



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 39th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 16 November 2009

Lundi 16 novembre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 November 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 novembre 2009

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mario Sergio: I have the pleasure of introducing a delegation from the wonderful city of Ferrandina, from the region of Basilicata, in the province of Matera, led by the mayor, Raffaele Ricchiuti; Counsellor Vincenzo La Guardia; Ingegnere Angelo Lisanti; Ingegnere Manny DiLece, president of the Basilicata Cultural Society of Canada; the vice-president, Pat Tremamunno; secretary, Vince Primucci; and public relations, Danny Liberatore. I welcome them to Queen's Park in our beautiful province, and I hope they have a wonderful time.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce some guests in the gallery: Stacey Papernick, who is with the Ontario Nurses' Association; Dorothy Algar, who is a PSW and a bargaining unit president; Vicki Cunningham, who is also a PSW; Denise Murphy, who is a registered practical nurse; Stephanie Smith, a PSW; Lillian Marino, who is a supporter; and Andy Summers, who is the regional vice-president of ONA.

Il me fait également plaisir de vous présenter différents membres de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. Je commence avec M. Conrad Mazerolle, qui est de mon côté; j'ai également Anne Vinet-Roy, qui est la vice-présidente et représentante de la FEO; il y a M^{me} Emilie Brochu, qui est la co-présidente de l'unité 62 de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens; nous avons Denis Bonin de Sturgeon Falls, qui est vice-président; M. Paul Baril, qui est sur l'exécutif de Hearst; M^{me} Caroline Brazeau, présidente de la section locale 103 de North Bay; et Sylvie Bédard, qui est de l'AEFO 60A de Cochrane. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Hon. John Milloy: I think members will want to join me in welcoming, in the members' gallery, Herb Epp, the former member of this Legislature from Waterloo North, who served our community ably for many years. We welcome him to Queen's Park.

Interjection: And former mayor.

Hon. John Milloy: A former mayor of the city of Waterloo.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome back.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to welcome Robyn Lin as a new page, and welcome her mom, Andréa Chun, and her sister, Tasha Lin, who are with us in the gallery. Welcome.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Il me fait plaisir de vous présenter des représentants de l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques: Carole Drouin, Dorothée Petit-pas, ainsi qu'une interne, Maegan Baird. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Good morning. Today I would like to welcome the students from Cornell public school in the riding of Scarborough-Guildwood. They will be joining us shortly in the Legislature and the galleries.

Mr. Dave Levac: I have two delegations that have come to join us today from the riding of Brant, one in support of a page—Sean Stemler, Victor Levesque—and another one in terms of a very large charity event that they supported to have lunch in Queen's Park today: Lisa Meggs, Randy Meggs, Caelan Meggs, Susan Cross, Steve Cross, Syd Bolton, Chris Milmine, Pat Foley and Spencer Milmine. They are joining us today for the workings of Queen's Park. Thank you very much, and we enjoy their presence here.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: It is my pleasure to introduce Cathy Steckle, who is in the members' gallery today, and her daughter Valerie is our new page today. You'll recognize the name Steckle as a longstanding member of Parliament from the riding of Huron-Bruce.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: The \$7-billion sweetheart deal that your former Deputy Premier, George Smitherman, negotiated with Samsung caused cabinet leaks and news of an internal rift. Premier, what is it about this deal that had half your cabinet "gang tackle" George Smitherman?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is a great opportunity for me to speak about our Green Energy Act and the tremendous influx of investment it has created. One of the things we set out to do is to ensure that we—that is Ontario, the people of Ontario—stood head and shoulders above every single other North American jurisdiction. In six years we've gone from about 10 wind turbines to 670. They recently built, just outside of Napanee, the third-

largest solar farm in North America. That is just the beginning of an explosion of new investment that we're going to attract here in the province. It's about finding new opportunity in the green economy, creating green jobs and doing ever more so that we can shut down our coal-fired plants and produce a cleaner environment for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I think everybody heard about this gang tackle of your former Deputy Premier except, obviously, for the Premier himself. Let me tell you, Premier: Cabinet broke solidarity to speak out against this deal, quite frankly, because Premier McGuinty refused to ask the tough and uncomfortable questions that a Premier needs to ask of his ministers, particularly George Smitherman.

It looks like some of your cabinet wised up to Smitherman's ways after he wasted some \$837 million in the eHealth boondoggle with sweetheart deals for Liberal friends. Or maybe the Premier heard from the Canadian Wind Energy Association, the Association of Power Producers of Ontario or others who said that a sweetheart deal was "manifestly unfair."

