Takhar needs to have a little chat with Minister Duncan.

Minister, your conduct shows that you don't believe that the Premier's edict applies to you, but hopefully you still understand what transparency means. Just how many other sole-source deals have you handed out since the promise that these untendered contracts would stop?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, the contract in question was done prior to the new policy. It was done as part of a plan to ensure continuing operation. I'm sure the member would want the public to know that a competitive bid is now under way for the permanent operator of that facility.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Shurman: Again to the Minister of Finance: Back when you made a big show of firing Kelly

McDougald, you called the Windsor Energy Centre a boil to be lanced. It was constructed in a rush. You didn't bother to tell Ontarians they were on the hook for an additional \$80 million for a project in your riding, and—this just in—we now find out the generators at the Windsor Energy Centre have never produced any power. It seems that you spent \$80 million to build a giant air conditioner and that this is not a temporary arrangement to keep the lights on at all. Can you tell us, Minister: Does the Windsor Energy Centre work?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would refer the member to public accounts, and I would say that in fact there were, and continue to be, challenges at OLG. I acknowledge that. We want to ensure that all of our crown agencies are operating at maximum efficiency. When things don't go as well as we would like, we take steps to ensure that the public trust is maintained.

The member will see in public accounts the disclosures of these various expenditures. They're there and they've been there. I think they were disclosed in 2006, I say to the member opposite. We have an interim board operating the OLG, and I am in the process of getting a permanent board to ensure that those important sources of revenue continue to operate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Maybe we can get a briefing on the Windsor Energy Centre, and the minister could attend.

What's the point of promising to stop untendered contracts if you're not going to do it? It looks like Minister Duncan couldn't wait to sidestep the rules. At the very time we were debating new legislation to support the McGuinty Liberals' promise, Dwight Duncan and OLG signed not one but two untendered contracts. The RFP drafts prove that what he said about needing to do the Casino Niagara deal with Bob Lopinski is wrong. The fact that the energy centre in Windsor hasn't even been commissioned proves that what he said about needing to do the \$15,000-a-day deal with Angus is wrong. How do you explain such a calamity of incompetence to taxpayers? Minister, why do all your excuses end up being wrong?

1040

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In 1996, the then-government of the day signed a lease with Casino Niagara. There were three-month renewals when the lease expired, and there were a number of them signed between 2001 and 2002, similar to what we did, which the member has called—I apologize; I couldn't hear over the din. I think he talked about incompetence.

The signature on those three renewals was one Tim Hudak, and I think the member may not want to be casting such aspersions on the talents of his leader.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I would just like to recap the facts here. Minister Duncan—no one else—planned to spend \$400 million on the casino expansion, and went over budget. He planned to spend \$50 million for an

energy centre and he went over budget. He has claimed that it was necessary to sole-source a contract to keep “the lights on”—your words—but the \$80-million energy centre hasn’t produced any power. You signed off on an untendered contract for no reason. You’ve made a mockery of the Premier’s word that the McGuinty Liberals were done with these sole-source deals.

Signing off on sole-source contracts was the firing offence that led David Caplan to resign. What will you do, minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I believe that the government Mr. Hudak was part of signed those renewals at Casino Niagara on—I’m going to confirm the number—seven or eight separate occasions. Mr. Hudak himself was the signatory. They did so—

Interjections.

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

You have 10 seconds, minister.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: And so Mr. Hudak did in fact on three occasions sign those renewals. Unlike the member opposite, I thought that was the appropriate thing to do at the time. I thought Mr. Hudak acted appropriately, and we will continue to act appropriately on the file.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of Health. Ontario families, particularly parents of young children, are very, very anxious about extremely long waits to get the H1N1 flu shots. They’ve been told to get their children immunized and to do it at the earliest opportunity, but when they try to do exactly that, the line-ups stretch endlessly. Dr. Allison McGeer of Toronto’s Mount Sinai Hospital says, “We clearly did not think carefully enough about how to make the whole vaccine delivery system work.”

What is the government’s plan to provide immediate relief to families who are waiting hours and hours, even days, for flu shots?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for the question. I know that all members in this House are working together to make sure that we respond appropriately to the H1N1 pandemic. I want to tell the member that she does not need to wait for question period. Anytime you’re interested in information, my office will make that available to you.

I’m a mom; I’m a grandma; I acknowledge the anxiety that parents are feeling, but I do want to reassure everyone in the province that we have ordered enough vaccine for everyone who needs it and wants it. We have now received 2.1 million doses of vaccine. Thousands of people have been vaccinated already. We’re a week ahead of schedule. Mount Sinai Hospital alone has vaccinated 4,000 people. We’re getting the vaccine out as quickly as possible.

I will continue in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I appreciate the minister’s offer. In fact, part of question period is informing the

broader public as well, which this government seems to have a bit of a problem with.

The situation will likely get worse, as we know, over the weekend and into next week. This morning, we’re getting reports of long lineups at new clinics. New clinic locations are seeing very, very high demand. Some describe the scene at some of these locations as “chaotic and confusing.”

How is the government tracking and reducing wait times at vaccination clinics currently? What is it going to do to reassure Ontarians that they will, in fact, be able to access the vaccinations in a timely way?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am pleased that so many people have decided that they do want to take the vaccine, that they are taking their children to clinics.

Our local public health units across the province are responding in real time to the increased demand. They’re implementing their plans to get the vaccinations into as many people as quickly as they possibly can.

As I said, we will have more than enough vaccine for everyone who needs it and wants it. The public health units are responding. They are increasing the number of clinics. They are expanding the hours the clinics are open.

I spoke to Dr. King late last night and I told her that if there was anything we could do to help get more people vaccinated more quickly, we were prepared to respond to that request.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There’s a domino effect here, and we’re already beginning to see it. A cumbersome vaccination process will lead to higher rates of infection—and that’s already putting an incredible strain on emergency rooms across the province. It has also taken a toll, as everyone knows, on the Telehealth phone hotline, where some callers are actually being made to wait up to seven hours to speak to qualified medical personnel.

What resources is the minister prepared to commit to ensure that worried Ontarians have quick access to H1N1 medical advice in person, as well as through the Telehealth network?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite is right; there has been a dramatic increase in the number of calls to Telehealth. In fact, they’re experiencing five times higher than normal volume. We have responded. We have increased the number of nurses by over 400 hours to try to respond as quickly as we can. We’re also training more people to try to ease that burden.

I do recommend to people, though, that they go to the website ontario.ca/flu. We have put on the website a self-evaluation tool, where people can go through a questionnaire and take the steps that are recommended on that website.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Minister of Health. We see how important our health care

system is when it is put to the test, like right now. We need to be spending every single health dollar wisely. Yesterday, at the public accounts committee, MPPs from the governing party voted to stop the auditor from looking into executive compensation in the health sector. Does this minister think that was appropriate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: My understanding is that public accounts has invited members of the ministry and members of eHealth to return to public accounts so that they can continue to ask and answer the questions that members of this House have. I think that's the appropriate step to be taking, and I encourage members of the committee to ask the questions that their constituents would expect answers to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families in Ontario are starting to see health care cuts already: ER closures in Port Colborne and Fort Erie, plans to cut 37 nurses at the Sudbury Regional Hospital, and 69 beds and 79 staff gone at Quinte health centre. If people in these communities are being asked to make sacrifices, shouldn't we at least consider whether we've done all we can to curb executive salaries?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to take exception to the premise of the question. Services in health are not being cut in this province. In fact, we are significantly expanding health care coverage. Whether it's access to primary care, whether it's shorter wait times for important procedures, health care is significantly better now than it was when we took office in 2003. By any measure you can use, health care is better. We've increased spending. We've increased access to primary care. We've dramatically shortened wait times. Health care is significantly better than it has been since we were elected.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It might work for the Liberal backbenchers, but it doesn't work for the people of Ontario. They know when their hospitals are closing, when their emergency wards are closing and when beds are closing in their communities.

This week more than ever, people are thinking about how important their health care system is to them. The Premier says that cuts are coming, but in communities across Ontario, the cuts are already here. People who are losing their emergency rooms and seeing nurses fired expect to see some balance from this government.

Why is the government unwilling to even consider some of the sky-high salaries of compensation with executives in our health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The notion that health services are being reduced is simply erroneous. I would urge members of the public and members of this Legislature to actually go to the Ministry of Health website, where they can for themselves track the improvements we've made in wait times by procedure, by hospital. They can explore that website and they will see for themselves—they don't have to take it from me—how we have made targeted investments that have resulted in real

improvements for health care for the people in this province.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Health as well. Yesterday, at the public accounts committee, the members for Peterborough, Ottawa–Orléans, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Willowdale and Guelph voted to block Sarah Kramer and Dr. Alan Hudson from giving evidence about the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. My question is this: Who ordered Jeff Leal, Phil McNeely, David Ramsay, David Zimmer and Liz Sandals to block Ms. Kramer and Dr. Hudson from coming forward to tell us what they know?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the earlier question, which seems quite similar to this one, members of the ministry, employees of the ministry and eHealth have been called before the committee. They will come; they will respond to all of the questions that are being asked by members of the Legislature. That's the right process. I know they will provide answers to the questions that members in this Legislature have.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The vote by the McGuinty Liberals to block Sarah Kramer and Alan Hudson's evidence is proof that we need an independent public inquiry to get to the bottom of this billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle.

Ms. Kramer and Dr. Hudson are the most important witnesses as to what went wrong and which consultants benefited from their Liberal connections. The McGuinty Liberals must come clean. Why are they trying to silence the two people who know how these deals were done, by whom, and any information that should be given to the police?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said, I applaud the members of the public accounts committee for exploring this issue, but I also ask that they explore and actually read the Auditor General's report. If they were to actually read the report, they would see that we have made significant improvements. We have come a long, long way in getting eHealth on the road.

I am absolutely committed to continue with the plan to get eHealth records. It's critically important to the sustainability of our health care system as we move forward.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Chen is a shopkeeper in downtown Toronto doing his best to run an honest business—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. We have a format where a member asks a question and a minister responds to a question. If two members have a question or want to debate an issue, take it outside.

The member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: David Chen is a shopkeeper in downtown Toronto doing his best to run an honest

business to support his family and to contribute to his community. Mr. Chen confronted a known shoplifter back in May. He and his two coworkers apprehended and detained the thief and waited for the police to come. The result: The thief gets a reduced sentence for testifying against Mr. Chen and Mr. Chen gets charged with committing a crime.

How do the charges against Mr. Chen serve the public interest?

Hon. George Smitherman: I'd have to say on this matter—which, of course, I've followed with significant interest in the media—that I have two very distinct disadvantages, beyond all of those others that are well-known. The first is that this matter is before the courts, and also that the minister who would be more familiar with the exact circumstances isn't available today. I will impress upon him that you've asked this question and ask him to endeavour to speak with you on whatever matters are appropriately discussed in the public domain, given the circumstances that it is before the courts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Deputy Premier, I understand what you said, and I just wanted to tell you that Mr. Chen is here in the gallery with many of the small business folks that are here.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, sir, for sitting down.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He apprehended a well-known shoplifter, and most reasonable people believe that he did the right thing.

I have to tell you that I had a meeting on October 23 with a lot of the small business community in my riding—Scadding Court—and I have to add that the small business community was palpably angered and frustrated. Giving the thief a break while charging Mr. Chen has given rise to public outrage. Common sense must prevail.

The Attorney General has the power to instruct the prosecutors to use their discretion and to drop the charges against Mr. Chen. Will you or he at least consider that?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's certainly a privilege to have a representative cross-section of small business representatives alongside Mr. Chen here in the Legislature today.

I know that—

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: You're unhelpful.

I know that the honourable member who has asked the question has also, in the past, been constrained by circumstances where a matter is before the courts. I just want to tell him that I will, as he has asked, take the matter up with the Attorney General, who I'm sure will be available to have further conversation with you on this important matter that has touched many of us very, very emotionally, as we witness the hard efforts that small business people are involved in every single day, something that I had the privilege of doing in this city for 10 years.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, residents of Hamilton are hearing the media reports about delays at H1N1 clinics set up by public health units, and I know that many members of this House, like me, are hearing first-hand from our constituents who have had some difficulty accessing clinics.

Minister, I know that families are anxious about when they can take their families to get vaccinated, but they don't want to wait in lines, especially long lines, in this cold weather. There have been suggestions that the province should direct public health units to hold H1N1 clinics 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

My question to the minister: Minister, will the government be acting on the recommendation to expand H1N1 clinics, 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is a very important question, and I'm sure all of my colleagues are getting the same questions in their offices.

I share the concerns that people are waiting a long time to get the vaccinations. As I said, I did speak to Dr. King last night. I talked to her about this issue. She reassured me that the rollout was proceeding as planned and that public health units were responding, in real time, to the higher-than-anticipated demand. Some are expanding their clinic hours. They're increasing the number of clinics.

I spoke to Dr. King, and I asked her to please let me know if there was anything more that needed to be done from our end to get the vaccinations out to people as quickly as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I've also been hearing from some of my constituents on Hamilton Mountain, Minister, who are complying with the instructions not to rush to the emergency room when they have flu symptoms. They're calling Telehealth, only to be put on hold for sometimes over an hour. They're calling to get information about their symptoms and what course of action they should take, but without a quick response, some are forced to go right to the hospital.

Could the minister please provide this House with information about how Telehealth is coping with the increase in calls, what the government is doing about it and if there are any other options for Ontarians looking to get medical help before taking the step of going to the emergency room?

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There has been a dramatic increase in the number of calls to Telehealth: five times more calls than we would expect at this time of year. I want to say thank you to Ontarians for using the Telehealth service. It is a good service.

I also want to reassure them that we're doing everything we can to respond as quickly as possible. We've ramped up staffing. All available resources have been put on the phones. New staff are being trained to respond.

Between October 19 and 25, 430 additional nursing hours were added to accommodate the increase in demand.

I do urge people in the province to go to the website, ontario.ca/flu, where we have put a self-assessment tool. People can go through the steps on that self-assessment tool and follow the instructions that are given to them on the website.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is also to the Minister of Health. I have been listening very carefully to the questions that have been asked of her this morning with respect to H1N1. I've also been listening to Dr. King, who does assure us that there is an ample supply of the vaccine. I'm very happy to hear that.

However, there is a problem with respect to accessibility. Many Ontario families are standing in line for hours and hours, but many others simply can't take the time off work and can't wait that long. I've also heard from doctors in my riding who have told me they haven't even been able to get their own shots because the vaccination clinics aren't open past the hours during which they're seeing their own patients, many of whom are exhibiting H1N1 symptoms.

The H1N1 virus isn't keeping 9-to-5 hours. Neither should we be. So my question again to the minister is: Will you commit to keeping the H1N1 vaccination clinics open 24 hours a day?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite. To you I offer the same: If you need any briefings at all, we are more than happy to respond to that.

As I have said, I have spoken to Dr. King. She has assured me that the vaccination clinics are rolling out as planned and that they are responding in real time to the higher-than-anticipated demand. Some of that response does mean longer hours. It does mean more clinics.

Our public health units are working very, very hard to get vaccination into as many people as is possible. We do have more than enough supply for the province of Ontario.

I am asking that highest-risk groups go first and that those of us who do not fall into that high-risk group wait a little bit to get the vaccine. Let those who need it the most go first.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I understand that public health professionals are doing all that they can right now, but they simply don't have enough resources to keep up with the demand, and we need to be able to meet that demand.

Parents and families are really frustrated right now because the research is showing conflicting messages between what the Ministry of Health is saying and what the public health clinics are doing. There are different opening hours and different clinic hours and times; they're constantly changing.

Fortunately, there's a way that this can be resolved. Instead of people going to the clinics, can we not bring the clinics to them? Will the minister please commit to

opening up workplace vaccination clinics and clinics at school in order to get the people who are most at risk vaccinated as soon as possible?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member. I know we all have ideas about how we could do this better, but I, for one, am relying on the medical experts. We have known H1N1 was coming. We have been planning very hard for it. Those plans are being executed and the public health units are responding to increased demand.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that affects all of us. The experts are doing their job. I have made the offer to Dr. King: If more needs to be done, I want her to let me know. I'm relying on her expertise and I think the rest of us should too.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday in the House, the minister responsible for pensions made a perplexing statement. He said that the implementation of the Arthurs recommendation to protect monthly pension benefits up to \$2,500 would result, and I quote, in "a massive increase in what employees have to contribute in order to fund the PBGF." Will this minister stand in the House and admit that (1) employees do not pay directly into the guarantee fund—pension funds do; and (2) nowhere in the Arthurs report is it recommended that individual employees pay directly into the fund in the future? Will he stop the scare-mongering?

Hon. George Smitherman: I would say to the honourable member that I'm pretty sure that he has misinterpreted the answer.

I listened carefully to what the Minister of Finance said yesterday. I believe what he said to you was—you asked him to implement one part of a report that you liked, but he said that to move forward and implement the entire report would see the circumstances where individual employees would be expected to contribute substantially more than they have been so far; not specific to the fund that you referenced, but that many of the recommendations in Mr. Arthurs' report have broad implications. To implement the whole report, as you called for one portion of it to be implemented, would have left other things undone. I think that that may help to clarify the matter for the honourable member.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: The minister made another perplexing statement yesterday regarding pensions. In responding to a question as to why Ontario wasn't following Quebec's lead in helping safeguard the pensions of Nortel employees, he said, "What the government of Quebec is doing is exactly what we would do in the same circumstances ... it would not be appropriate to characterize it as doing anything different than Ontario is doing."

Will the minister admit that the Ontario government has not followed the lead of the Quebec government in offering a helping hand to Nortel employees and has

neither guaranteed the capital of Nortel employees' pensions in Ontario, nor has it agreed to hold off on a wind-up and give the assets five years to regain their value?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think what would be appropriate to acknowledge is that successive governments, over time, on the matter of the pension benefits guarantee fund, have created circumstances where it's unable, really, to fulfill its stated purpose and intent. A good bit of this responsibility, as I understand it, is to be borne by members of that member's party, who created this concept of "too big to fail."

The point of the matter is that it's a very challenging circumstance for many individuals. We know that, and accordingly, the Minister of Finance, carefully considering the recommendations of the Arthurs report, will seek to move forward in the best possible fashion, recognizing that the circumstances at hand at the moment are particularly challenging, especially for many individuals whom we all know.

TAXATION

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question today is to the Minister of Revenue and I ask it on behalf of my son, Braden, my daughter, Shanae, and all their friends who play sports in the great riding of Peterborough. In cities and towns across Ontario, hockey is a way of life, and Peterborough is no different, with strong minor hockey associations and teams like the Peterborough Petes for all kids to look up to.