Premier, why don't you release the Samsung deal to the public so that taxpayers can decide if it's a fair deal or another giveaway as your minister went out the door?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Every day we learn more and more about what the leader of the official opposition stands against. Some day it would be nice to learn what he stands for. He now tells us he's against Ontario's Green Energy Act, which I can tell you is making —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Municipal Affairs—it's not helpful.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We now know that the leader of the official opposition remains firmly planted in the 19th century. He stands opposed to the Green Energy Act. He is against any initiatives pursued by Ontario, collectively through their government, to pursue new opportunities in the green economy. We are moving ahead. We're moving ahead aggressively. We have the most proactive and aggressive legislation in all of North America. There's only one other place on this planet which is moving more quickly—and we're on the move—and that is Germany.

Again, I repeat: We are moving as quickly as we can to put in place more capacity when it comes to manufacturing our wind turbines and our solar farm materials, the kinds of—

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

1040

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's the Premier who's stuck in the 19th century with backroom deals that make Tammany Hall look honest. CanWEA, APPrO and CanSIA wrote you on behalf of an industry that is investing billions of dollars in Ontario but were passed over so you could do a sweetheart deal with a Korea-based company. I'm here,

Premier, to say that special sweetheart deals should not be required to achieve the province's energy needs, but the Premier keeps getting caught doing backroom deals rather than open tendering.

Premier, let me ask you this: Did you offer any other energy company the same sweetheart deal that you've given to Samsung?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I don't know what my honourable colleague is afraid of. We are prepared to do business with any company that approaches us and can settle on terms that are advantageous to the people of Ontario, whether that's Samsung or anybody else. One thing we are absolutely committed to doing is finding opportunity in the green economy to ensure we create more green jobs, whether that involves the greening of existing and traditional jobs or the creation of brand new green jobs; for example, installing and maintaining wind turbines. But more than that, we want to put in place capacity so that we can build wind turbines and solar panel materials, so that we can export those to the United States and other parts of Canada. Therein lies tremendous opportunity in the green economy for Ontarians.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier on the same topic: The PC caucus isn't afraid. We're simply worried about a Premier who would rather negotiate shady backroom deals on something as important as our energy supply. Then I'll ask the Premier: If this is not a shady deal, would the Premier tell us who he and his former Deputy Premier have met with from Samsung to negotiate this deal?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the continuing interest on the part of my honourable colleague when it comes to us aggressively prosecuting the Green Energy Act. It would have been nice to have had their support at the time when we introduced the legislation and it became law in the province of Ontario. But now I gather he wants us to find other ways to involve more people. What I say to the leader of the official opposition is, if he's aware of any business that wants to do business with the province of Ontario, wants to get on board when it comes to building a new and stronger green economy, then we're open to his suggestions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, what the industry associations have said about your shady deal is that it "appears to allow the government to direct long-term power purchase agreements and significant transmission capacity to a single company." One would expect that before picking a foreign-based company for a sweetheart deal, the Premier would have met with company representatives to work out the details. But no one from Samsung is registered with the lobbyist registry, not even company executives.

We know the Premier has made it a habit of breaking his promise to stop sole-source sweetheart contracts, but why is the Premier also breaking the lobbying law?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The purpose of the Green Energy Act, as you well know because we stated this in the Legislature many times over, is to create new jobs. In fact, our commitment is to create 50,000 jobs in the next three years in domestic manufacturing and assembly, architecture, construction, trucking, servicing and installation, financing, engineering, electricians, inspectors and computer software and hardware.

My honourable colleague tells us that he's somehow concerned about the implication this will have for domestic business. The single most important thing that we can do to strengthen this economy and create jobs is to put in place a harmonized sales tax, so I would ask my honourable colleague to stand up and do something that is admittedly difficult for that party, which is to lend their support for the HST in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, this is not about the Green Energy Act; it's about the transparency and the integrity of billion-dollar contracts for our energy future, issues the Premier no longer seems to care about, because the Premier knows the energy industry was caught by surprise when the Premier and his former Deputy Premier, George Smitherman, abandoned them to seal this deal with Samsung. They warned you that this foreign-based company has little experience in renewable energy generation and development in our province. The news that no one is registered with the lobbyist registry moves this deal from suspect to shady.