Minor sports associations and families in my riding are concerned that the HST is going to place an additional and unsustainable burden on minor sports. They are concerned that these changes are going to mean less access to these sports for them. Some people are trying to claim that the HST is going to apply directly to children's recreation fees. We know that is not true, but the HST will apply to some items the minor sports associations need to provide their members. Would the minister tell us, on behalf of Braden and Shanae, if the HST means fewer kids will play minor sports in my riding and across this great province?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to say to my friend, as one hockey dad to another, that what we're doing in our tax reform package is getting people back to work. The reason we do that is because the greatest indicator of whether a child can play a minor sport is whether or not their mom or dad has a job, and we have to make sure that people get back to work in this province. That's why we are doing our tax reforms.

But I would say specifically to parents that if they look at the registration for their child's minor sports today, they should see whether or not they are today paying the GST, because I can assure them that if there is no GST on the registration today there will be no HST on the registration in the future.

I would also remind, particularly our municipalities, that under the current GST rules, a municipality that provides minor sports for children who are under the age of 15 and also for people who have disabilities—that

there is today no GST, and as a result, there will be no HST, just to bring some clarity to the issue.

But the most important thing we can do is make sure that parents have a job so their children can engage in minor sports.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Certainly, the opposition likes to portray the HST as having a negative effect on people when they talk about increasing hockey fees, but we need to do whatever we can to get families back to work so they can get their kids into minor sports and other activities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please continue.

1110

Mr. Jeff Leal: Business also says the HST is going to make Ontario more competitive and create jobs. I know our government has supporters from the business community, including the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

Would the minister tell us about low-income earners faced with increased fees? Are there any benefits for them in the short term?

In summary, Minister, how will the HST help to create jobs and help low-income earners in the province of Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would remind the member that the reason why our tax reform package has been endorsed by business and also by poverty activists is because we have struck the right balance. We are ensuring through our tax reform package that those families that have the least means will have the greatest benefit by way of our tax credit reform. It is why the federal government today provides a GST rebate of some \$140 for a child, and we'll be adding an additional \$260 per child permanently, tax-free, to the children who qualify in the province of Ontario.

As well, in the first year, a year of transition, we will be providing support to consumers, and that for those families that have a combined income of less than \$160,000, they will be receiving, by way of three cheques, some \$1,000 in the first year. That is prepaying the tax on some \$12,500 worth of purchases. We will be there for the people of Ontario and our consumers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It is a Thursday, and perhaps there are some members who wish to get on the road a little earlier, and I can certainly arrange for that if that is what they desire. But I do want to remind the members, as I just did earlier in question period, that this is the opportunity to question the government. If you want to have a cross-debate or a discussion across the floor, and I say this to members on both sides of the House, please take it out of the chamber so that it doesn't interfere in the flow of question period, because there are many members in this chamber who do want to hear the questions and the answers.

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Transportation: This relates once again to the government's apparent in-

difference to the fact that the ongoing strike at Ontario's licensing offices continues to wreak hardship on people right across this province. I want to ask the minister this: Why does he and his colleague the Minister of Labour continue to claim that they don't want to interfere in the negotiating process when now we find out that since the beginning of the strike, more than 1,000 G1 and more than 250 M1 licence applications and written tests have been administered through the Bay Street office of ServiceOntario in downtown Toronto? How can the minister justify administering tests in downtown Toronto and not make the same services available to people right across this province?

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's shameful.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Before the member for the Ottawa Valley starts giving some interjections, he should know that this is historic; this has always been the case. Remember, we're talking to individuals, good friends of mine, who were once transportation ministers: my friend the honourable Norm Sterling, in days gone by; my friend who asked the question, in days gone by. That has been the case for a long period of time. That has been grandfathered into the system since the day that my friend—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I will offer a final warning to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for the next 19 minutes and 53 seconds of question period.

Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: When the previous government signed the contract with Serco, it was decided at that point to retain testing services, excluding road tests, at the College Park location, originally located at Queen's Park. This location is an exception to the ministry's contract that you signed on behalf of the government of Ontario. You don't have to live in the Toronto area to visit it, but of course it is much more convenient to people there.

I appreciate the member's concern about it. I share his concern—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I am aware that the United Steelworkers made an offer to the minister to extend those services throughout the province of Ontario and, in the course of the strike, make it possible for people to access those written examinations in the same way that they're available in downtown Toronto. It has also come to my attention that the minister refused to co-operate on that basis.

On behalf of people in Windsor, Sarnia, Thunder Bay, Ottawa and across Ontario who don't have access to the downtown Toronto office, I'm asking the minister: Given the fact that his negotiations are going nowhere, will he reconsider and ensure that those essential services are made available to people right across the province without discrimination?

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, of course, you would know, as a result of the contract signed between the previous Conservative government by my good friend Norm Sterling and circle, they're not my negotiations. I am concerned about those negotiations, I must say.

It's interesting that the member raises the issue that he does. If we were talking about bringing in replacement workers or, as people in the union would call them, strike-breakers in order to get this facility going again, there would be a huge uproar. In fact, that is really what is being suggested in this case. Remember, as you would know, because you implemented the contract he signed, that would violate the contract. There would be a huge legal suit as a result of that, because that that would violate the terms of the contract that has your fingerprints on it and Mr. Sterling's fingerprints on it.

So I'm very surprised that you, of all people, would bring—

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

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The city of Hamilton is reporting a projected budget shortfall of \$31.5 million, largely due to rising social services costs during these difficult economic times. Hamilton was expecting \$16.5 million from the province to help cover the costs of providing social assistance, a provincial responsibility that the McGuinty government is shirking.

When does this minister plan to announce that the Ontario government will cover the cost of social services that municipalities like Hamilton provide in good faith on the province's behalf?

Hon. Jim Watson: I had a wonderful opportunity earlier this week to be with Mayor Eisenberger and tour the beautiful city of Hamilton with my colleague from Hamilton Mountain and the Minister of Government Services. I always enjoy going to visit Hamilton to see the amount of money that has been invested in that city from the McGuinty government.

We had an opportunity to talk about the \$7.1 million for 81 rental and supportive housing units. We also talked about \$110 million since 2003 that's gone into transit to help the people of Hamilton, \$156 million in highway infrastructure and \$136 million in roads and bridges money.

This government has stood by Hamilton for the last six years. We've signed a deal with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Next year, Hamilton will benefit as a result of uploads of ODSP and the first phase of Ontario Works.

So we're there with Hamilton. We look forward to partnering with them in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister knows very well the pressure on the operating budgets of every single municipality in this province, from Hamilton to Ottawa

to everywhere else. The reality is, they're picking up the costs of this government's responsibilities. It's bad enough that the McGuinty government refused Hamilton's much-needed disaster relief funding to repair massive flood damage that affected 7,000 homes. Now, with social services costs, which are on the climb during this economic tough time, again we see that the Liberals at Queen's Park are ignoring Hamiltonians.

Minister, will the McGuinty government make good on its obligation to Hamilton and commit to the \$16.5 million they need to pay for the province's programs?

Hon. Jim Watson: I don't know why the honourable member who represents Hamilton always talks down her hometown. We're proud of the fact that our members Ted McMeekin and Sophia Aggelonitis have committed funding for Mohawk College and the McMaster renovation, a great innovation for that particular community.

Let me quote the mayor in a letter to me just a little while ago: "I applaud your willingness to continue working together with our city and other municipalities, as well as your prudent decision to continue investing in our communities."

1120

As a result of the upload, which was signed a year ago this week, estimated benefits to Hamilton, when fully uploaded: 72 million new dollars for the people of Hamilton and the taxpayers of Hamilton; infrastructure stimulus funds, \$61 million; the Recreational Infrastructure Canada, Ontario program, \$3.4 million.

We've been there in the past, we'll be there in the future. We have great confidence in Hamilton—

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

FINANCEMENT MUNICIPAL MUNICIPAL FUNDING

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ma question s'adresse au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement. Monsieur le ministre, de nombreux résidents de ma circonscription s'inquiètent de la capacité de leur municipalité de faire face à cette période économique difficile. Ils sont confrontés à des difficultés budgétaires et ils doivent faire des choix difficiles entre des programmes et des services importants sur lesquels leurs concitoyens comptent.

Il y a un an de cela, notre gouvernement a fait une annonce importante: l'achèvement de l'Examen provincial-municipal du financement et du mode de prestation des services. Ce rapport préconisait la prise en charge de plusieurs coûts de l'aide sociale, comme celui du programme Ontario au travail, de même que les prises en charge déjà annoncées du Programme de médicaments de l'Ontario et du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées.

Est-ce que le ministre pourrait faire une mise à jour sur la prise en charge ainsi que le premier anniversaire de l'Examen?

L'hon. Jim Watson: Je pense que c'est seulement la deuxième question en français pour moi. Merci au député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

J'étais extrêmement fier en octobre dernier lorsque je me suis joint à mon collègue le ministre Dwight Duncan et aux représentants de l'AMO et de la ville d'Ottawa pour annoncer l'achèvement du rapport consensuel sur l'examen provincial-municipal.

Ce fut un moment historique pour la province de l'Ontario, et quel meilleur moyen de mettre l'accent sur le partenariat que nous sommes parvenus à rétablir avec les municipalités dans cette province? Une fois ces coûts pleinement pris en charge, les municipalités auront droit à des avantages nets par année de 1,5 \$ milliard. On célèbre le premier anniversaire de cette entente, et encore de bonnes nouvelles pour toutes les municipalités de la province et pour les contribuables.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I know that municipal leaders and members of my community truly appreciate the work you have done on this and your advocacy for municipalities at the cabinet table. I'm proud to be part of a government that works in partnership with our municipal partners to deliver on the needs of our communities.

In our hometown of Ottawa, I hear from residents frequently asking what the province is doing to assist our community. Affordable housing and public transit are always top-of-mind concerns, and so are social assistance costs and infrastructure needs.

Minister, what do the uploads mean for Ottawa and what impact are they having today on our city?

Hon. Jim Watson: A year ago this month, we signed an historic agreement with all municipalities, including the city of Ottawa, and as a result of the uploads that the government of Ontario is going to take back from the municipal sector, the city of Ottawa will be ahead by over \$122 million. That is great news for the taxpayers and the city of Ottawa. In 2009 alone, the uploads are saving taxpayers and the municipality \$18.7 million.

We're also proud of our investments in Ottawa. Social housing dollars: \$47 million this year to provide more social housing and affordable housing for our residents. As a result of the Investing in Ontario Act, \$77 million is going into Ottawa to provide greater access for transit, to clean up the Ottawa River. It's unacceptable that raw sewage is going into the Ottawa River in the 21st century. These are just some of the examples, including over \$500 million in infrastructure projects since 2003.

We've been there for Ottawa, and we look forward to being there in the future for the city of Ottawa and the taxpayers of Ottawa.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

The town of Milton, the fastest-growing town in Canada, has been keeping up with growth, but the hospital services in Milton have not. Milton hospital was built to serve a community of about 30,000 people; today, the population exceeds 90,000 people, and by 2021, the population of Milton is expected to surpass 180,000 people. Failing to address the situation at Milton hospital puts residents' health and lives in jeopardy.

Minister, when will the people of Milton have an expanded hospital?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member for raising the question, as he did yesterday in estimates.

I do know that there is money that has been allocated, that your hospital has received for planning purposes. Many hospitals are in that position.

You do know, also, that this government has really accelerated hospital construction. There are more than 100 projects that are either under way or completed right now across this province. Part of our \$30-billion ReNew Ontario strategy included \$5 billion for hospital construction and reconstruction. That is an enormous investment, no matter how you cut it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: As I mentioned, Milton is the fastest-growing town in Canada—in fact, in North America. No town in Ontario has a more compelling case than Milton for an expanded hospital.

Minister, an expanded plan for Milton District Hospital was submitted to the ministry over a year ago, for which there were some funds put out. Still, the only answer that we've had from the Liberal government for that plan submitted a year ago is silence. The doctors and nurses of Milton hospital are doing a tremendous job, but they are forced to work against the force of inadequate infrastructure.

Minister, I've asked you before: When will the second phase of the hospital plan be implemented? We've been waiting a year already.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do commend the member for his advocacy on the part of his community, but I would appreciate it even more if he would support the government's approach to capital expenditures across the province. It's not about one hospital; it's about our health care system.

I think it's important to acknowledge that our government has spent more on capital projects for hospitals than the previous five governments combined. We've had a lot of ground to make up for, but we are continuing our commitment to build the infrastructure that is required for excellent health care in this province.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, the Manitoba government and Greyhound announced an agreement to continue bus services to rural and northern Manitoba while they work out the final details of a long-term agreement. How is it that in northwestern Ontario, rural bus service

is still scheduled to end on December 2, one month from now? How can Manitoba get an agreement and yet people in northwestern Ontario are still facing the loss of a bus service, in many cases the only transportation service they have?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would say to the former minister, first of all, that the reason they can get it—if you're willing to shell out money and subsidize the private sector in this, I guess you can get any kind of agreement you want.

I remember your earlier statement—I wish I could find it in here; I'll paraphrase it, then—you were characterizing the company as perhaps trying to intimidate government into providing money for them, and you were saying this was a ploy of some kind. Someone will send the actual quote; I'm sure it's going to come.

I want to say to the member: We are concerned about this. We do know that there are at least two other companies who have expressed interest in providing that service in northwestern Ontario. We're encouraging them to come forward with those proposals, which I believe they are. I think it makes an awful lot of sense.

At the national meeting of transportation ministers—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The minister talks about intimidation. No; I said from the beginning that Greyhound is in business and they're engaged in a bargaining tactic, and now, in Manitoba, the government of Manitoba and Greyhound have reached an agreement.

To say that you don't believe in subsidization—this government already provides \$35 million a year for GO buses in southern Ontario and \$25 million a year for bus and train service to Ontario Northland in northeastern Ontario. If it's good to subsidize intercity bus service in southern Ontario and it's good to subsidize it in northeastern Ontario, why don't people in northwestern Ontario count as well? Why are they facing the loss of bus service by December 2?

1130

Hon. James J. Bradley: As I indicated to the member, they aren't necessarily facing that. I know that Greyhound has said they're going to withdraw their service. There is an indication that there are two other companies, which you would be aware of—

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm not going to quote it. It's okay. I know it. He paraphrased it himself. To be fair to Howard, he paraphrased it himself. He said that it was a tactic, and I understand it is a tactic.

I want to say that when the transportation ministers of Canada met to discuss this matter, there was no appetite for subsidization of Greyhound in that particular case. There was a recognition, and the federal minister said he was not interested in it at all. He has characterized them as a very wealthy company that appears to be using pressure tactics at this time. But I can—

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: If you want to be critical of other services that are provided by GO, I will tell the people of those communities that you're not in favour of that, unless you can get exactly the same thing in northern Ontario. I'm sure you wouldn't want me to do that.

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question today is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. There is a growing need for improved access to services for newcomers in Guelph and Wellington. Guelph has a long history of welcoming newcomers. When I was a kid, about 40% of the population of Guelph came from Italy. But over the last decade, Guelph has welcomed approximately 7,000 newcomers. In fact, Guelph has one of the highest proportions of immigrants in Ontario. Newcomers in Guelph are in need of quality services to settle, to integrate into the community and to find a job.

Minister, what are you doing to support newcomers who choose to make Guelph their home? What assurances are you able to provide to those newcomers who intend on making Guelph their home?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. By 2016 or earlier, 100% of our net labour force growth will depend on immigration. That's why it is important that Ontario keeps its door open to newcomers, now and in the future.

That's why we invest in newcomers across Ontario, including the city of Guelph. In Guelph, we invest in settlement services, language training, bridge training and credential assessment. We strongly believe, that through these services, we are able to integrate our newcomers sooner and better.

It is true that these individuals arrive with many hopes, dreams and aspirations. It is Ontario that benefits the most when these newcomers are able to live out their hopes, dreams and aspirations here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Newcomers have travelled thousands of miles to make Guelph their new home. They've travelled from India, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Colombia.

As I mentioned, settlement services provide a foundation for these newcomers to start their new beginning in Guelph, but there are obvious next steps that individuals need to take in order to succeed. A lack of investment in Guelph when there is a growing need could have adverse effects on the long-term viability of the city's culture and economy.

Minister, what investments are you making to ensure that our newcomers are able to integrate and to play meaningful roles in our local economy?

Hon. Michael Chan: We understand how important settlement, integration and employment are for newcomers. Our future economic prosperity depends on it. That's why investing in such programs is a priority. This is why we invest in growing communities, communities like Guelph.

We have invested more than \$330,000 in settlement services through the Guelph-Wellington settlement program since 2003. We have invested more than \$3.5 million in language training at the Upper Grand District School Board since 2003. We have invested more than \$2 million in bridge training so that individuals can get their credentials recognized and serve communities like Guelph and Wellington.

We must continue to invest in our newcomers—and we are.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Leeds–Grenville has filed notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts. The bill may therefore not be called during orders of the day today.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask all members to join me in welcoming the widow of a former colleague of ours, Tony Wong. We would like to welcome Ellee Wong to the Legislature today. Welcome, Ellee.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1135 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: We have some very special guests with us today to help us celebrate the 86th anniversary of the Turkish republic. In the east gallery, I'm delighted to introduce to members of this House Dr. Mehmet Bor, who is the president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Mr. Ismail Vataner, the vice-president; Mrs. Hatice Pakdil Notidis; Mrs. Aynur Ilkay, the president of the Turkish Canadian Society; and Mr. Sükan Alkin, who is the principal of the Nil Academy. Welcome to you, and congratulations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm going to have to ask the honourable member to withdraw from the chamber, please.

Mr. David Zimmer: Give him a chance in the chair.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, I'm not going to give him a chance in the chair, and if—I'll bite my tongue.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WIND TURBINES

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I always bite my tongue too, Speaker.

Later this afternoon, my good colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is going to be tabling a resolution in this House that would essentially compel the government to issue a moratorium on any new wind projects until such time as a proper study is done, and the chief medical officer of health, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Health Promotion would have to sign on that they're satisfied that there are no deleterious effects caused by the placement of wind turbines within the proximity of where people live.

It's about time that this government took their responsibility seriously—

Interruption.

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

We certainly invite all of our guests and certainly welcome everyone. As much as you may wish to participate in the proceedings, we ask that you bite your tongue, maybe, sometimes and keep your hands to your side, but not participate. But we do welcome you to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. Maybe a little extra time would be in order.

Anyhow, it might be time for the government to take a serious look at this. They made all kinds of insinuated promises that they would do this during the hearings for Bill 150 and they've done nothing of the sort at this point. The opportunity will be presented to the House later today to do just that.

Such learned people as Dr. Robert McMurtry, the former dean of health sciences with the University of Western Ontario, and Carmen Krogh, a pharmacist from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke who has done extensive research on this issue, have both asked that the government go by the precautionary principle, which is, if you don't know that there are no ill results, then let's do the study. That's all people are asking: Do the study.