Premier, is this one of the many reasons why your cabinet lost confidence in George Smitherman?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we're very proud of the work that we continue to do as a government and proud of the leadership demonstrated by Minister Smitherman when he served in his capacity as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Our commitment is to create 50,000 new jobs in the green energy sector and to do that as quickly as we can. If there's any company anywhere in the world which wants to approach us and has some kind of an offer or proposal with respect to doing business, of course we're going to sit down with them, and if we can come to terms that are advantageous to the people of Ontario, then of course we will do that; that is what is expected of us.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Ontarians are struggling through a deep recession. This government's cure: a new tax on gasoline and home heating. By this time next year, if the McGuinty government has its way, Thunder Bay seniors Anne and Milton Marion will be paying 8% more on their \$600 heating bill.

Why is this Premier ramming through a new tax that will make Anne and Milton Marion's life so much less affordable?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question, I really do, but I would rephrase it a little bit. "Why do

poverty groups and food banks support our package of tax reforms?" I think is a good way to put the question.

I think it's important to keep in mind that under our package of tax reforms, 93% of Ontarians will get a permanent tax cut. That takes effect in January of this coming year, by the way. The average family with an \$80,000 income will see a 10% tax cut in their personal income taxes; 90,000 low-income Ontarians will no longer pay any personal income tax. And here's an important example: A single parent on social assistance with two children will save over \$1,200 under our tax plan.

This is about helping all Ontarians, but we pay particular heed to those in low-income groups.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For every dollar the HST will cost consumers, only 18 cents are being returned through income tax cuts, and this Premier knows it.

Wherever I travel in the province, I hear worried Ontarians who are talking about the HST. In fact, Rich Whitehead from St. Catharines said this: "Five years ago I worked one full-time job 10 kilometres from home and struggled to make ends meet. Now, having lost that job, I drive to Mississauga to work one full-time job and race home to work a second part-time job in the evenings. I have trouble paying for things like groceries and utilities. We've cut back in every way we can ... there's not even enough for necessities. You're kicking me while I'm down. The HST will hurt my family."

Why is this Premier kicking Ontarians like Rich when they're down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to draw to my colleague's attention a very important report that was released recently by Dr. Jack Mintz. It was peer-reviewed by four economists, including Don Drummond and Jim Stanford of the CAW, so we've got quite a spectrum there in terms of economists who've looked at it. What Dr. Mintz said is that because of our package of tax reforms, over the course of the next 10 years, 591,000 more jobs will be created than otherwise would have been the case.

Fundamentally, this is about jobs. It's about ensuring that gentlemen like the one referred to by my colleague have the opportunity to earn a good living, to enjoy a good standard of living and to look at his kids with a sense of pride, knowing they're making it on their own. This is about building more jobs in the province of Ontario and it's about building a better future for all Ontarians.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last year, Jack Mintz said that the HST was going to kill up to 40,000 jobs a year, and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce agrees. In fact, the finance minister said that Jack Mintz was nothing but an Alberta academic whose ideas simply don't work. What a change of heart, all of a sudden.

Here's what I care about: I care about what Roger and Monique Byrne from eastern Ontario say about the HST. I care about what they say about the HST, and here it is:

“We live in a rural area where it is necessary to drive to our jobs. Please do not add to our already stretched ... budget.”

1050

Sue Vellinga, from the GTA, says this: “As somebody that has lost their job due to the terrible economy of Ontario, I think this would be a huge mistake.”

Brenda Moore adds: “I’m a single mom. I hold two jobs. I think this is absolutely terrible.”

Why isn’t the Premier listening to Ontarians like Brenda, Monique, Rich and Sue?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it is newsworthy when the head of the NDP in Ontario abandons food banks and poverty groups who are in support of our package of tax reforms. This is what they said at the 25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction in response to our budget: “This budget has moved the bar forward on housing, tax credits and child benefits in ways that will make a tangible difference in the lives of many Ontarians.”

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East will come to order when asked, please.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What we’re doing, through the budget, is paying close attention to the needs of our low-income earners by providing them with special benefits—in many cases, eliminating them from the tax roles entirely—and at the same time giving special supports to our businesses so they can grow stronger, so that we can create, over the course of the next 10 years, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 600,000 more jobs.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier as well. The Premier is asking Ontario families to pay more for daily essentials—home heating, hydro, gas for the car—and at the same time, he is telling them to brace for closed emergency rooms and funding cuts. If people are going to be paying more than ever before in this province, why are they getting less from their government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague is not prepared to accept a fundamental precept of Ontario history: We have always come together during difficult times; we have always done whatever is necessary to build an ever-stronger province.