Liz Witmer asked a question earlier this year on that very same subject—to do the study. They've done nothing—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Miller: This evening, along with NDP leader Andrea Horwath, I will be meeting with condo owners and seniors in Hamilton to discuss the impact that the HST will have on their lives.

As real understanding of the damaging impact of the new tax comes to Ontarians, they realize that the McGuinty

Liberals are prepared to sell them down the taxation river. McGuinty is prepared to make seniors and others living on fixed incomes put out more money for their basic living needs, their medical needs and their accommodations each and every day, with a faint promise of a refund when they file their tax returns a year.

The disingenuous cheerleading by the members across the floor has not fooled everyday folks, neither in my riding nor in their ridings. They know when they're being sold a line, and these smug Liberals should be very wary of the bite coming back to them in two years from now.

When the real estate market, currently the only strong sector of our economy, gets hit with the HST and begins to tumble, I'll be sure to remind the McGuinty Liberals that this is solely their responsibility and they are moving Ontario closer to the bottom.

Along with my NDP colleagues, I will continue my efforts to ensure that Ontarians fully understand the real devastation that the HST will have on every aspect of their daily lives.

I encourage constituents in every Liberal-held riding to let their MPP know that if they continue with this HST, they should enjoy their final two years on the job.

MARK DEMONTIS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Against great odds, he did what no one has ever done before. Mark DeMontis, an outstanding 22-year-old from my riding of York South–Weston, skated from Toronto all the way to Vancouver to raise funds for blind youth in Canada who love hockey and long to play it.

Mark skated from our side of Canada to the Pacific Ocean in three months and 20 days—2,800 miles—but without central sight, because Mark DeMontis is legally blind. But Mark made up for that with the content of his character. Equipped with Rollerblades and a great team, through good weather and bad, Mark followed the shores of the lakes and rivers of Ontario, crossed the rock beds of Manitoba, the grasslands of Saskatchewan and the plains of Alberta, and passed the Rockies to reach the city of Vancouver. In Vancouver he was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd.

When I think about his journey and the cause that fired his purpose, I am truly proud for York South–Weston, for our province and for blind youth across Canada. His Quest for the West has been a real source of inspiration.

Mark DeMontis is here with us today. Mark, I hope that your future quests ride the wings of your first success.

TUITION

Mr. Jim Wilson: Next Thursday, more than 5,000 students are expected to assemble here at Queen's Park to protest the McGuinty government's post-secondary education policies. Thousands more will march through the streets of Ottawa and Sudbury to draw attention to

Ontario's new distinction as the province with the highest tuition fees in all of Canada.

In this House we hear a lot from the McGuinty government about their so-called Reaching Higher plan, a plan that proved to be nothing more than a plot to reach deeper into the pockets of Ontario students.

Keen observers know that tuition would be lower today had this government followed the Progressive Conservative plan. Even the Canadian Federation of Students recognized that: "Reaching Higher allowed tuition fees to increase higher than did the policies of the government of Premier Ernie Eves."

Students will also be here to expose the fact that unemployment in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is at an all-time high, especially among youth. In fact, young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have been hit the hardest, losing 134,000 jobs since October 2008.

Clearly, the problem is twofold: The McGuinty government is allowing student fees to skyrocket. At the same time, the Liberals have created an economic climate where students can't even get a part-time or summer job to help pay for their share of college or university.

Increasingly, students are finishing school without much hope of a job. As one former Premier noted today when he said, "What sense would it make for students to graduate into a jobless economy?"

So I encourage all members to join with me and thousands of students next Thursday at 4 p.m. here at Queen's Park to call for changes in education policy.

SECOND BASE YOUTH SHELTER

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to speak about Second Base Youth Shelter, located in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. This shelter grew out of a 1984 youth task force initiative of Human Resources of Scarborough. At that time, some 285 Scarborough high school students were unable to access emergency shelter in their community. Second Base was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1987. On December 8, 1993, it was officially opened. It is the only shelter of this type located between Victoria Park and the city of Oshawa.

This 24-hour, 56-bed facility for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 in need of emergency accommodation is unique in many ways.

1310

While Second Base provides food, clothing and shelter for our homeless youth, it also teaches them to be self-reliant. It promotes a sense of belonging and fosters personal growth through relationships and skills training within a community setting. These skills will ultimately empower the youth to face the challenges of the times.

Second Base can boast of many proud achievements over the years. For example, it has an alternative education program, Second Wave, which prepares the youth for their general education degree. It has a top-class catering initiative called Second Helping. With its master chef, Second Base launched its top-class catering service

for corporate and private events. Many have used these services.

In conclusion, I'd like to salute the staff, board and the youth at Second Base for their tireless commitment to making their centre a place for change and empowerment.

CASINO RAMA

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Casino Rama is the most profitable commercial gaming casino in Canada. It is also the largest single-site employer of our First Nations brothers and sisters in Canada.

Yesterday, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs bragged about hosting an aboriginal affairs conference in Toronto. If that is the case and he cares about the concerns of aboriginals, I would ask for immediate support from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs with respect to the future of Casino Rama.

The operating and development agreement for Casino Rama expires in the fall of 2011. On at least two occasions at the Standing Committee on Estimates, I asked Minister Bryant and then Minister Smitherman for their support for reissuing the operating and development agreement. They both replied that negotiations were extremely positive and they supported the great work being done by the operators and staff of Casino Rama, which is situated on lands and buildings owned by the Chippewas of Rama.

The silence on the agreement is deafening, and frustration and distrust is mounting every day.

The over 3,000 employees of Casino Rama contribute to the economy of Simcoe county and Muskoka. They purchase vehicles, have mortgages and they strengthen our community.

The community is anxious to know what OLG is up to. We need to know that Casino Rama will be viable and will contribute to the economy of Ontario for many years to come. It is time for Minister Duncan and Minister Duguid to quit dithering and announce immediately that the operating and development agreement for Casino Rama will be extended. Anything less is irresponsible.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I rise in the House today to remind all Ontarians of what a wonderful place the GTA is to live, work and play. In our busy lives, we rarely take the time to celebrate the diversity, culture and sense of community that the wonderful citizens create.

We on this side of the House also recognize that Toronto faces unique challenges, and we have responded with a strong financial commitment to ensure that all of our citizens can reach their full potential. These include providing \$141.5 million for the construction of 2,930 rental and supportive housing units, \$27.3 million for 1,300 housing allowance units, and \$11.2 million for 859 homeownership units; providing \$98.6 million this year and \$121.4 million next year to renovate and retrofit

existing units; and providing \$1.5 million this year alone and \$7.8 million since 2003 for Toronto rent banks, preventing 4,185 evictions and ensuring that Toronto children have the stability they need to succeed.

These investments underscore the McGuinty Liberals' commitment to municipalities around the province and to ensuring that the residents of the GTA have a roof over their heads and every opportunity to succeed.

GREEK COMMUNITY

Mr. Eric Hoskins: Ontario is home to a multitude of cultures, ethnicities and religions from around the world. This coming together has created a rich tapestry of shared experiences, a deeper understanding of each other and a greater quality of life for Ontario citizens.

The riding of St. Paul's, the GTA and ridings across the province are fortunate to have strong and vibrant Greek communities which hold the values of family, faith and inclusiveness at their core. They share and promote these values among their fellow citizens and have played a major part in the prosperity of this province.

In St. Paul's, we are fortunate to have as neighbours many members of the Greek community, including those residents of Hellenic Home for the Aged, a vital and welcoming residence for seniors. Hellenic Home will be holding their annual fundraising dinner on Saturday, November 14, at the Crystal Fountain banquet hall in Markham, and I encourage all members and their families to attend and support this important event.

Members of this House already know the vibrancy of the Greek-Canadian culture, and anyone who has experienced the wonderful food and culture on the Danforth, the devotion seen in their religious ceremonies and their dedication to family will certainly agree.

I hope that all members will join me in recognizing the Greek community, including the 100th anniversary of their establishment here in Toronto, not only during this special time but throughout the year for their contributions to the cultural richness, tolerance and prosperity we all enjoy today.

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Eighty-six years ago, a very important event took place in the history of mankind: the establishment of a new modern state called Turkey. Since then, Turkey has tried to get closer to the west and integrate with the west on many items. It is a founding member of the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and a member state of the Council of Europe since 1949 and of NATO since 1952. And since 2005, Turkey is in accession negotiations with the European Union, having been an associate member since 1963.

Today, I had the great fortune to raise the Turkish flag along with many of the leadership of the Turkish

community, who are joining us today in the east gallery. While we raised the flag, we were mindful of two items. One was of course the sacrifices that had been made by Turkey in order to establish a new country. We also know that Turkish Canadians who are here today and who raised the flag with us are very important in terms of creating a new Canada, a new country, a young country. We want to thank them as well for participating in helping us in Canada to establish this country called Canada, and we want to thank them very much on the 86th anniversary of their union.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BOTTLED WATER SPENDING ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LES DÉPENSES LIÉES À L'EAU POTABLE EN BOUTEILLE

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 215, An Act to prohibit the use of public funds for the purchase of bottled water / Projet de loi 215, Loi interdisant l'utilisation de deniers publics pour acheter de l'eau potable en bouteille.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This bill would simply take public money that is now being used to buy bottled water and instead reallocate it to provide people with municipal tap water wherever that potable water is available.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

JARDIN D'ENFANTS À TEMPS PLEIN

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise in the House today to highlight and celebrate Ontario's plans to give our youngest students a stronger start on their learning. As we announced earlier this week, starting in September 2010, we will be phasing in full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.

Full-day learning is an important part of our government's plans to increase student achievement, to build a stronger workforce, to break the cycle of poverty and set more children on the road to success. Up to 35,000 kindergarten students across the province will be enrolled in full-day learning in the fall.

Notre but est que d'ici 2015-2016, tous les enfants de quatre et cinq ans puissent participer à ce nouveau programme précieux.

Giving younger students an earlier start on their learning will help improve their reading, writing and math skills, provide a smoother transition to grade 1 and help increase their success in school and beyond.

En plus d'offrir aux jeunes enfants davantage de possibilités d'apprentissage enrichi, notre programme aidera aussi leurs familles.

Parents will be able to choose to enrol their children in an extended day program before and after the regular school day portion of the program. Parents will pay a reasonable fee for the extended day option, and certainly subsidies will be available for some families based on financial need.

The extended day program will be led by early childhood educators, and teachers and early childhood educators will work together to help children learn and grow during the regular school day. These qualified professionals will complement each others' skill sets and create a learning environment able to adapt to the unique needs of each child.

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Ce programme sans faille facilitera l'apprentissage aux enfants, et la vie à leurs parents.

We know that we are doing this in difficult circumstances, in the midst of a tough economy and in the face of declining revenues. But we also know that we cannot afford to not do this.

I believe, as a society, we've spoken about this as a need for a very long time, and it seems there has never been exactly the right time to do it. We're on track to do this, and we're moving forward.

L'investissement dans l'éducation des jeunes enfants aura de vastes retombées.

It will give more students a stronger start in school and in life, which in turn will give our province a more skilled workforce, a stronger economy and a firmer foundation for success. By implementing the program in phases, we are being responsible in keeping it affordable while keeping our eye on the long-term goal of giving all children and families the support they need.

En 2007, notre gouvernement s'est engagé à instaurer la journée complète d'apprentissage pour les enfants de quatre et cinq ans.

Earlier this year, the Premier's adviser on early learning, Dr. Charles Pascal, presented a report that painted an ambitious vision for full-day learning in Ontario. I want to thank Dr. Pascal for all of his work.

We took some time to review these recommendations and to decide how to move forward with this program. We wanted to make sure that we got it right for our children, for families, for education staff and support workers, and for Ontario. I believe we have done that, and we're ready to start rolling this out to reach as many children as possible and to make a positive difference in their lives.

Early learning is one of the most important investments we can make as a society, and it's just one very important piece in our ongoing plans and efforts to strengthen education. We have focused on increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gap, making sure that all students are given the supports they need to reach their full potential. We've introduced a series of new programs for high school students to improve their learning experience and to help them build a promising future for themselves. Now, through full-day learning, we will be helping more children earlier, giving them the strongest possible start so they can achieve success later in school and in life.

By moving forward with full-day learning, we're giving more children in Ontario the opportunity to live up to their full potential.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I think that the announcement of this initiative in the House today is regrettable because the Premier had a big photo op on Tuesday—three days ago—regarding this initiative. Courtesy used to be extended first to members, where announcements would be made in the House and the people who had been elected by Ontarians would receive the information first. We're now getting it three days later. I think this government has forgotten who the representatives of the people are, who have been elected to represent the millions of people in the province of Ontario.

What certainly comes across in the time since this announcement has been made is that more and more people are questioning the cost of this additional program. This government announced a week ago that they have racked up the worst deficit in Ontario's history; in fact, it's \$24.7 billion. It is a massive deficit. It is unlike anything we have ever seen in this province before, and there are many people who now are questioning when and if we can ever balance our books.

This government has plunged the province now further into debt by making this announcement today. They made the announcement and they indicated that the new classes for the four- and five-year-olds would begin this fall. They said that learning would take place under the guidance of a teacher and an early childhood educator, and we would now have 26 students in the class.

What happened? For years, this government said, "We've got to have 20. We've got to have a small class size. Students can't learn in big classes"—and they have broken that promise. We are now going to see 26 students. What happened? We now know that that was simply a broken promise. It doesn't seem to matter anymore today, but I think the taxpayers are recognizing that on top of the \$24.7-billion deficit that was announced last week, which was far beyond anybody's expectations—in fact, we don't know if the final shoe has dropped yet—we now have an additional \$1.5 billion that this government is going to add to that debt and increase the deficit.

In fact, Ontario's deficit is greater than every other provincial deficit combined. This means that every household in this province is now burdened with a \$13,500

share of this government's debt, and yet the Premier is sidestepping as to how he's going to pay for this new program. He does say that there are things that will have to be cut; however, he hasn't revealed what is going to be cut.

We do know that children's aid societies in this province are running deficits. They've been mandated and given new responsibilities, but the province isn't giving them additional money. So children at risk are being put in jeopardy, on one hand, and the children's aid societies aren't going to be able to mandate the services that are required. Yet this government is going to announce a new program.

So the question that the public is certainly asking is: How do you pay? How do you pay for all these additional promises and services? We know that the Second Career program is not moving forward as promised. Certainly, the parents of these children deserve to have retraining and need to be able to get a new job.

The Premier has no plan to address his deficit. In fact, he doesn't even know how he is going to create the environment that's going to allow the private sector to create some new jobs.

We can't continue to spend public money and create new jobs without creating jobs in the private sector. It's the private sector that pays the taxes that support the public sector and support health and education funding.

Now the public is going to have to pay the harmonized sales tax as well. We're hearing about higher auto insurance rates. This Premier is leaving a debt to these young children whom he purports to serve.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to tell you right off the bat that New Democrats are supporting this initiative. Our leader is very close to this issue and stated her support a couple of days ago, when this announcement was made. We had this as our election promise in 1999, so imagine us not supporting the initiative. We support it because we believe it's good for kids.

There is always a good time and never a bad time to introduce this kind of initiative. This is preventive by way of its very nature. If we can help students in the early years and give them the skills they need to be able to go on through their early years and on to high school and do well, that's the advantage we give them. That's the benefit we give those kids and the benefit we give to our families and our economy. It's about supporting individuals and families, and it's ultimately about making our economy much more efficient.

I know it is going to be tough for some teachers and some early childhood educators to work together. Teachers are used to working alone in their classrooms, and they're going to have to learn to work with early childhood educators.

It's always a problem when you have to work with somebody else. It's a problem when you have a government and you're in opposition. There are times when you work together and there are times when you attack each

other and there are times when you sort things out. I think we're capable of that, as human beings.

I believe that early childhood educators are great at what they do and teachers are great at what they do. I believe they can work out any differences that might arise as this initiative gets unfolded.

I understand the concerns that the member from Kitchener-Waterloo raises. I disagree with her ideological inclination on this, but she does raise interesting concerns. And I have to say—because we are very critical of the government—if we managed our choices better, we'd have more money to spend on things that we agree on. You happen to believe that spending \$4.5 billion as a tax giveaway to corporations is a good thing. New Democrats believe it's fundamentally wrong to give away close to \$5 billion in that manner to corporations, many of which don't even need the money, and then we cry "poor" because we don't have any money to spend on anything, but we give it away to people who don't need it. Those are wrong choices that we make, that you make as a government. If you did not make that choice, you'd have a few more dollars.

1330

You made serious errors of judgment on many of the consultants you hired, who really don't need our support. Some of them are so happy to work for government. They make such a great living, they'll want to stay as long as they can.

We can't afford to waste money. We need it. This is the kind of initiative that is good, and if we had extra money, we should be doing this not in five years but in three, because we believe it's a good initiative.

We have concerns around some of the issues connected to this particular initiative, and that is, if you have full-day kindergarten now, do those boards get extra money to compensate, or do they count as part of the full-day learning in the early childhood education program? Do they count as part of this number, as part of the 350,000? In my view, they shouldn't. It should be additional, but if those boards are already doing it, they are taking money from some other pot. Will they be compensated by this government for doing that? This is an important question we ask, and hopefully at some point the minister will be able to answer.

The government says it's going to be done over five years. I don't know; we'll wait and see.

We're concerned that class size of 26 is an average, and that class sizes may become too large, like many of our current grades 4 to 8 classes. Many of our classes in grades 4 to 8 are incredibly large. The government is happy to say that they capped the primary grades, but they haven't done a good job of keeping the numbers low from grades 4 to 8. The numbers keep rising, and I'm hopeful this initiative is not going to add more students to that particular problem.

Mr. Pascal called for an early years division in the Ministry of Education to develop and implement a coordinated policy around—

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

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Cathy Scott of Wasaga Beach for sending these pages of petitions to me.

“Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) 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, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, veterinarian bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are a growing number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities;

“Whereas only police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are allowed to possess handguns;

“Whereas a growing number of illegal handguns are transported, smuggled and being found in cars driven in our communities;

“Whereas impounding cars and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing illegal guns on the spot by the police will make our communities safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, a bill ... entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law so that we can reduce the number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

GREEN POWER GENERATION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition on Bill 150. There are a lot of people from my area and all over Ontario who are here because of Bill 150 and the wind

turbines. I’d just like to introduce them all. They’re all sitting up here and up there, so just wave.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the residents of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound believe that Bill 150, Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, is a new Liberal tax grab;

“Whereas a London Economics report showed that the increase in hydro bills could be at least \$1,200 per household per year plus 8% for the new HST;

“Whereas the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure has not stated where or how all these supposed new green jobs are going to be created;

“Whereas no scientific studies have been done to prove or disprove the health effects of living near wind turbines;

“Whereas the Liberals have failed to fully think out Bill 150 and how it will affect municipalities;

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

“That the Liberal government should delay the implementation of Bill 150 and provide the citizens of Ontario with further research on the above-mentioned concerns.”