Today, what we are going to do is ensure that we maintain the economic capacity in the province of Ontario to continue to fund good schools for our children and their children, to continue to fund good health care for our children and their families, to continue to fund good and strong environmental supports for our children and their families.

What I’m saying is, this is not an easy thing for us to do, but we have always, as a society, built good schools to serve all of us, built good health care to serve all of us and built a strong economy that delivers good jobs for all of us. This is about all of us. My friend opposite believes

it’s just about the individuals; it’s about the individuals doing something together for all of us, a stronger economy and a brighter future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For every dollar this government takes from consumers in new sales taxes, they’re going to be handing out \$1.06 in corporate tax giveaways. To Ontario families, the Premier says, “These are tough times. You’ll have to pay more, while your emergency rooms close.”

Why is the Premier hitting Ontario families with a new tax that makes life more expensive, while handing out billions and billions of dollars in tax cuts to profitable corporations?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know it’s an old saw for the NDP: “Corporations bad; all corporations bad.” I just don’t think that washes anymore, especially in an era of globalization.

I think my honourable colleague does understand deep in her heart that it’s very important, in a jurisdiction that has an economy that is so export-driven like Ontario, that we ensure that our exporters, particularly our manufacturers, can be competitive in an era of globalization. We have to help them get their costs down. That’s what the HST is all about: It’s about ensuring that we have a strong manufacturing sector here that can grow and create more jobs.

The very people my honourable colleague purports to stand up for are dependent upon those corporations getting stronger and those businesses getting stronger, growing and creating more jobs. This is about 600,000 more jobs; it’s about a bright future.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It does nothing for the struggling corporations, and that’s a fact. The struggling corporations aren’t going to be getting anything from this; it’s the profitable corporations that are going to win big on this tax change.

But do you know what? Jobless numbers in this province continue to creep up—everywhere I go, people tell me that they are worried—and instead of practical solutions, Ontario families are getting a new, job-killing tax on gasoline and home heating, and what else? They’re told to brace for cuts.

But there are winners in the Premier’s plan; there are obvious winners: a \$2-billion corporate tax giveaway to profitable corporations and \$1 million a day for high-flying consultants in the province.

Why are the concerns of everyday Ontario families and small businesses at the bottom of the Premier’s list of priorities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the representation, but I can’t agree. I’ve got to keep coming back to this because I think it’s salient. Why do poverty groups and food banks support our package of tax reforms? They’re doing that because they understand the package in its entirety. They know that we’re going to take people who are paying income tax now, 90,000 of those in the

lowest income levels, to ensure they're no longer paying it. We're talking about doing something like a single parent on social assistance with two children saving over \$1,200 under our tax plan.

Most importantly for all of us, this is about creating 600,000 more jobs over the course of the next 10 years than otherwise would have been the case. It's about making an effort now to build a bright future—

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

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Premier. Jason Grier is George Smitherman's former chief of staff and current riding president. Mr. Grier also is the vice-president of a national lobby firm where he bills himself as a specialist in infrastructure, health and energy procurement—all Mr. Smitherman's old files. Over the past three years, Mr. Grier was registered to lobby your government, including Mr. Smitherman.

What is the total amount of taxpayer money that was spent on deals between Mr. Smitherman and his top fundraiser/riding president?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask the member to rephrase that question and not be specifically drawing a member in and impugning motive.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Premier, what is the total amount of taxpayer dollars that were spent between the Minister of Health, Infrastructure and Energy, and Mr. Grier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The honourable member alleges that because there is an individual who works on a riding association that there's somehow something unfortunate with that. There is a lobbyist at Strategy Corp. who is the first VP of the Ontario Conservative Party. There is a senior executive at Edelman who is the CFO and treasurer of the Ontario Conservative Party. There are a number of Conservative riding association presidents who are advocates or lobbyists on particular issues, including funding private religious schools.

We encourage all Ontarians to get involved in the political process, and if that includes serving on a riding association, that's something that we support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: In two years those people might have to lobby us, because we'll be in government when your sorry government is thrown out. But we know Mr. Smitherman—we know he had a reputation for handing out sweetheart deals, and he handed Grier's clients over 100 million in taxpayer dollars.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew will come to order.