I realize it has already passed, but maybe they could withdraw it.

TAXATION

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents in Burlington do not want the McGuinty 13% sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Rushabh.

TAXATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a petition here—two different ones.

“Whereas Ontario has lost 171,000 jobs since October and over 300,000 manufacturing and resource sector jobs since 2004; and

“Whereas many families are facing the threat of layoffs or reduced hours; and

“Whereas, rather than introducing a plan to sustain jobs and put Ontario’s economy back on track, Dalton McGuinty and his government chose to slap an 8% tax on everyday purchases while giving profitable corporations a \$2-billion income tax cut;

“Be it resolved that the undersigned call on the Legislature to cancel the scheduled implementation of sales tax harmonization.”

I sign that petition.

SHARK FISHERY

Mr. Mike Colle: I have another petition 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, by either suffocation or attack by a predator;

“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” world’s oceans;

“Whereas the practice of shark finning can have disastrous effects on other fisheries, as the decrease in sharks decreases the supply of scallops, oysters and other soft-shell and hard-shell organisms;

“Whereas the United Nations General Assembly itself 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.”

I support this petition. I affix my name to it.

1340

CEMETERIES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great number of my constituents in the great town of Tillsonburg.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have here yet another petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Be it resolved that I am opposed to Dalton McGuinty’s 8% sales tax grab and call on the Parliament of Ontario to cancel its plan to introduce a harmonized sales tax on July 1, 2010.”

I have a number of signatures, and I sign that petition.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have another petition to stop the exploitation of caregivers.

“Whereas a number of ... caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable caregivers; and

“Whereas” caregivers “are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

“Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect” caregivers “from these abuses; and

“Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for” caregivers; “and

“Whereas a great number of” caregivers “perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection” for our elderly and for our children;

“We, the undersigned, support ... the caregiver ... protection act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save Ontario’s independent school bus operators, and I have several hundred signatures.

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the school boards of Ontario, is entertaining or proceeding with a request for proposal ... to obtain transportation services, with the intention of eliminating the current process; and

“Whereas this concept strongly favours large international operators who are in a position to underbid local, small, existing, independent operations; and

“Whereas independent school bus operators form an integral part of the communities in which they operate and contribute to the social and economic well-being of the community; and

“Whereas local school bus operators support ... local businesses such as insurance brokers, gas station operators, farming operations, financial institutions, retail outlets and professional services such as dentists, chiropractors and doctors; and

“Whereas school boards already utilize a procurement process where they set the price for school bus services, and this process has proven to be cost-effective; and

“Whereas the outcomes of the RFP pilot projects have proven that local bus operators will lose their routes in an RFP process based on price first and quality second; and

“Whereas the experience in other jurisdictions has proven that, while there may be short-term cost savings to an RFP process, in the long run the process reduces competition and costs eventually go up when there are only one or two large operators left to tender;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned Ontario parents, students, community leaders, education professionals and business owners call on the Ontario government to address the concerns of the Independent School Bus Operators Association, abandon the RFP process, and adopt a process that ensures small and medium-sized school bus companies continue to be able to do business in their communities.”

I'm very pleased to sign this.

HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

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

“Whereas the community of Waubaushene in the township of Tay has two entrances off Highway 400, one of which is the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp; and

“Whereas the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp entrance has had numerous accidents, including fatalities, over the past two decades; and

“Whereas the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp entrance is very confusing and awkward for drivers trying to make left-hand turns onto Highway 12 from either Pine Street or the Highway 400 ramp; and

“Whereas the Tay community policing committee and the council of the township of Tay have expressed grave concerns over the safety at the Pine Street-Highway 400 and Highway 12 intersection; and

“Whereas there is a strong feeling in the community that traffic lights at the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp and Highway 12 intersection would save lives;

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

“That the government of Ontario support the Tay community policing committee and the council of the township of Tay and immediately install traffic lights at the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp and Highway 12 intersection.”

I'm pleased to sign that.

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 they 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 of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' 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.”

I will affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

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

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“Whereas there is a strong feeling in the community that traffic lights at the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp and Highway 12 intersection would save lives;

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

“That the government of Ontario support the Tay community policing committee and the council of the township of Tay and immediately install traffic lights at the Pine Street-Highway 400 ramp and Highway 12 intersection.”

I'm pleased to sign that.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT ACT (RENTAL
INSURANCE), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA
LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION
(ASSURANCE DES LOYERS)

Mr. Prue moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 209, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to landlords' obligation to provide rental insurance / Projet de loi 209, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de l'obligation des locateurs de souscrire une assurance des loyers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Michael Prue: I am standing today to talk about a bill whose time I think has come. On January 11, 2008, at 1797 Danforth Avenue in the city of Toronto, an event happened that twiggged my mind. This was a construction of a former bar that was being turned into a clubhouse for the Canadian navy club, and they were going to move in there. They were underpinning the floors and trying to make reparations to a relatively old building, and the entire building imploded.

You can imagine the residents who lived above it. All of the tenants of that place scrambled for their lives. They didn't know what was happening. The walls started to creak. They all got out, thank God, in time, but they didn't get out with any of their possessions; 30 people lost literally everything. They lost their televisions, their money, their clothes, their household furnishings, their dishes, their stoves, fridges—they lost everything. They lost pictures and photo albums, their family stuff. They lost everything, and none of it was retrievable.

The sad thing is, there was one woman in particular who came to us with tears in her eyes. She was a person who was on Ontario Works. Ontario Works had just approved her for starting up her own business. She was a seamstress. She had contracts from most of the local dry cleaners, and she was doing repairs, and she had bought sewing machines with the money and started her own business. She lost them too.

Not one of the 30 tenants had a penny in insurance. Not one of them had anything to fall back on. All of them went to shelters. The city of Toronto paid for it, but all of them, at the end, had to find other accommodations, and they had to start again. They had to start without a television, a bed, a couch, some dishes, food—they had nothing. They had to start all over again.

1350

The second event in my riding, which happened a little later that year, in July 2008, was at 2 Secord Avenue.

This one is very well documented; everybody knows about this. Nine hundred residents were sleeping in their beds when there was an explosion and fire caused by the transformer. They were all forced to evacuate. None of them were allowed back into their homes for days and days. In the end, all of them were out for seven weeks. They lost enormous amounts of money; they lost furnishings, they lost clothing, they lost food. In the end, when we started to recoup and try to find how we could assist them in any way, we found that almost none of the 900 people who were tenants had any insurance, and so again they had to start all over.

We decided that we had to try to do something, and I am here today to ask you to think beyond the box to try to do something to assist the millions of tenants who live in this province, almost universally none of whom have contents insurance. What I'm asking you to do, again, is think outside the box.

What we are proposing today is a very simple solution that can work, that insurance companies are in favour of and that people who are tenants—clearly most of them—will want to do. Landlords will be required to provide insurance for their tenants when there are more than five people living in a residential unit. The tenants would get insurance at basic, minimum coverage. The landlords would be entitled, under law, to recoup the cost of the insurance. It will be a minimal cost, but they will be allowed to recoup that cost through the rents. The tenants, in turn, will pay that item in their monthly rent. It is estimated, through phone calls I have made to the insurance industry, that this will cost an average of between \$8 and \$10 a month.

I do acknowledge, and will state to you flat out, that there are some tenants in Ontario who cannot afford \$8 to \$10 a month. People have asked me about those who are in rent-geared-to-income units. Yes, this may be onerous, and in some circumstances the province may have to help and assist people to have that insurance. Tenants who already have insurance—those who live at the upper end in insurable buildings will surely have insurance—will be exempt and will not be required, upon showing proof that they have insurance, to pay the additional amount.

There are a couple of examples in Ontario that have already gone down this route. The first is SoHo Insurance Inc. It may be a surprise to some—it was a surprise to me, and I have been here for some time—but SoHo Insurance provides public housing tenants with insurance already. SoHo Insurance provides to anyone who asks, through the landlord, insurance on their properties. They have two policies. The first is \$10,000 worth of contents insurance plus \$2,000 for living expenses if they are forced out, as in the case of both Danforth Avenue and 2 Secord, and \$500,000 of liability insurance. The total cost is \$13 a month. That's already in existence for people who live in public housing. They also provide a second, more generous, policy, which is \$20,000 of contents insurance, \$4,000 for living expenses if they are forced out of their home and \$1 million of liability insurance, for the magnificent sum of \$17 a month. So

we know that this can be done, and is being done, for people who live in public housing.

I was heartened, after this bill came out, that a private insurance company by the name of Sinclair-Cockburn Financial Group called me. They looked at what happened at 2 Secord Avenue. They went to the landlords and said, "How can we help the tenants of Ontario?" The landlords themselves thought that we need to help the tenants. We need to make sure that if you're forced out of your home, you have an opportunity.

I spoke to a man by the name of Eamonn Kinsella, who is the account executive. He told me that they are preparing a policy for the Greater Toronto Apartment Association, for the managers and owners to offset the losses by tenants should there be another disaster like 2 Secord Avenue. This policy that they are preparing is at the instigation of a man I would not ordinarily quote, Brad Butt, who is with the rental housing providers. He is talking about the need for landlords to be involved with their tenants to make sure that they are protected in extraordinary circumstances. The estimated cost, according to Sinclair-Cockburn, is about \$12 per month to insure the tenants, and they are going to provide for both the loss of contents and for living expenses. The policy is to be unveiled next week, and I'm sorry, I don't have any additional details.

What we are saying here is that for a very limited cost—and we believe it will be somewhere between \$8 and \$10 a month for the majority of tenants in Ontario, and the reason for that is because there are millions of tenants. If they are all insured, the insurance companies can do it at a far lower cost than either SoHo Insurance or Sinclair-Cockburn. Millions of people who do not have insurance, who face the same problems that existed when the building collapsed on Danforth Avenue or when the transmission blew out at 2 Secord Avenue, will have insurance, even if they have not gone out themselves in the past and sought out insurance, even if they were not eligible for insurance.

The province of Ontario and the city of Toronto will be respected. They will be able to stand back and say, "We have protected these people." Quite frankly, the memory of these disasters are fresh in all of our minds. The cost to the municipalities will be extremely reduced. We know what it costs the city of Toronto to house people who have been forced from their homes. In the case of 2 Secord Avenue, we know that they spent seven weeks in hotels and accommodations, seven weeks that the city of Toronto had to pick up. This could and should be covered by insurance.

We know that the costs of the lawsuits to the city of Toronto, to Ontario Hydro and to everybody else will be lessened if people have insurance and know that their chattels have been looked after and that they have somewhere decent to stay in the period until the homes can be replaced.

This will not cost taxpayers a single dime, save and except—and I'll be blunt with you—if the province determines that those in rent-geared-to-income units are

incapable of paying the amount and picks up the cost. That's the only potential cost there could conceivably be. But I leave that to the committee.

We know that Ontario homeowners have to have insurance to get a mortgage. We know that people who choose to live in condominiums have to have insurance before they are allowed to buy and to move into the condominium. It only makes sense that the millions of people who live in tenanted apartments have the same rights to low-cost insurance; to recognize that if a catastrophic event happens that is not their fault, they are covered.

I believe with all my heart that this is a good idea for tenants. I believe that tenants should be treated in the same way as homeowners and condo owners and have the right to have insurance. It makes infinite sense to insure the landlords and for the landlords to pass on those costs, rather than to have millions of people apply for policies. After all, when the insurance policy comes due and they have paid into the insurance policy, they have the same rules and responsibilities. They have to show what the loss is. They have to make the claim. They have to show what the cost of replacing the lost articles are.

The insurance companies, as I've said—there are already two of them: one who provides it, one who is about to provide it. The Ontario government just needs to mandate it for every single person. The time has come, and I ask for your support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm pleased to stand up and comment on the bill that was introduced by the member from Beaches—East York. I listened to the member very, very carefully and listened to every word he said, and when I read the bill I didn't understand it very well, to be honest with you. I thought that there's no merit to the bill since the landlord is going to charge the tenant the cost of the insurance. But when he explained it, it made sense to me. When the massive landlords can go and buy insurance for many units, it would be cheaper than every individual buying for their unit.

1400

To my understanding, in every building that has more than five units, the landlord is already obligated to have insurance in the building. Whatever happens to the building, all the tenants would be subject to reimbursement from the insurance under the policy, which is already being applied to every building that has more than five dwellings. Sometimes it's a very complex issue because, as he mentioned, so many different tenants have different value in their apartments and their units. They maybe have some jewellery or valuable issues and then they want to go buy higher insurance. The insurance may cost more than \$10, \$15, \$20 and \$30, so I don't know how it's going to work out. I understand that not all of the tenants have the same things, same value, same appraisal. They may want to go and extend their insurance. Also, some tenants like to go and shop and buy whatever possible insurance for themselves.

In the end, it's a great suggestion, but I have great questions to the member who proposed this bill. Under the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, we put some kinds of guidelines as to how much the landlord can increase the rent. We have a fair rent increase which is about 2.1%. If the landlord added to that rent, it might exceed his allowance to increase the rent. How can we deal with this issue? It's very complex, because it's guarded by a special guideline, which is 2.1%.

I listened to the member passionately speaking about many different incidents that happened in the province. I agree with him that it's our obligation and duty to protect the vulnerable people among us because so many people cannot afford or don't have the ability to go shop for their own insurance, and I think it's our obligation as the people, as a province as a community, as a people who have more knowledge, to give them some kind of support. In the meantime, if the person also has a default in paying the landlord the insurance premium, will they be subject to eviction? So I'm not sure. This is also a question to the member who proposed this bill.

This bill, in essence, overall, is trying to create some kind of protection and protect the vulnerable people among us, but also raises so many different questions. Do we have to change the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006? Do we have to adjust it to allow the landlord to increase the rent according to the insurance that they pay? Does the landlord have a right to evict the people if they're not able to pay that insurance? All these questions have to be put in place and addressed in this bill.

As you know, according to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, we put in place some tough regulations to create a balanced approach between the landlord and the tenants, to create a fair approach for both of them. For instance, if the landlord does not look after his or her dwelling, they have no right to increase the rent. Also, according to the rules and regulations that exist, they cannot increase the rent until they finish their maintenance and put all these good things in the apartment and make it livable for the people who live in it. So this approach is being taken by our government to address the balanced approach between the landlord and the tenants.

Every one of us in this place receives a lot of complaints from both sides: from the landlords and from the tenants. Landlords come to my office all the time complaining about their tenants not paying rent and they cannot evict them. They have to give two months' notice; they sometimes destroyed their dwelling without paying anything. At the same time, we have a lot of tenants saying to me, "That landlord is not fixing my carpet, not fixing the bathroom, not fixing this and this and this." That's what happens. We have to create a balanced approach.

In this area, the protections are very important. Hopefully we can reach some kind of agreement to address this issue very well, because it's an important issue to protect the people who have no money in case they lost their furniture or the unit burned or the unit was destroyed for some reason. I think it makes sense to reach

an agreement and see how much we can allow the landlord to charge for rent, or the landlord could absorb the insurance if the insurance was just \$5 to \$10 or \$15; I think it's not that big an expense. To my knowledge, according to many different insurance—insurance averages between \$30 and \$50 and sometimes it's \$100. It depends on what you want to add to the insurance.

I think it's a good idea; it's a good approach. Hopefully, we can fit it with our tenancy act of 2006.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'm pleased to be joining the debate today. I have great respect for the member from Beaches—East York and the kind of work he has done over the years, both as a municipal representative and now in the House.

This bill, if passed, will create an obligation for landlords to obtain insurance for every residential complex containing five or more rental units, but also, it will obligate landlords to obtain and maintain insurance for their tenants for their personal property.

I don't think that this is necessarily the way to go and that it's necessary to legislate landlords to purchase insurance for their own property. Certainly, I can't agree with mandating landlords to purchase insurance for their tenants' personal property.

I'm certain that financial institutions require property owners who have a mortgage to also have insurance on that investment. It would seem evident that any prudent investor, regardless of whether they have a mortgage or not, would want to protect their investment with insurance. Business people, I think, are a lot smarter than we are. I don't think we need to legislate something that makes good business sense.

I would like to address some of the things in the bill's current form that I see as having potential to present a problem. For example, in an apartment building of multiple residential units, there are many unknown factors, thereby making it difficult for the insurer to make an accurate estimation of what needs to be covered in the building and what costs to apply to this. In light of some of these unknowns, the insurer would likely want to provide what they call blanket insurance. This would be a logical way to cover the unknown items in each tenant's individual apartment without having to itemize the precise value of their individual belongings. This bill stipulates that the cost of insurance will be added on to each tenant's rent, provided they have not opted out because of their own independently owned insurance coverage. Unfortunately for tenants, blanket insurance could result in their paying higher premium insurance rates. Adding the cost of blanket coverage could prove to be onerous to some tenants.

If we further consider this scenario and take it down the road a little bit, tenants who do opt out from the coverage their landlord provides will make that premium even higher for uninsured tenants because it would have to be pro-rated amongst a smaller number of people. We also have to take into consideration that there will be a

turnover of tenants, and all the above factors combined could make this an administrative nightmare.

It also remains a possibility that upon examination of tenants' credit ratings—credit scores, as they're called—a practice which is currently allowed, the insurer could either decline coverage because it deems the client too much of a high risk, or could charge an exceedingly high premium.

Leaving individual tenants to purchase their own content insurance makes more sense. It will allow the insured to be charged an appropriate rate for the actual content and personal belongings of the apartment, and prevent them from being overcharged with blanket insurance.

Also, the bill presently remains silent on what would happen should an insurer choose not to provide coverage for the landlord.

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As I said at the beginning, we should not be legislating good business sense. Although I can appreciate where the member from Beaches—East York is going with this bill, I think that the best option is for individuals to accept the personal responsibility and thereby have the choice of their own insurance coverage. The same applies to the property owner of a complex.

While I understand the devastation of losing everything in a fire, I believe that awareness regarding the prudence of having insurance or including the cost in the calculation, in the case of social insurance recipients, is a more realistic approach.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de parler en faveur du projet de loi 209, le projet de loi sur l'assurance pour les locataires. Le projet de loi est simple : les locataires devront avoir une assurance pour leur propriété personnelle, ce qu'on appelle souvent entre nous « le contenu ».

Le projet de loi rend l'assurance obligatoire pour tous les locataires, mais il fait ça d'une façon pratique et économique. Dans un premier temps, pour ceux qui sont locataires et qui ont déjà de l'assurance, il n'y a pas de problème. Ce projet de loi ne s'adresse pas à vous. Pour les millions d'Ontariens qui sont locataires et qui n'ont pas d'assurance, ce projet de loi vous offre une protection—pas une immense protection, mais une petite protection—pour vous assurer que vous pouvez retomber sur vos pieds si, par malheur, vous avez à vivre une tragédie.

Donc, si vous demeurez dans un appartement qui a plus de cinq unités, vous serez automatiquement couvert pour une prime qui peut aller jusqu'à 5 000 \$ et couvrir entre deux et quatre semaines de loyer ailleurs si votre foyer a été tellement détruit par les flammes, l'eau ou quoi que ce soit que vous n'êtes pas capable d'y retourner dans un délai raisonnable. Donc, au moins, vous aurez un peu d'argent pour vous payer un autre loyer et pour acheter les nécessités de la vie. Un manteau d'hiver, des bottes en hiver, ce sont des nécessités; un lit, une table, quelques ustensiles de cuisine, ce sont des

nécessités, et ça ne prend pas de temps que les 5 000 \$ passent, mais, au moins, vous aurez les nécessités pour retomber sur vos pieds.

On parle en ce moment du fait que 70 % des locataires en Ontario n'ont pas d'assurance. Je peux vous donner des exemples. Comme j'ai déjà dit en Chambre, mon mari est pompier. Je me souviens d'un feu dans une région de Sudbury qu'on appelle le Moulin-à-fleur où près d'une douzaine de familles se sont retrouvées, en plein milieu de l'hiver, avec l'appartement complètement détruit par les flammes. Il y a également eu une personne qui est morte dans cette incendie-là.

Aucune des familles qui demeuraient dans ce bloc appartements n'avait d'assurance. Je me souviens que les pompiers se sont collectés entre eux pour être capables d'aider ces familles-là. Si on avait eu une assurance comme ça, cela aurait rendu la vie beaucoup plus facile pour tout le monde. Il n'y a personne qui aime voir les gens dans le besoin. Pourquoi n'est-on pas proactif pour mettre en place des projets de loi qui aident les gens avant qu'ils aient à vivre des traumatismes dont ils vont se souvenir toute leur vie?

Ces gens-là vont se souvenir de l'incendie comme la pire journée de leur vie. Puis qu'est-ce que le gouvernement avait fait proactivement pour les protéger? Absolument rien. On a dit que les « business » vont s'occuper de ça et qu'on ne devrait pas dire aux propriétaires comment gérer leurs affaires, mais pour moi, c'est de la foutaise. Les gouvernements, on est là pour aider les gens. On a la possibilité en ce moment d'aider un paquet de gens qui vont vivre des traumatismes et des tragédies. C'est sûr qu'on ne souhaite ça à personne, mais on sait que ça va arriver.

C'est un projet de loi qui est bien pensé, qui va offrir une petite couverture et qui, en fin de compte, ne coûtera pas grande chose, et, en plus, ne coûtera à peu près rien au gouvernement. Donc, c'est sûr que je suis en appui du projet de loi. Si on peut aider quelques victimes de tragédie à passer à travers de ça d'une façon une petite plus humaine, je trouve qu'on a une obligation comme députés d'aider ces gens-là.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Merci. Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak about this particular bill from the member from Beaches—East York. I must say that I think the member certainly has good intent for what the bill is going to accomplish, but to a certain extent, the broadness of the bill, although it is a very simple bill, leaves a lot to be desired.

Some of the things we've already heard previously from some of the members who talked about this bill. Although I said a few minutes ago that I think the intent is commendable—when we try to help those folks who are sometimes less fortunate, for whatever reason—I guess one of the things we say is, here's another piece of legislation where governments of all stripes get strongly criticized for meddling in private business, things we

shouldn't be a part of. So this could certainly be looked into.

Here we are legislating something where the private sector and the tenants are doing a decent job managing their affairs. With the last revision to the Residential Tenancies Act, I think we've built up a good relationship between tenants and landlords, and we've put on those things in between to resolve some of these issues.

I was delighted to hear—and I'll be honest with you. I wasn't aware that there were companies that offer those kinds of policies.

Interjection: That's interesting.

Mr. Michael Prue: About to.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: About to, and that's really interesting. I think it's great. This is a great opportunity for tenants and landlords to get together and make those choices together. When I say "together," here's a proponent with a product for that market where both could have a say, and it could happen if the willingness was there.

The other challenge I find is—I think we've all experienced in this House; I know I have—whenever you go and get a new quote, whether it be for car insurance or home insurance, depending on your past record, a number of circumstances that I would never dream of until they come back with a quote make a huge difference on premiums.

Once again, if this was a general blanket coverage, I think you'd find some folks with a really good record paying for somebody else's poor record. As I hear from one of the speakers that these things could be individualized, this would be a real nightmare to manage from a landlord's perspective. So the administration piece is something that creates somewhat of a burden.

I'm just going to reflect again—and I can't reflect it enough—the piece about having government interfere when things have been working fairly well. In many cases, when a tenant goes in and signs a lease—I know that the lease I signed, as I do have an apartment just up the road, like some of the other out-of-town members—there are some conditions attached that we all have to meet, and I think that's spelled out fairly clearly.

Once again, I'm not sure how many wealthy tenants are out there who buy properties. Maybe there are, but I couldn't. But, as they mortgage their properties, like we do with our own homes or cars—we have to have insurance if we finance it—they have to make sure they have adequate coverage for those things.

So those are a number of questions, but for me, the fundamental one is government interfering with something that's already out there that we should not interfere in. But I am delighted to hear that there are potential companies out there that will have such a product available, and I think we should let the market, along with the tenants, negotiate those potential policies.

1420

Personally, I think that if there is a product—there will be a good product out there—I'm sure other companies will jump on board and be able to either match or better

what that product is. I'm going to have a hard time supporting Bill 209. I commend the member once again for his efforts; I think his heart is in the right place. The intent is there, but I'm not so sure it's necessary, once again because of the cumbersomeness it creates, and I think tenants will be able to determine what they can afford and what their right coverage should be, and let that play itself out.

I have a lot of respect for the member, but unfortunately I will not be able to support this piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, the wolves are going to turn on me. I can feel it coming. First of all, I want to say that I will speak in support of my good friend's bill, and I'll tell you why.

I've listened to the arguments put forward: Let the private sector figure this out because, after all, only business knows how to do these things and only they can do it well. They're doing it so well that they're at the trough in North America and Europe to the trillions of dollars for us to pay for the mistakes they've made when it comes to business decisions. When I hear Liberals or Tories say—and there's not very much difference between the Liberals and Tories when you listen to this kind of debate—that business knows how to do it best, I just want to remind them that, yes, I believe the private sector has a key role to play in the development of our economy—I'm not a big interventionist in my own right—but I also understand there is a role for government. If we were to take the position in Canada that business should not get in the way of people by legislating things and doing things, there wouldn't be much civil society left in this country.

These same arguments were made back in the 1950s and 1960s as we brought medicare into Canada. People argued, "You can't let government get in the way of business because, after all, only doctors know how to run the health care system, and if you allow government to get involved, it will be a terrible, awful thing." God, you can't get a Conservative to speak against medicare in Canada now, because even they have to admit that the government has a role to play. So I don't buy this argument that we don't do this because business knows how to do it better and we have to allow business to do it.

Here's the issue: There are literally tens of thousands of people who have apartments and are not insured. Why is that? A lot of tenants don't even know they're not insured. How many people have gone into a rental agreement in a large apartment building or a not-for-profit housing complex who automatically think they themselves are insured? I've had them come to my office, and I'm sure you've had them come to your office. They've been involved in a fire. I remember in a particular one there was some water damage in a subdivision, and they came and said, "I'm living in a not-for-profit housing complex. I would have thought, if there was a sewer backup, that there would be some kind of insurance on the part of the housing complex to pay for the damages to

the goods I had inside my basement.” There wasn’t. So the tenant was out, in that particular case, because he was not aware that there was no insurance on the contents he had in his apartment building.

What we’re trying to do here—or, I should say, what Mr. Prue is trying to do—is set up a system by which a landlord has to make sure the units with five people or more that he is renting are insured to a fairly small minimum when it comes to contents. It’s not a large minimum; you’re talking 10,000 bucks max. So you’re not talking about a lot of money here.

What’s the point? It’s no different than what we do when it comes to health coverage. We ensure, by way of our taxes in this country, that every citizen of Canada and every citizen of this province is insured when it comes to health care. We do that how? We do it through the collecting of taxes. If you’re making \$1 billion a year and a bonus working in some company somewhere or you’re working at \$10 an hour or you’re unemployed or on a pension, you are automatically insured. If something happens to you, your family doesn’t have to go bankrupt in order for you to be provided with much-needed health services.

What do we do with vehicles? We understand that if we left it to the private sector, there would be a whole bunch of people driving on our highways with cars that would be uninsured. We decided in this country years ago, and each province has followed suit, that we make it mandatory that you have auto insurance to plate a car and put it on the highway. Why do we do that? Because we understand that if we leave it to the individual, people will say, “Hmm. Pay \$900 for insurance or \$900 on a holiday in Cuba this winter?” Right? A person is going to say, “Cuba looks awful good from where I stand.” So people would not insure their cars if you didn’t have mandatory auto insurance. We don’t have public auto insurance, which is a whole other debate—one of the things that I think we should have done in government, but that’s for another debate.

But my point is, we understand the concept when it comes to automobiles, because we say that if we were to make it so that it was strictly a voluntary system and we waited on the good graces of people who sell cars—the dealers—or the people who finance cars—the banks, the finance companies or GMAC, whoever it might be—there would still be many cars that would be uninsured on the highways in Ontario. We have it by law in Ontario that every automobile that is to be plated must be insured to a particular minimum. We do that not only for the protection of the individual, but also for the protection of everybody else who’s driving on our highways. This concept, what Mr. Prue is asking for, is not something that is very different than what we’ve already done in a whole bunch of other areas.

I make the following proposal. I’ve heard some legitimate arguments about the level of insurance. There have been some technical arguments made about, “The bill should do this, that or the other thing.” Allow it to pass at second reading. Let it go to committee and let the com-

mittee deal with the issues of how we should deal with some of the technical issues that were raised by some of the other members. At least allow the bill to get to committee, and then let’s hear from landlords and tenants, let’s hear from insurance companies and others who know something about this—to come before our committee at some point and say, “We’re in favour”; “We’re opposed.” “Here are the reasons why we’re in favour”; “These are the reasons we’re opposed.” Then people can amend the bill to their liking, and if they don’t like the final product, then vote against it or vote for it at third reading. It’s a simple thing.

Let’s not let our political ideology get caught up—and I say this to my Liberal and Conservative friends: Don’t allow your ideology to get in the way of a good idea, because if we would’ve allowed right-wing ideology in Canada to get in the way of a good idea, there are many things that we take for granted today that we would have never had, such as making sure that we have universal health care, such as making sure that we have an equal chance for every kid to go through a system of public education. We do many things in this country as a result of understanding that we do things together, and by standing together and doing those things in a collectivity, we are much better off as a society in the longer run.

His proposal is not a radical one. It strictly says that a landlord will make sure that when he or she purchases insurance on their building, if it’s five units or more, he or she will have content insurance for the tenants when they come in. The cost of that wouldn’t be that high because it is a better buy because you’re buying—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was going to get to that point, But the point is, it’s a better buy because it’s not every individual going. To the argument that the right-wingers have put up in this debate that, “Oh, you can get a better deal if you go out and do it yourself”—give me a break. We all know that if you can put a large number of customers together, be it, in this case, apartments, and say, “I want to buy insurance for 50 apartments versus one,” you’re going to get a much better price per unit if you’re buying for 50 versus one. It’s a cheaper way of doing it and, in the end, the cost is not a cost that is incurred by the landlord; it’s passed back on to the tenant.

But it gets back to the point: I also have a responsibility as a tenant, and we need some mechanism to make sure that at least I have some minimal protection, if I was a tenant, to be able to do it. It’s a concept that’s done in condo buildings; it’s a concept that’s done by every financier of a mortgage in the province of Ontario, in the country of Canada. We ensure that there is going to be insurance. Why? Because it is the right thing to do, and I ask the people to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Prue, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Michael Prue: I thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Burlington, Nickel Belt, Northumberland–Quinte West and Timmins–James Bay for their contribution to the debate.

The member from London–Fanshawe raised some questions. Just to explain to him: There will be an exemption for every single person who can show proof of insurance; they won't have to pay the additional fee. The pass-through is already allowed under the laws of Ontario, that you can pass through hydro and every other extraordinary cost, if they go up, and this would be one of those pass-throughs that are allowed, that of insurance.

Tenants will be allowed to and will be encouraged to get more insurance than what this bill provides for. This is for minimal insurance. I have not set the rates because I believe that needs to be done in committee, but we are looking in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range, so that if you were flooded out, if you have a fire, if the transformer blows, if some extraordinary damage happens to your unit, you will have the wherewithal to get a television, a bed, a couch, some sheets and blankets and some food and a refrigerator to start over again. This is not extraordinary insurance. It's not intended to cover jewellery and extraordinary things. You have to show receipts of what was lost in order to get the new stuff back.

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For the member from Burlington: Landlords already pay insurance. We are merely suggesting that they pay an additional amount of insurance that they are entitled to recoup, and tenants, again, will have to produce documentation.

The member from Nickel Belt said that her husband was a firefighter and provided anecdotal evidence of how firefighters and communities have to band together to pay when people have nothing left. This is what we're hoping the insurance will cover.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West said that this is a private business. We are asking that it be public business, because we as taxpayers are involved. We pay when people have nowhere to go. This is not intended to be individualized but is intended to be for everybody; hence what the bill proposes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): For the members in the gallery and those watching at home, we will vote on this ballot item in about 100 minutes.

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Mr. McNeely moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change / Projet de loi 208, Loi visant à augmenter la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak in the Legislature, but also to the students who would be watching this debate today. I met with about 100 students and teachers last Friday and I told them about this, and I hope to have the opportunity—in any case, I'll be sending them out a copy of the proceedings today.

This private member's bill, if passed, would name April 21, the day before Earth Day, Climate Change Awareness Day. It would also require the Minister of the Environment to produce a report card on certain indicators of climate change, which would be delivered to students in grades 5 to 12 in schools throughout our province. I'll speak about this report card shortly. I advanced a similar bill in my third year in the Legislature, in 2006, but it did not get to third reading and therefore did not become law.

Many of you watching and here today may consider this bill to be trivial, of no consequence; a waste of time. However, the scientific community agrees that climate change is the most pressing, serious challenge that humanity currently faces. The term refers to the changes in weather patterns and global temperatures—and here we're referring strictly to the human causes of climate change. As we all know, this type of climate change is caused by increased concentration of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, which trap heat. Deforestation also contributes to the problem, as the lungs of our planet become less capable of absorbing carbon dioxide.

We note that the Earth has undergone climate change naturally over the last several million years, but the changes that we have seen in the past few decades cannot be attributed to our planet's natural cycle. In fact, without human interference, scientists tell us that the planet should actually be cooling, but the exact opposite has happened. Over the last 100 years that we have been burning fossil fuels, the Earth's average temperature has risen by 0.74 degrees Celsius. Although this may not sound like much, consider this: With a two-degree rise, most of the world's coral reefs will be lost, large portions of the ocean will become dead zones, mountain glaciers will largely vanish and many other ecosystems will be at risk. It brings the risk of reaching a tipping point, where the Greenland and western Antarctic ice shelves could melt, leading to catastrophic rises in sea levels. Only a one-metre rise could leave 500 million people homeless, forced to evacuate low-lying areas. For all of these reasons, it is crucial for the sake of humanity's future that we build awareness of this problem. That is why I have introduced Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.

As mentioned, in addition to naming April 21 as Climate Change Awareness Day, the bill asks the Minister of the Environment to produce a report card containing indicators of climate change. It also asks the Minister of Education to provide all Ontario students in

grade 5 to grade 12 with that report card. I hope that students watching like the idea of governments measuring their performance rather than the government measuring yours.

The first thing that the report would indicate is the amount of greenhouse gases being produced globally, by Canada and by Ontario in both the last year and back to 1990. This will give readers an opportunity to see whether we as a province, or Canada as a country, or the planet, are making progress in reversing global warming.

Second, it will report on the amount of carbon dioxide already in our atmosphere, giving the most recent estimates and annual figures back to 1990.

Third, the report will rank the 10 highest-polluting countries on a per capita basis, allowing us to see who the biggest culprits are and see how Canada ranks—and we rank very high in the most-polluting people on the face of the planet. We're up there with the US and Australia as the worst.

The fourth indicator that would be reported—and it's reported every year; we see newspaper articles of it; it's done with existing information—is the least sea ice that occurs each summer. There have been indications that the sea ice in the Arctic would be disappearing in 40 or 50 years. Now we find that the Arctic ice cap is sort of a canary in the coal mine and a very visible representation of how the pace of climate change is affecting our climate.

Fifth and sixth are lists of any new species added to Ontario and Canada's list of species at risk.

Polar bear populations in Ontario are the seventh indicator of climate change, as their northern habitats are suffering from the effects of global warming. Many of the polar bear populations are decreasing and many are stable, but at least we would see what is happening to the polar bears in Ontario.

Finally, the bill would allow the Minister of the Environment to track any other indicators that he or she feels relevant, and maybe that list could be established by the students throughout Ontario. That could be one of the projects, because climate change, global warming and sustainability are part of the curriculum now and could be included in a little bit more detail. I know that there are probably hundreds of students with good ideas out there about what we should be measuring. I want to hear those ideas.

Although all of this information exists elsewhere, collecting it in one place, in one report, will allow the public and the students to get an overall picture of the health of our global environment, and it would let individuals see how their elected representatives are performing on this issue. I think this is very important.

Why is climate change relevant to young people? Well, if you have followed the news lately, you would have read about a British research team that recently spent 73 days measuring the Arctic ice. That research confirmed what we've been hearing: Because of rising temperatures, by the summer of 2030, the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free in the summertime.

By 2030, you students in our high schools and elementary schools today will be getting married, starting a family or buying a house. On average, you would be 35 years old, in the prime of your life, and wonderful things will be happening. But ships will travel across the North Pole—saving shipping costs, I suppose. Oil companies will be mining the sea bottom and, no doubt, pumping more fossil fuels and producing more CO₂. But because the Arctic ice has melted, the blue ocean would not reflect the sun's rays, and global warming will accelerate. The under-ice ocean of today would change rapidly and many ocean species would be under stress. The permafrost would be melting, and this would further release greenhouse gases. We would have set in motion irreversible changes that would put our entire planet as we know it in danger, and young people have the most at stake. This is why, out of all groups, this bill seeks to inform you.

Some governments and some people are taking action. Ontario has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas production below the Kyoto 1990 levels: 6% below in 2014, 15% below by 2020 and 80% below by 2050. We are closing the province's biggest polluter, coal-fired power generation, by 2014, reducing Ontario's carbon dioxide production by 30 million tonnes annually. We have successfully increased our renewable energy generation by orders of magnitude. Two weeks ago, I was in Arnprior, just west of Ottawa, where we were opening the largest solar project in the province. We are aggressively encouraging water power and water conservation. We are also proposing a new law that would establish a cap-and-trade system in Ontario, giving companies an incentive to reduce the pollution they produce. This will mean that we no longer look at carbon dioxide as a no-cost waste that we can dump in our atmosphere.

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Most Ontarians are willing to do their share; however, our federal partners need to do more as we approach the December meetings in Copenhagen. Canada signed the Kyoto Protocol, but the Harper government, as the government before it, has done nothing significant yet. In 2002, Mr. Harper said, "We will oppose ratification of the Kyoto accord and its targets. We will work with the provinces and others to discourage implementation of those targets. And we will rescind the targets when we have the opportunity to do so." So it's no surprise that Canada's greenhouse gases, through the lack of government action since the treaty was signed, have increased 26% since 1990. This, as some might think, is an action of environmental terrorists, because we know what's going to happen—and we're a rich country; we should lead—and we know that Canadians are not environmental terrorists. We are 33.8% above our Kyoto commitments, according to Environment Canada.

Several groups, including a group made up of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the Pembina Institute, the Suzuki organization and an economic guru who probably does the best economic analysis of anyone in Canada, brought out a study yesterday—and studies have all

concluded that there is no evidence that the Harper plan will come anywhere close to achieving Kyoto targets.

This past September, the chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said, "In the last couple of years, I'm afraid, Canada has not been seen as sitting at the table. I think Canada should be doing much more."

We are one of the world's worst polluters per capita, and instead of leading, we are hindering progress on global greenhouse gas reductions. Politicians and adults are not doing enough, so students—tomorrow's leaders—must lead now. Tomorrow may be too late.

That is why I'm encouraging students in my area to get involved in this issue. For the third year in a row, I've launched a climate change challenge in my riding. This is a friendly competition between students and schools in Ottawa-Orléans to build awareness of climate change. In 2007, I asked students to produce posters in a contest; in 2008, videos; and this is the one we're trying this year.

I need your help in getting the bill passed. I need groups in each school who are concerned with climate change to sign petitions to mobilize support and to come to Queen's Park to help me get this passed. If the adults cannot get it done, then it is time our youth take action to protect their future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome the opportunity to address this proposal.

Here we are again, debating the finer points of yet another day, another designation. In this session alone we've debated Peace Officers Memorial Day, Tom Longboat Day, Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Day, Greenbelt Day, National Students Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day, Stop Human Trafficking Day, St. John Ambulance Day, and on and on—many, many days. To what extent we lose some of the impact, and to what extent previous designated days lose some of their importance by going down this route—although we all recognize that any attempts to raise not only awareness but to try to dig out just where governments are coming from with respect to policy, whether it's the McGuinty government or the Harper government or the governments of China or India or Russia, is very important. April 21, I think, will be designated as the day. That's already taken, as I recall, by Earth Day; it's either the 21st or the 20th. The proponent's heart may be in the right place, but quite frankly I'm not sure that designating yet another day and ponying up the money through our boards of education to distribute an additional report card to students—I'm just not sure of the kind of impact.

It is important. I used to teach environmental science, and climate change—the greenhouse effect—was part of my curriculum. That was 1969, and here I am. I find that we are continuing to discuss this, with little evidence of direct action, and there are reasons for that.

The member for Ottawa-Orléans mentioned the TD-funded report that came out yesterday, for example—it is

in today's Globe and Mail. Again, there are reasons, and one is cost. I've got the article here. The cost to meet Mr. Harper's targets would be \$8 billion. I don't know whether people in Canada, especially in western Canada, are willing to go along with that.

Further to the Globe and Mail, I might refer the member to the May 15, 1953, edition of the Globe and Mail. I have a copy of this; I don't throw anything out.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That was a good year for people to be born.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Back then there were about two billion of us in the world, and, in keeping with the member for Ottawa-Orléans, human activity is part of the problem. There are now—what?—6.8 billion of us, just in the lifetime of many of us here, the baby boom crowd. That's a very serious problem; more serious, in my view, than global warming.

The 1953 headline in the Globe and Mail: "Carbon Dioxide in Air Making World Warmer." We've known about this since 1953. I don't know whether the Ontario Legislature was debating this in 1953. I don't know whether the government of the day was doing anything about it. So whether it is 1953 or 1969 or 2009, I'm concerned that the debate will continue without any glimmer of a practical, doable, politically acceptable policy in this province, and I recognize that this is not so much a provincial issue and not so much a national issue. This is a global issue.

The report that was referred to by the member opposite goes on to say that either through direct taxation—the Dion approach—or by capping emissions and forcing companies to buy allowances, which essentially comes up with the same result, the federal government would receive approximately \$46 billion or more in revenue, which it would then redistribute through spending and personal tax cuts.

This government also has cap-and-trade legislation. I do hope that members present sit in on the general government hearings next week—that would be Monday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon—when we're discussing cap and trade.

Whether it's cap and trade or a carbon tax, it's essentially the same end result: It would be a green shift, and many people are aware that if this were to occur over the ensuing years, they're going to have to hang on to their wallets. A redistribution of wealth, as we read in the Globe and Mail today, not only within Canada but, with the purchase of credits overseas, the spectre—many people are concerned about this, as it is a method of redistributing wealth from the west, if you will, to the developing world, to countries like China and India. That's why it is so important at the national level. I don't know whether the Premier is communicating with China and Russia and Brazil and India, some of the very large emitters, on this. I know we're talking to Utah and we're talking to Nevada; I'm not sure how significant the carbon dioxide emissions are in those jurisdictions.

1450

I am with the minister, or—not a minister; who knows, in the future?—the member opposite with respect to the preamble to the legislation where a government member actually mentions the elephant in the room with respect to environmental sustainability and the kinds of numbers that I just mentioned, with respect to the impact of ongoing increases in population, not only those born in 1953, but the incredible population growth that we've seen since 1953, essentially since the Second World War. I'll quote the member opposite.

"The world's population in 1950 was 2.5 billion, in 2007 it was 6.7 billion and by 2050 it will increase another 2.5 billion. Additionally, in the next few decades, it is expected that, as a result of ongoing economic development in the less developed world, 2.5 billion people will join us at our level of consumption"—again, here in the West, in my words—"of the world's resources. This will greatly increase greenhouse gas production by humans."

I do know that the government bill itself, if you read that legislation, makes reference to human activity and its contribution to carbon dioxide and the problems that will go with that. So it brings up this inconvenient truth, which is the fact that there are too many of us in this world and this planet is suffering as a result.

Further to that article in the *Globe and Mail*, they have an editorial referring to that Pembina Institute and the David Suzuki Foundation study that came out yesterday. Their analysis, as they indicate: "It is the wrong approach; its all-out attack on the oil and gas sector is politically and economically unacceptable, and would euthanize a vital Canadian industry." So that's the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

They go on to say, "The industry would be devastated, and so too would Alberta's economy (and, to a lesser extent, Saskatchewan's)." And they indicate again, "This is unacceptable."

They make mention of the concept of purchasing emission credits, and again, they indicate there has been little political ground laid for this transfer of wealth from Canada to poorer countries. I would suggest that anyone who is interested take a look at that report and a great deal of reporting on that as well in today's *Globe and Mail*.

Just going back to the point that we do agree on with respect to the spectre of continued population growth: One example would be Ethiopia. Gwynne Dyer did an analysis of the great hunger in Ethiopia; it was the mid-1980s, a million people died in Ethiopia, so that's 25 years ago. Subsequent to that, expertise came in as far as farm practices, the use of fertilizer, and within a number of years, Ethiopia became self-sufficient in food; this was by the late 1990s.

However, guess what happened in the last 25 years in Ethiopia? The population doubled. It went from 40 million to 80 million. That part of the world, as we know, is in trouble again. I'm just talking about one country, and perhaps this is the future for many other countries in

the world. Ethiopia's population will double again to 160 million people in just 32 years. Uganda: There's a country that's about the size of Oregon as far as geographic area. When they gained independence in 1960, they had five million people; now it's 32 million people. The current growth rate will have 130 million people, again, by the year 2050. That's actually more than—no, that's close to the population of Ethiopia.

It's unfair what happens within the world. I don't think there's enough aid to continue to support this kind of population growth, and when you see this population growth in other countries like China and India, which are rapidly industrializing—I've lost count of the number of coal plants that are being built in India and China, projected in the United States. But much of this problem relates to human activity and human numbers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to Mr. McNeely's bill. I have to say, first of all, that I have a lot of respect for the member. He has spoken consistently in the House for action on climate change. He makes a reasoned argument. He does not come at this in any sort of opportunistic way, and I have to say, when he sets up a scientific case, he sets it out, in many ways, as I would.

Frankly, if we were in a position where I could amend his bill to add further refinements, that in and of itself might be useful. I personally would put in such a bill a requirement that the government report precisely on what it's done—what investments have been made and what investments have not been made in the past year—to actually move things forward.

That being said, even though I will vote for this bill and I have told my caucus's critic that we should vote for this bill, increasingly I don't believe that our problem is a lack of awareness. I think people are aware. I think people have seen the nature shows on television and they've seen the news reports. Frankly, a year and a half ago or two years ago, before the financial crisis broke with full force on the world stage, one was regularly seeing reports on the news, short documentaries about the impact of climate change. I would say that the population, on the whole, is aware of the problem. Maybe not in every detail and maybe not every particular item, but they know that there is a world-scale problem out there, one that will affect themselves and affect their children and one that has to be addressed. I don't believe that the problem is a lack of awareness; I think our problem is a lack of action.

I will speak a bit to my history with this issue, but I have to say that we can't take on this problem unless we understand the kind of problem that we have. It is not simply a biological problem or a physical problem; it is not an intellectual issue; it is not a question of passing one good law or another, because laws, in fact, simply reflect relationships of power within a society. It's the larger questions that have to be addressed.

As the member before me indicated, there are substantial issues on the table that have to do with industry. There are trillions of dollars at issue. There is the future of the oil and gas industry on the one hand and the future of our society on the other, and I have to say, having dealt with these sorts of battles in the past, that we are facing a knock-down, drag-out battle with the oil and gas sector and with the coal community, all of whom are interested in protecting their interests. Frankly, although I won't say this is true of all of the people in the oil, gas and coal communities—certainly with leading sectors of it, those who are politically powerful and politically active—there is no question that they are energetically defending their interests; that they have financed work to slow down and stop action on climate change; that they have done their best to confuse the issue, confuse the public. If we don't understand that reality, then all the legislation that we put forward in terms of awareness will be of no consequence.

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The Globe and Mail today reported on the study done by the Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute, financed by the Toronto-Dominion Bank. It was quite an interesting editorial because they understood that what was at stake was a dramatic reduction in the amount of oil and gas to be produced. You can't reduce greenhouse gas emissions without reducing the production of oil and gas. They were not interested in that. They said the cost was too high.

I have to say that we here in Ontario are paying the other side of that cost. When a line of tornados goes through Vaughan and people have their houses ripped apart, that is part of the cost. When you have unprecedented flooding in Hamilton or Peterborough, that is part of the cost.

Dr. Eric Hoskins, a new member of this Legislature, would be well aware of this issue. The United Nations referred to the war in Darfur as the first climate war because the reality was that this area in Africa had previously not been a hotbed of conflict, but as drought conditions intensified, a war developed as people fought over what resources were left. There's a lot on the heads of the oil and gas industry, and we are being asked to preserve them, keep them whole and let the rest of humanity pay the cost.

I have to say—for those who are here now waiting for another debate, many of you come from rural areas—that the reality is, when you look at the scientific studies, there's a projection that in Ontario over the next few decades we will lose the ability to carry on agriculture in many areas simply from rainfall. We will have to go to irrigation where the fresh water is available. Projections of reduction in agricultural production in Canada in grains and corn are in the 30% to 40% range in this century. For those who are already trying to farm in a difficult environment, a projection for a dramatic drop in agriculture production is bad news.

If you look at the studies done by the government of Canada about the substantial increase in the number of

forest fires in this country and the impact it will have on the forestry sector, I say that what we are facing is a dramatic reduction in the standard of living of most people in Canada in order to protect oil and gas and coal interests. Frankly, that is not defensible.

If we want to have a climate strategy that will make a difference, we have to go far beyond awareness. If you want to have something that's actually going to make a difference, you have to have something that's commercially, technologically and politically viable.

I have to say that, in this country, environmentalists have been too focused on the technologically viable, perhaps the commercially viable, and have forgotten what it takes to make something happen politically. In the end, that's the key piece.

I have to say that the oil and gas, coal and nuclear industries understand the political piece really well. I throw the nuclear industry in because investment in nuclear power sucks away the money that you need to actually invest to make a switch to renewable power. That's part of the reason that in the report from the Pembina Institute and the Suzuki Foundation they were saying, "Don't invest in nuclear power." In this province, we have a commitment to nuclear power that will cripple the transition to a green economy. That's a substantial issue.

The good news for all of us is that we can take a very different path, a very different direction, and we are in a situation of financial crisis, an economic crisis that, in fact, opens the door to rebuilding the economy here. We have people who are unemployed. We have interest rates at historically low levels. We have the need to renew our electricity infrastructure and, frankly, we need to renew our whole energy infrastructure. Too often in Ontario, we focus on electricity. We forget about oil, gas and coal.

In other jurisdictions, increasingly, they're thinking in those terms. In Toledo, Ohio, 6,000 people work in the solar industry—one city. People in academia, people in the commercial sector, manufacturing, people who used to make windshields are now making the glass for solar panels. In Michigan, the Democratic administration has taken advantage of money made available by the federal government to invest heavily in battery production for electric cars. They are making steps to build factories worth in the hundreds of millions of dollars to manufacture batteries in that state so they can have an electric car industry.

Here in Ontario, we have a climate change action plan that lacks action, a plan that lacks numbers and lacks respectable targets. Mr. McNeely was quite correct: The federal government doesn't respect the Kyoto targets; neither does the Ontario Liberal government. Its climate plan doesn't meet Kyoto and, for 2020, more than a decade out, doesn't meet the targets the United Nations says are necessary to at least stabilize the climate.

I have to say to you that I have no use for the Harper government's approach. It is one that one can condemn morally and ethically. But frankly, although it's packaged much more nicely with much better rhetoric, the McGuinty plan is just as limited and will not have the impact that we really need to transform our economy.

You have to know that other jurisdictions are beginning to understand that not only do we have a physical problem before us, but we have this extraordinarily promising manufacturing opportunity. China has committed to spending \$44 billion a year over the next decade to develop renewable power. They understand the market and manufacturing opportunity that's presented to them. South Korea, a much smaller jurisdiction, is planning to spend between \$8 billion and \$10 billion over the next decade to become leaders in two areas of the renewable power revolution. We're a small jurisdiction. We could be focused on a number of pieces of renewable energy and become leaders in North America. We are far too small in our thinking, far too limited in our thinking.

So when I respond to the private member's bill put forward, I say to the member: You're going to have to build a coalition of business, of labour and of government that will transform manufacturing in this province, much as the Conservatives at the beginning of the 20th century led the establishment of Ontario Hydro to set the basis for the industrialization of Ontario. I don't see that happening with this government. I see the carving out of a small piece of the electricity sector for renewable power. I voted in favour of the Green Energy Act. I thought that, small as it was, it was useful to do. But in terms of what has to happen both to take on climate change and to actually transform our economy in a fundamental way, that isn't what's before us.

Mr. McNeely, I thank you for bringing forward the bill. I think people need the information. But our problem is no longer a lack of awareness; our problem is a fundamental one—a lack of action.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Reza Moridi: I am pleased to rise in this House on behalf of the residents of my riding of Richmond Hill to speak on Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change, brought forward by my friend and colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

I wanted to begin by first applauding my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing forward this bill. It's a bill most significant and much needed, given the kind of environmental crisis happening not only in Ontario but all over Canada and, in fact, the world.

Climate change has become a global issue and requires full co-operation across provinces, nations and countries. I'm sure everyone in this House is familiar with the Kyoto Protocol agreement, which was signed in 1997 by a total of 184 countries as part of an international initiative to address climate change. The agreement aimed at combatting global warming by significantly reducing the member nations' greenhouse emissions. This agreement was a significant step forward in our history, one that I hope will guide our society as a whole towards a more green-friendly culture.

1510

We are now in the year 2009, 12 years after signing the Kyoto Protocol. How much has changed? Where are we now in Canada? I am saddened to report that we are

in no better position than when that agreement was signed. Our greenhouse emissions increased by 27% between the years 1990 and 2004, and continue to rise. Our federal government has continuously ignored its obligations and has gone as far as to ignore a private member's bill that successfully passed in the House of Commons in February 2007, which would ensure that Canada take effective and timely action to meet its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and help address the problem of global climate change. It also set out that the government prepare a climate change plan on an annual basis, another provision that has been ignored by our federal government. This continuous ignorance on the pressing issue of climate change must stop. We must move forward and help prepare the next generation for the challenges awaiting them, and this takes me to my next point.

I would like to particularly commend the member from Ottawa–Orléans for the attention he has brought to the importance and significance of public education with regard to climate change. Protecting the environment by passing laws and bringing forward legislation is all very good, but education is the key, particularly the education of our younger generation. With the ever-increasing availability of technology, we have an obligation to educate our children. By such education, children can find information on any topic they are interested in. From Google to Facebook, the new wave of information technology has given us a great tool in educating our children.

However, it seems that the topic of climate change must be brought to the attention of our children in schools. As a government, we should do whatever we can to make sure that our young people are fully aware of the importance of climate change, in particular, and of environmental issues in general. I'm certain that this will occur with the passing of this bill.

The issue of climate change is a non-partisan issue. The threat to our environment is very clear, and is becoming more and more present in our daily lives. I hope that everyone in this House can look past political lines and support Bill 208. We must take the threat of climate change seriously and make the necessary changes to ensure the safety and health of future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure to join the debate this afternoon and to support my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans on this bill, An Act to increase awareness of climate change, which looks at engaging young people, specifically schoolchildren, in the process of environmental awareness.

When I listen to the debate today, I hear the opposition and the third party saying, "We have to go past awareness." Well, fair enough. And we have. We have gone past the awareness piece, and I think that Bill 208 just continues to build on this. The preamble of the bill states, "It is vital that Ontario's young people be made aware of the direction we are going as a province, a nation and a

planet, with respect to climate change.” No one could argue with that. That’s absolutely a fact. It is vital that our students understand that. So I thought it would be helpful, in support of the bill today, to take a look at what we already do in the education system that supports this and look at this as a springboard of next steps and where we go from here.

On June 22, 2007, our Minister of Education, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, accepted the report of a working group that was presented to the curriculum council, called *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future*. That report made 32 recommendations—policy development, leadership and accountability, curriculum, teaching—and I’m proud to say that the government will be moving ahead on all 32 of those recommendations.

The ministry has developed an environmental education policy framework entitled *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*. It’s in accordance with recommendation number one from the *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future* document. The goal of this policy framework is that by the end of grade 12, students will develop the knowledge, the skills, the perspectives and practices they need to participate as environmentally conscious and environmentally responsible citizens at a global level, at a national level, and, as we stand here and represent our ridings—mine of Kitchener–Conestoga—absolutely at a local level, and what they can do in their schools, which takes us back to Bill 208.

This government believes that the environmental education policy must encourage and support an Ontario education system that delivers effective environmental education, but at the same time models environmentally responsible practices. And how do we do that? We go to our youth, we go to our students in our schools, and we model these practices. We teach them this, and it becomes a way of life for them that they carry into the future.

Speaking of the future—that was an unintended segue—I wanted to give a quote from Roberta Bondar, who was chair of the working group that made the 32 recommendations that were accepted by the minister. Dr. Bondar said, “After observing the planet for eight days from space, I have a deeper interest and respect for the forces that shape our world. Each particle of soil, each plant and animal is special. I also marvel at the creativity and ingenuity of our own species, but at the same time, I wonder why we all cannot see that we create our future each day, and that our local actions affect the global community, today as well as for generations to come.”

Throughout the document, the recommendation is that schools and—of course, the statement is that schools have a vital role to play in preparing our young people to take their place as informed, engaged and empowered citizens who will be pivotal in shaping the future of our communities, our province, our country and our global environment, and Bill 208 today continues to move forward with that in increasing awareness of climate change. As a result, students will understand the fundamental connection between their place in the world and

the larger world around them, in relationship to their responsibility to food, water, energy, air, land and the interaction with all living things. The education system, as a result, will provide opportunities within the classroom for students to become engaged in actions that will deepen this understanding.

We’ve heard from the member from Ottawa–Orléans that this is also a mechanism by which to engage students across the province to become actively involved in this pursuit of environmental education, that is absolutely crucial to the development and the formulation and the formation—the morphology, really—of how our future will look.

Part of the springboard for Bill 208 includes what we already do in the ministry in terms of what students should know in environmental education as part of the curriculum; teachers receiving the knowledge and skills they need to model and mentor for the students; learning; and schools’ ability to provide not just an education for students and parents but for the larger community.

1520

As I run out of time, I direct us back to the bill. The bill looks at—no single person, community, country or continent alone is responsible, but we need to do this all together as a community.

I commend my colleague today on bringing forward Bill 208.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. McNeely, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I wish to thank the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Toronto–Danforth, Richmond Hill and Kitchener–Conestoga for their remarks on this bill.

I’d like to start off by stating Ontario’s position, because I have been close to it over the last few years. I’m really pleased that we are moving ahead and we’re closing the coal-fired plants. I think that is tremendous. That is a major undertaking. We have to thank the people of Ontario, because that’s going to be costing every taxpayer dollars to do what is right.

The Green Energy Act, brought in by Minister Smitherman, has really taken us forward in renewables and in conservation. This is very important. Now we have the cap-and-trade legislation that we’ll be debating, I understand, next week.

The targets set by Ontario are targets below the 1990 levels. It’s 6% by 2014, 15% by 2020, and 80% below the 1990 levels by 2050. I think those targets are tough targets, and they’re targets that we’re moving forward to meet.

The people who spoke to the bill today all made important comments, and I certainly liked the comments from the member from Kitchener–Conestoga that relate it to the curriculum in schools, and how I think it’s very important that we get our youth a lot more aware of what’s happening. They’re ready; they’ve helped us with many environmental challenges and they will continue to do so.

In the late 1980s David Suzuki referred to global warming as “a slow-motion catastrophe,” one they ex-

pected to kick in in perhaps generations, but only two decades later, we see that's different. I hope today's discussion moves forward the considerations on the environment.

I thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will vote on this ballot item in about 50 minutes.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the province of Ontario must impose a moratorium on all new wind turbine projects in Ontario until such time as Ontario's chief medical officer of health, the Ministry of Health ... and the Ministry of the Environment have stated that wind turbines do not have any adverse health effects on people who live near them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Murdoch moves private members' notice of motion number 116. Pursuant to standing order number 98, Mr. Murdoch, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: First I'd just like to tell the assembly how this happened. I have a good friend and mate here, John O'Toole, who phoned me a couple of weeks ago. John wanted to change private members' bills with me. At that point I really hadn't thought of mine—mine was going to be in November—and I actually told John no. But as most people here will know, John O'Toole is pretty persistent, so he decided to phone me himself. When I got that, I thought, "Well, he must really want to change, and he must have some ideas." I was at home and I had to think. It didn't take me too long, though, to think about what I would do. I phoned John back and said, "Hey, I've got an idea."

You see, for some time now, my offices at Queen's Park and Owen Sound have been getting letters and calls from people living near industrial wind turbines, about the noise levels making them sick. The people who live close to these massive structures are complaining about experiencing a number of health problems, most commonly sleep—how do you say that word?

Interjection: Deprivation.

Mr. Bill Murdoch:—deprivation—I'd better say that word right, because we want to know what it is—cardiac problems, nausea, severe headaches. All of the negative health effects experienced by these people have been compiled and reported on in several published reports, which I'm sure most of you have either read or heard about. One of the published reports is on the way to your offices. It'll come in a green folder. I've taken the liberty of mailing it to everyone in this assembly so that you will get a copy of it. Hopefully you will read it.

I initially told the constituents there was nothing within my legislative power that I could do to help change the situation: I could not scrap the Green Energy Act. After explaining this fact to them, I'd always refer them to the man in charge of the energy file, Mr. George Smitherman, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, who has been handed sweeping powers and absolute

control over industrial wind projects in Ontario. As you know, when we passed Bill 150 you gave George all the power he needs and overruled any municipalities which may have different ideas. They may want to look at some of these things, but this assembly, when it voted in favour of Bill 150, gave the power to the minister. I told the people, my constituents, that he was the only one who could mitigate their suffering by undoing the regulations, changing the setbacks and ordering these massive wind structures to be erected further away from peoples' homes. But his office dithered and nothing was done.

When I called back my friend the member for Durham, I told him I was going to introduce a resolution to call for a moratorium on wind farm development in Ontario until such time as our chief medical officer of health of Ontario stated publicly that wind turbines are not making people sick. Now, I feel that she should be in control of this, because if we're going to make people sick by doing something, then she's going to get this on her lap to sort out. As you know, when SARS comes along or any of the other problems we have, it always goes to our chief medical officer, so I believe that she should be in the loop on this. If she doesn't have problems maybe there are no problems, but we'll get to her just a little later on here.

Since announcing my intention to do this, many members of this House have approached me to say, "You know, this is a good idea." I wish they'd thought of it first, especially John. John O'Toole is always telling me things like that, because John just had one of his bills pass: the cellphone bill. That was John O'Toole's idea, but the government of the day took it; it took a good idea from a Conservative and made it law. I don't know whether it's such a good idea or not, but I didn't get a chance—I wasn't here the day they voted on it; I may not have. But John was the one who thought about that, so you've got to give John credit.

The first member to say that to me was the member from Durham. You will hear from some of them in a short while. Some you have already heard from, such as member Lisa MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton. She spoke about the effects of wind turbines in this House the other day and she supports my resolution, along with my friend in the chair today, Jim Wilson, who doesn't get a chance to debate it today because he is in the chair doing his job, but he has indicated to me that he would support this resolution if he had a chance.

Also, my resolution has been supported by Grey Bruce medical officer of health Dr. Hazel Lynn. She's been at many of the meetings that have happened in my constituency and said there seem to be people who have problems with this, but it's not her mandate to do anything at this time. But if the chief medical officer of Ontario takes it as her mandate, then she will get involved, and I understand from the chief medical officer that she, in the very near future, is going to have a meeting with the other medical officers across Ontario to discuss this very project.

As you know, a lot of your constituents have come to different members, all members—maybe not so much the

members in the big cities, but all the rural members and northern members here must have been contacted by some of these people, because we have them in the House today from all over Ontario. It's not just Grey and Bruce; this is an Ontario problem, and it's all to do with the Green Energy Act and what the regulations say. They ignored the people who said they had problems with this and went ahead and gave all the powers to one minister to go ahead and put them wherever he feels like.

We talked about the chief medical officer of health. A member from the Ministry of Health's so-called—what do they call him? He was not an adviser; he had come out with whatever he felt that the minister should say. But this gentleman two days ago told the media—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's called a spin doctor.
1530

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Spin doctor: Is that what they're called? Yes, I guess so. I was trying to be nice so far, but the spin doctors in the government.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: You're trying to be nice?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: So far, anyway. I'm hoping the government will vote for this resolution today, because it's not a hard resolution to vote for. If you're going to make people sick, maybe we should look at that before we continue on. It's not a hard thing to do.

But anyway, the spin doctors from the Ministry of Health informed the media that our chief medical officer was onside. He said absolutely, she was. If you don't believe me, look at some reports. Lorrie Goldstein in the Toronto Sun wrote that. He said he asked this gentleman and he said, "Absolutely, she's onside." Isn't this funny? Yesterday, the chief medical officer was in estimates and she was asked if she was onside. She said, "No, we're still studying it." That's right from her. So somebody at the ministry is leading us astray.

You wouldn't want to say they lied; it would be bad to say something like that, and I never want to say that in the House, but something happened. They got a different opinion. Something must have happened. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to get you upset by anything like that and I would never say that anybody in this House would do that, but somebody who maybe works for people in this House may have done that. At least they misled the media and said that she's onside. But yesterday, in a committee hearing—it was estimates, and Christine Elliott asked a question. Let's see; we'll just find it here.

This is what the member for Whitby—Oshawa, Ms. Elliott, asked the chief medical officer of health during estimates on Tuesday, October 27: "So at the moment you don't have a formal position?" Response: "No, we're still reviewing."

That fits right in with my resolution. All I'm saying is that we put a moratorium on any new wind turbines until the medical officer of health for Ontario gets a chance to come up with her opinion of whether there are problems with it or there aren't problems with it. I'm not a doctor, so I don't know. But you see a lot of people here who claim that they have problems, so they can't all be dreaming. There must be something to this.

I don't know whether we need a new report and somebody to run around Ontario to look at a report, because there must be tons of them out of Europe. There are all kinds of windmills in Europe. Do we need to do that? I'm not sure, but let the medical officer tell us what she wants. Until she does that, I'm claiming that we shouldn't build any new ones, because in the McGuinty era, as I understand it, he wants, what is it, 7,000 of them so he can get rid of the coal-fired generators? Which he promised to do, which he hasn't done—another broken promise. Maybe he doesn't want 7,000 turbines; I don't know. You can't believe him. He tells you one thing and does something different. But if they even want 1,000 more by next year, does that mean there are going to be 2,000 or 3,000 people sick? I don't know, but that's why we have a chief medical officer here: to tell us. I think we had better stop.

I've been told, "If we put a moratorium on, there are all these jobs that are going to be lost," and things like this. If we lose a job but we keep somebody from getting sick, I think that's a heck of a lot better. I don't think jobs should override people getting sick. The other one I heard was, "If we close down the coal-fired generating plants, we'll make people better." Maybe that's true, but do we make other people sick just because we're going to close them down and put in all these wind farms? I'm not one to say that they're going to make them sick, but I think that's why we have a chief medical officer: to do that.

I think that's what should be done, and I would hope that in this House, like-minded people—we're all here to look after people in Ontario. It's not just Grey, Bruce and Owen Sound; we're looking after everybody in rural and northern Ontario. I understand there's one to go down here in the city in the Scarborough Bluffs, if I'm not mistaken. There's someone in Ms. Best's riding, so I'm sure she'll be here to vote for this and tell us what she wants done. That's why I think we need a moratorium.

The other thing is, if you don't put a moratorium on, then we'll drag it out forever. Should we produce more wind farms just because we want to drag it out and because they need more? I don't think we should be doing that. I think we should put a moratorium on and find out the facts before we do any more. So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for being able to talk.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I know Bill's popular, but I'll just remind you that you can't clap or participate in the debate, please.

The honourable member for Oak Ridges—Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's my pleasure to enter into what I think is a very important debate which is occurring this afternoon. I would like to thank the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound in bringing this concern forward. I want to acknowledge the concern, which is entirely valid. Many constituents obviously across Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound feel very strongly on this issue, and many Ontarians are also extremely concerned about the health effects of wind turbines, whether there are any. They want some debate on the matter.

I think I can understand this fully. I am the former medical officer of health for York region. In that capacity, I often had to look at situations where there might be some scientific ambiguity and respond in a responsible way to those concerns. I think we know that when people see 18-metre wind turbines dotting the landscape, they are naturally anxious about any potential health effects. I'm very familiar with the precautionary principle that, at all possible times, we do not want to inflict any harm on the population. I used that as the former medical officer of health as it related to electromagnetic fields from high-voltage transmission lines.

When I was appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, this was actually one of the first areas that I wanted to look at and be briefed on. What I found was that there was a very excellent review of the evidence by Dr. Ray Copes and Karen Rideout from the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, which is an arm's-length agency funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. They conducted this review on behalf of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. They looked specifically at the areas of concern, in particular, sound, noise levels, intensity, low-frequency noise, infrasound, electromagnetic field exposure, shadow, flicker, icing of the turbine blades, structural failure and so on, and they came to a conclusion. They came to several, but the one that I want to address at this point, because I know many of my colleagues want to enter into this debate, was their conclusion that, based on best available evidence, any identified risk can be addressed through siting or setbacks and operating practices.

I was pleased to learn—and I'm sure this will be very reassuring for the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—that, in fact, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. Arlene King, on October 21 this year, wrote to medical officers of health and environmental health directors. I'll quote directly from her letter:

“The public health division, in collaboration of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and Infrastructure and with the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, has reviewed the concerns expressed by some regarding health impacts of wind turbines, specifically wind turbine farms. A status update is being provided at this time so as to support common levels of information and public communication.”

She goes on to say, “The literature review revealed that while there are anecdotal reports of symptoms such as sleep disturbance, headaches, dizziness, anxiety, concentration and learning problems, and tinnitus”—that's ringing in your ears—“there is no scientific evidence, to date, to demonstrate a causal association between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects. A few Swedish studies reported that noise from wind turbines is annoying to some people.”

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I know that the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound referred to some comments made by Dr. King at the estimates committee, and I do have, from that

transcript from October 27, a clarification that she gave to some of her previous comments. In response to Mr. Jim Brownell's question related to a causal association between turbine noise and adverse health effects, Dr. King said the following:

“Yes, in terms of the existing literature right now, we have not found an association between adverse health effects and wind turbines. We're continuing, again, to review that information, as I said earlier, and determine where there may be gaps in the literature that exist in order to be able to develop a common view among myself and all of my medical officer of health colleagues across our province.”

Our government has made very stringent setbacks to address the concern raised by Dr. Copes—550 metres—with noise at the periphery of the property of 40 decibels.

We are also absolutely committed to establishing a research chair in conjunction with the Ontario council of universities. This is not the time for us to succumb to analysis paralysis; it is the time for us to move forward based on what we know, and I can assure this House that in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of the Environment, I will be urging the establishment of that research chair at the earliest opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome the opportunity to talk to this one, and I want to say at the outset that I support this resolution in its intention. As you know, it's a resolution to provide some answers to questions with respect to health and the impact of these wind turbines, given the deluge of disturbing reports of the effects from those and many people in my area in Haldimand–Norfolk. I know people are here today from my area who live in close proximity to these provincially approved wind turbines, and given the reported plans locally for another 200 or more turbines on or adjacent to Lake Erie—there are plans for 200 to be built offshore. We already have—and I haven't counted them all; I'm not sure—80 or 90 that stretch from Lowbanks, Dunnville, right through to the Port Burwell area in Elgin county.

Given that, I do feel it's incumbent on this government, as the resolution states, to impose a moratorium on all new wind turbine projects in Ontario until such time as the chief medical officer of health, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Environment have stated that wind turbines do not have any adverse health effects on the people who live near them.

If the minister is confident that there is no health impact, then we very simply ask: Say so, tell us. Let us know definitively. If not, it bears investigation, and there's nothing wrong with neutral, objective, research evidence. We're not scientists. Bodies of work are out there, and for us to make decisions, we need those kinds of facts. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound indicated that the government has a responsibility as well as a mandate to investigate such claims. We've heard the claims of sleep deprivation, heart palpitations, things like that.

Mr. McGuinty did promise a number of months ago to set up an academic research chair. I think that's a good idea. I spent 20 years with a research organization, and it's incumbent on us to have access to the best scientific information available. Regrettably, we know this government's track record as far as keeping promises; there is no research chair. I don't know whether the Premier has any real intention of keeping that one, and providing us with the resultant scientific information that has been promised to us.

Many of us in rural Ontario call these turbines neighbours—they're 300 feet tall. You don't really have to be a scientist to question the possible impact of not only the massive arms of these turbines, but the generator itself. You can hear the dull roar, the grinding of the gears, the mechanical mechanism within these structures. I don't have the answers to a lot of this. I think it's important that we be provided with this kind of information.

We've heard of Dr. Robert McMurtry, former dean of medicine, University of Western Ontario. He has called on the province to undertake an independent epidemiological study on whether noise and low-frequency vibrations do have a negative impact on health.

I'll just cut to the chase. I know other people are speaking. One person here today, Stephana Johnston from Clear Creek, is in the visitors' gallery. I think everybody knows where Clear Creek is, down on Lake Erie. She has a proposal. A turbine town needs to be purchased as an experimental facility: "Is it ideal? With 18 [turbines] within a three-kilometre radius of a few varied types of residences, some of the present residents might volunteer to stay on as guinea pigs for the experimental phase.

"The design of the experiment would have to be done with extreme care by an arm's-length neutral research body so that all sides of the debate will be convinced with the results.

"Let's stop the nickel-and-dime waste, the Mickey Mouse measurements and get down to the really hard work of a conclusive experiment here."

I agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

I have to say first off that I have tremendous respect for Mr. Murdoch, and I'm not being coy or playing games. You may be one of the shrewdest political people in this House. I've watched your career. You've survived purges, you've survived faith-based funding for schools, so obviously you're a man who tests the political currents on a regular basis.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He had his own independent party.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes. He may be one of the only fourth-party members in this House who has gone through election cycles and come back triumphant. I disagree with you but I respect you.

There are people who have come here today who travelled a good distance. They didn't come here because

they like travelling; they came here because they have serious concerns, and I say to them, with great respect, that I disagree with you, but I also recognize that you're not here on a frivolous basis; you're here because you have a point of view that you want to have expressed, and I think Mr. Murdoch has done you well in doing that.

I'm in a situation where I have actually had an opportunity to listen to a number of these arguments and debates. I had the opportunity—the honour—to sit on the committee that travelled around Ontario and listened to the presentations on the Green Energy Act, listened to people who were dealing with a variety of problems, both with wind turbines and other forms of generation. I can see a member from south Mississauga who is here, who is dealing with a proposed gas-fired power plant in his riding. I have had to have that battle myself, and I know that when people are dealing with technologies, questions come up—substantial questions, sometimes; not substantial otherwise, but questions that people clearly care about.

There were people who came to the Green Energy Act hearings from rural areas—farmers—who wanted wind turbines built on their properties because they wanted the revenue to help ensure they could stay on the land. I have had farmers call me who are upset by the setbacks put in place by this provincial government because they wanted more wind turbines on their land so that they could stay on that land.

In the state of Iowa in the United States, the wind industry is a substantial part of that agricultural state's economy. Farmers refer to the wind turbines as their second harvest. I had an opportunity a few years ago to work in Ottawa as a climate adviser to Jack Layton. I had an opportunity then to meet with farmers from Pincher Creek, Alberta. They were there on the Hill lobbying for more wind investment because they said, as cattle farmers, those farmers—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just remind the members in the gallery: Please do not participate in the debate. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Those farmers from Pincher Creek said that if they had not had wind turbines on their property, they would have lost their farms; they would have lost cattle operations that had been in their families for generations. They wanted that investment so that they could maintain the rural life that they valued so profoundly.

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I have to say to you that there is no point in telling people that they don't feel something they feel, and if people here feel irritated by, sick from or annoyed with wind turbines, they simply feel that.

I'm going to set out my arguments and do it in the best way I can to ensure that people who listen to this understand where I'm coming from and where my party is coming from.

We face substantial public health problems in Ontario. The Ontario Medical Association has projected that

something like 9,000 people a year die in Ontario from air pollution—9,000. That's a lot of deaths. And there are many who are sickened. If you have 9,000 die, you probably have tens of thousands who have asthma, who have heart problems, who have respiratory problems, who have to go to the hospital. The OMA calculates the cost of that smog in the billions of dollars in this province. So we face a very substantial public health issue right now. This is not something that we need to debate. Everyone in the House can read the medical literature; they can see the simple reality. We have to move very quickly to move away from fossil fuels in this province because people are being killed by the fossil fuel effluent that we dump into the atmosphere.

There is a desperate need to move on climate change. For those who were here for the earlier debate, I won't go through all of the issues that were put on the table. I can say in passing that in this province and in this country, inaction on climate change will mean a substantial drop in our standard of living. It will mean a further impoverishment of rural Ontario. It will mean substantial reductions in forest cover in this province and all the implications it has for the remaining forest industry. Those two necessities, those two issues, drive the need to rapidly transition to an economy that's based on renewable power, and wind power is one of the most advanced, most developed technologies that we have at hand to move rapidly.

On that basis alone—the need to deal with thousands of deaths and to head off the loss of stability in our society—I support rapid deployment of wind power. In fact, I have publicly said in my riding, in this city, that I support wind power in my riding. And quite frankly, as many in this House will know, I fought aggressively against the gas-fired power plant in my riding and know without any doubt whatsoever that my constituents would have supported wind turbines in the riding, and that they understand, from their experience with the one wind turbine we have in this city—and we need many more—the implications and the advantages to them of having more wind power in urban environments.

I've had an opportunity over the last decade and a half to speak with environmentalists in Europe, to talk with those who have, since the early 1980s, lived in a situation where more and more wind turbines have been deployed—in some areas of Denmark, at a level far denser than anything we see here in Ontario. I've talked to people whose primary focus in their environmental activity is population health, who research toxic chemicals, who work on new developments, new problems with toxic chemicals.

Wind turbines are not an issue as a health issue in European jurisdictions. There are disputes. I won't argue that. There are very different views on how the landscape should look. There are very different feelings about how the wind turbines should be owned, but in my personal conversations with people—and frankly, in asking the legislative library to do the research and bring me the reports from the Journal of the American Medical Asso-

ciation, the Lancet and others, I don't see in the literature any epidemiological evidence that, in fact, we have a health problem that one could classify at the same level as what we're getting from air pollution now.

If there is a problem and if people are here, they must be experiencing something. I have to say that the symptoms that have been described are similar to those I experience as a city resident living on a very busy street. There is noise, and it is unpredictable; sometimes loud, sometimes quiet. I found it very annoying to live on busy streets. It just is; that's the reality.

I've disagreed with Mr. Murdoch, and I've disagreed with the argument that has been made. I want to talk about potential common ground; we can spend all our time arguing, but I always find it a lot more productive to set out, "Okay, so where can we go?" To those who are concerned about far greater investment in wind turbines, who want to limit the amount of investment we have in generation in this society, I say there is common ground to push this Liberal government and any government that happens to be elected in the future to dramatically accelerate efforts at energy efficiency. A number of reports have come forward in the last few years credibly saying that you could cut electricity consumption in this province by 40%. That would have a substantial impact on future investment in any form of generation technology. That is of consequence for us.

Those of you, like Mr. Murdoch, who are concerned about the issue of power generation should be aware that this government doesn't have that as a goal. It should have that as a goal. I support the investment in wind, but even more, I support the investment in energy efficiency. You should know—Mr. Murdoch may know—that when we had the Green Energy Act hearings, we had credible testimony that the energy efficiency codes for buildings in this province are not enforced. When new buildings are built that are electrically heated or cooled, the building code for efficiency is not enforced, which drives up the amount of power needed, which drives up the amount of generation that's invested in. There needs to be credible enforcement of the energy efficiency code.

We need to be looking at cogeneration. Right now there are hospitals across this province that run boilers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Those hospitals could be making power at the same time they are making heat. They'd provide themselves with emergency power and feed power into the grid. It would not increase the burden on our environment, and it would reduce the demand for new electricity generation. The strategy of energy efficiency, of maximizing the use of any fuel we do burn, is a way one could find common ground to reduce the amount of new generation capacity that is invested in, in this province.

This is going to be an ongoing question, because people will disagree about land use zoning and disagree about this technology. But we in this province have to take action to make sure we clean up the air in this province. One of the best avenues we have right now, one of the fastest to deploy and least expensive, aside

from energy efficiency, is wind, and we need to take that option.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I want to thank the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his motives in bringing forward this resolution. Protecting public health and safety is, of course, one of the most important duties we have as legislators. I want to thank the people who made the long trek down to Queen’s Park, who are here because they believe in the issues they are fighting for.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care listened to individuals and groups with concerns about wind turbines. I don’t want to get into that, because my learned colleague Dr. Helena Jaczek has gone into the health issues in the debate today. I want to speak more as an engineer and as someone who has been working with the Green Energy Act, and more on the setbacks—the setbacks have been established across this province. I want to talk more about the reasons that Ontario strongly supports wind power in the first place.

We just heard from the member for Toronto–Danforth about the reasons we have to get more clean energy available for Ontario and get rid of dirty coal. His records show that there are 9,000 deaths on an annual basis from coal-fired plants. We’ve talked about that since 2003 and we’re getting very close. I believe that we’re at about 40% or 50% reduction in coal-fired plants in this province already, and we’ll have no more coal in 2014.

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These turbines are helping to replace electricity currently produced by burning coal. “The impact of Ontario’s coal closure plan will reduce Ontario’s carbon dioxide emissions by up to 30 megatonnes” and all those other emissions that affect health that also go with it.

We know that there are serious and direct impacts on human health from burning coal. That’s why wind energy is being promoted so much by our province.

I have to leave sufficient time for the other member to speak to it, but I would just like to again thank the member for bringing this forward. It’s an important motion and it’s important that this has the opportunity to be before us today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I am pleased to speak and support the resolution today. Although I don’t have any wind farms proposed in my riding, I am supporting Ontarians who have had democracy pulled out from under them and also from under their local municipalities.

Much like myself, I’m certain that Premier McGuinty, his Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and his caucus colleagues are hearing from thousands of Ontarians with respect to their very serious concerns about the unstudied adverse health effects of wind turbines. They’re hearing from you, but they’re not listening and they’re certainly not acting. They are in their thinking place.

Regardless of these concerns, this government is continuing to go down the road of approval for construction of future wind farm projects without taking into consideration the concerns you’ve raised.

I cannot argue the importance of renewable energy, but without proper, conclusive scientific studies, I cannot speak to the placement of these wind turbines.

I am sure that the Premier and his Minister of Energy and Infrastructure are aware of the many reports that have looked at the potential adverse effects of wind turbines. Experts like Dr. Robert McMurtry, the former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, say that more than 100 people informally surveyed and others around the world living close to turbines have complained about similar symptoms: sleep deprivation, cardiac arrhythmia, nausea, heart palpitations and severe headaches, to name a few. Dr. Harrison, professor emeritus in physics at Queen’s University, says, “Wind turbine noise causes annoyance and health problems. These problems include sleeplessness; anxiety; headaches and migraines; depression; and an accentuation of learning disabilities.”

If the Premier and his minister are not going to listen to the recommendations and warnings in the various reports that have been completed, then my question is, what studies have they done that look into the potential health effects of industrial wind turbines? What is the government doing to address the concerns of Ontarians? What studies have they done and where are these studies?

I think we all know the answer is that the McGuinty Liberals have not done any studies, despite the fact that they said they would. Back in May of this year, this government said that they would establish an academic research chair to examine potential public health effects of renewable energy projects. But to this date, we’ve heard that Minister Gerretsen says that his government is still “looking for the right university” for this position. That was in September. Now it’s almost November, and the wind projects continue to be approved and constructed.

Ontario has a long list of great universities that excel in academic excellence. The Premier and his minister should just choose one and move on with this immediately.

Perhaps the delay is caused by the fact that the Premier and his minister are more familiar with having their work done by Liberal friends, as we saw in the eHealth scandal, friends who will give them the conclusion they want. Nonetheless, they need to take action and they need to take it today. Ontarians are looking for answers now, and this government has an obligation to provide them these answers before continuing to approve more wind turbine projects without understanding the adverse health effects.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I’m pleased to rise today to support this important resolution brought forward by my colleague the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

I want to make it clear that I support green energy. Being involved in agriculture, I know how important is the relationship that we have with our land and how we depend on it. But as we move forward, we need to make smart decisions about our environment and our hydro system. We cannot just blindly support everything that's labelled green.

This resolution is not against, or for, wind turbines; it's simply saying that we can't proceed without doing the proper scientific research to ensure that the health of Ontarians is protected.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of citizens from Oxford who are concerned about wind turbines and their impact on the health of nearby residents. I want to thank this group for the work they have done to ensure that my colleagues and I are fully briefed on the issue—and a great number of them are in the gallery today.

I don't have the time to go into all the research that they've provided, but it is clear that there are a number of serious issues about turbines that need to be answered fully and scientifically before we move forward with any more projects.

There are three different proposals of wind turbine developments in Oxford. With three different developers, the one thing that is consistent is that residents are worried about the impact of turbines on their health, and they are not getting satisfactory answers from the provincial government. In fact, hundreds of my constituents signed petitions supporting the idea of a moratorium on building turbines until their concerns are addressed. And I hope in the coming weeks to present those petitions to the Legislature.

All those people and the people in the gallery today have valid concerns. I know that all the members of this Legislature have received e-mails from families who live near wind turbines, and they have told us about the health problems that are driving them from their homes.

Through regulation, the minister has established a setback of 550 metres. Ontarians don't know if this is correct, nor do I. We are not scientists, and we haven't done the in-depth research to know what distance is safe. Perhaps the people can live closer to turbines. Maybe people shouldn't be living within a kilometre or two of the turbines. We just don't know.

Unless the government has done a full study to this issue that they aren't sharing with us, I don't think they know either. Doesn't it make sense to answer those questions before you build more turbines and before we allow companies to invest money in planning and developing these projects?

If we don't determine the health impacts and establish proper scientific setbacks, what do we do when we find out that 550 metres is too close? Does the government pay to move families that are suffering? Do we compensate the companies for building turbines they can't operate? Do we force the company to take the loss and go back and send the message that Ontario is not a good

place to invest? We owe it to Ontarians, especially the people who live near turbines, to ensure that they have done the proper research—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

We're almost done, people in the gallery, so you'll want to stick around for the vote.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Before I make my own comments, I was asked by my colleague from Huron-Bruce to read a statement into the record for her:

"I will not be supporting this resolution by the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

"During the public hearings for the Green Energy Act, no science-based evidence was brought forward to suggest that wind turbine developments were causing adverse health effects. It has been further confirmed by the chief medical officer of health that, based on all scientific evidence gathered to date, there exists nothing that would demonstrate a casual association between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects.

"Several of my constituents have concerns regarding their specific properties. To that end, I have made a written request to the Minister of the Environment to make certain that their outstanding concerns are addressed as a top priority of the academic research chair."

I myself have, over time, as a member, but also just as a farmer, watched and read and listened to a variety of research documents and many discussion papers, and I've even had the opportunity to get papers from the Netherlands to see what they are doing there because, of course, they have had wind turbines far longer than we have here.

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The one thing I've noticed over and over again is that there's not only a large volume of research, documentation and anecdotal information, but a lot of it conflicts and a lot of it doesn't always agree. I'm reminded of the fact that when I first brought forward the stray voltage bill, having good scientific data and research was really important and really critical in terms of a statement of opinion. We needed to be able to prove that something existed before we could approach the remediation of that issue.

So I find that it was very important to have that kind of research done, and I was really pleased when the Minister of the Environment said that he was going to establish a research chair. As some have pointed out—they're saying, "Well, what happened to the research chair?" Actually, I have here a press release from the Council of Ontario Universities, in which they say, "The Council of Ontario Universities today announced that it will launch a competitive process on behalf of the Ontario government for one chair in renewable energy technologies and health and two chairs in green chemistry and engineering." We are moving forward with this, and when someone said, "Well, is it going to be picked by the minister or by the Premier?"—I think having this work done by the Council of Ontario Universities and having it tendered is much more appropriate. So we are moving forward in that direction.

I have had in my riding a number of proposals for wind turbines. I also have existing wind turbine farms. There have been public meetings in my communities. There was one very recently in Adelaide Metcalfe. I was unable to attend because it was a Tuesday night and we were here in Toronto, but my staff was there and they came back and they heard from people and heard their concerns.

I want to say thank you to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound because I do think we need to debate this. I think that we—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

Mr. Murdoch, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I want to thank the three Liberal members from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Ottawa–Orléans and Oak Ridges–Markham, and just say that all I can do is go by what was quoted by the chief medical officer. I know they keep saying that she wrote a letter that she didn't think there were any concerns, but yesterday when she was asked—and I'm just quoting from this: "So at the moment you don't have a formal position?" And her response was, "No"—well, no means no. You guys got that now? That's what I understood: no means no—"we're still reviewing...." So it means that she doesn't have a position; at least that's what I would take from "no." I think that our medical officer doesn't have a position at this time. That's why I'm saying that we need to put a moratorium on this because, do we have the right here to make people sick because of something we do?

The Toronto–Danforth member, Peter—I appreciate the kind words and that; he's a great politician and he works hard, but in Toronto you've got one windmill—one of them. One. So what do you give a damn about it? You don't. You've got one bloody windmill. We've got them all in rural Ontario. That's what we're upset about. They're all in rural Ontario. They're not down here in Toronto, so it's easy for him to say—and I agree with all he said about how we need to have better sources of electricity and things like that. All of that was nice, nice and green and nice to say, but he's from Toronto—one bloody windmill down here. It's all he's got. I mean, what are we doing here, folks?

I want to thank the three members who spoke on my behalf from the party. I've got to mention John Yakabuski—you're just lucky he wasn't here; John wanted me to mention that he worked really hard on this thing too.

So folks, one—remember that; there's only one of those things down here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on Mr. Murdoch's item after we vote on the two previous items that are before us this afternoon.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENTAL INSURANCE), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (ASSURANCE DES LOYERS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item 40, standing in the name of Mr. Prue.

Mr. Prue has moved second reading of Bill 209, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, with respect to landlords' obligation to provide rental insurance. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will have a five-minute bell after we deal with the next two ballot items.

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item 41, standing in the name of Mr. McNeely.

Mr. McNeely has moved second reading of Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. McNeely?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I would like the bill sent to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be sent to the Standing Committee on General Government?

So ordered.

WIND TURBINES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item 42, standing in the name of Mr. Murdoch.

Mr. Murdoch has moved private member's notice of motion 116. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1617 to 1622.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT ACT (RENTAL
INSURANCE), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA
LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION
(ASSURANCE DES LOYERS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I ask all members to please take their seats.

We'll first deal with ballot item number 40, standing in the name of Mr. Prue.

Mr. Prue has moved second reading of Bill 209. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario
Hampton, Howard	Prue, Michael

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Albanese, Laura	Kwinter, Monte	Savoline, Joyce
Arthurs, Wayne	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	Moridi, Reza	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Pendergast, Leeanna	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Phillips, Gerry	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	Rinaldi, Lou	
Hoskins, Eric	Ruprecht, Tony	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 4; the nays are 25.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll open the doors for 30 seconds and then deal with the next ballot item.

WIND TURBINES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. Could you be a little bit quiet so the Clerk can count? It's pretty hard, I'm sure, and distracting for them.

We'll now deal with ballot item number 42, standing in the name of Mr. Murdoch.

Mr. Murdoch has moved private member's notice of motion 116. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dickson, Joe	Rinaldi, Lou
Albanese, Laura	Hoskins, Eric	Ruprecht, Tony
Arthurs, Wayne	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Balkissoon, Bas	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Bisson, Gilles	McNeely, Phil	Sousa, Charles
Brown, Michael A.	Moridi, Reza	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Pendergast, Leeanna	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Phillips, Gerry	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 5; the nays are 27.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day. Government House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Even though we're having so much fun, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1627.

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, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	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
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, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Eric (LIB) Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	St. Paul's 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 Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
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)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
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**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
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Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Eric Hoskins, Pat Hoy
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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Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, Reza Moridi
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
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Howard Hampton, 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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
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Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Jeff Leal, Dave Levac
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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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
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