Please continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I must have gotten their goat, but they didn't hear, I don't think, properly: \$100 million went to Mr. Grier's clients. Those clients included Emergis, Merck Frosst, Abbott Laboratories and others. They all received \$100 million, total, in contracts when Mr. Smitherman was at the helm. If Mr. Grier knocked on

Mr. Smitherman's door, then his loyalties were divided between two people: one, looking out for his clients' interests by getting them government contracts; secondly, looking after Mr. Smitherman's interests as his top fundraiser.

I have a question for the Premier. What have you done about the cozy and suspect deals totalling more than 100 million taxpayer dollars?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll name the program my colleague is reluctant to name: It's the Gardasil funding program. It's a three-year program funded by the federal government, aimed at vaccinating grade 8 girls against HPV. This is what my friend is complaining about. We're proud of that program. We think it's a benefit to our families that'll particularly benefit the young women, grade 8 girls.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Before the last budget, the Minister of Finance commented on Alberta-based Professor Jack Mintz's budget proposals. To quote the Minister of Finance, this is what he had to say: "We don't agree with Mr. Mintz.... That old neo-conservative attitude didn't work."

Why is the minister now embracing Professor Mintz and that old Conservative attitude?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite knows—*Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite knows that the reference was about something other, another piece of work that Mr. Mintz had done. Mr. Mintz last week released a study that looked at this government's budget. It studied that budget and concluded a number of things, first and foremost that the government's plan will create 591,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years. Mr. Mintz also concluded that it will raise family incomes and individual incomes over the 10 years.

I remind the member opposite that it was peer reviewed by a number of economists of all political stripes, including Jim Stanford of the CAW, and they all concluded what that member and his party won't acknowledge: that this government has a plan for job creation. It has a plan to get this economy back on its feet. It's no longer about the old bromides and the false rhetoric.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: In an earlier study, Professor Mintz said that harmonization would stifle job growth. Another study sponsored by the chamber of commerce found the same, and other studies anticipate job losses in home building and tourism, but the McGuinty government paid Professor Mintz to issue a new report, a report other economists have dismissed as "pretty dubious." I realize the minister paid his new best buddy good money for a new report wherein he was paid to change his mind, but does this minister really expect us to buy that old neo-conservative analysis?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: You'd be surprised who has in fact hired Mr. Mintz; it's amazing what my friend Mr. Bradley finds in the boxes in his office. It turns out that the NDP government hired Mr. Mintz in 1993, and what was his advice offered on? It was offered—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Mintz is a well-regarded economist. I have—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Mintz is a well-regarded economist who says that we are going to create 591,000 net new jobs with this plan. His work has been peer-reviewed and his work has been used by the New Democratic Party and used by the Conservative Party. We don't agree with him on everything, but this study—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. My constituents are concerned. They're hearing from the Conservatives and from the NDP that the harmonized sales tax will kill jobs at a time when we need them most. Recently, Jack Mintz—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment. I just want to remind the member, as he begins that question, that I have delivered a couple of statements in the House recently about use of language. Specifically, I made it clear that it's not acceptable to make allegations either directly or indirectly of any member of the House. I just want to remind the members from the government side that making assertions or asserting misrepresentations from another party and setting up the member to do the same will not be tolerated.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Recently, Jack Mintz, former president and CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute and at the University of Calgary, released a report regarding the HST's effect on Ontario's economy. The report confirms that, as a result of this comprehensive tax package, within 10 years Ontario would see an estimated 591,000 additional new jobs, increased capital investment of \$47 billion and an 8.8% increase in overall annual worker incomes. This report was reviewed and endorsed by prominent and respected Canadian economists from the financial, academic and labour sectors.

Minister, who should we believe on this: those who are playing politics with Ontario's economic future or a group of Canada's leading economists?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank Dr. Mintz for doing the report because what he was able to do, after we introduced the budget in March, was to look at the entire package of tax reforms that we introduced.

I know that my good friend the Minister of Finance will be introducing a bill that will see some \$15 billion worth of tax relief for people and businesses over the next three years, and I would think that all members would want to vote in support of providing some \$15 billion worth of income tax stimulus to our economy.

What Dr. Mintz was able to do, looking at the entire package—not just part of it but the entire package—is to predict, as the member was saying, that we will see an increase of 591,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario and that we will see some \$47 billion worth of more investment in our province and a rise of real income by as much as 8.8%. That's—

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: Over the past months I've met with many constituents who have questions about our tax reform package. Ratepayers, condo owners and seniors in particular all have concerns about how the reforms will affect them. At the same time, they understand and appreciate that in order to compete and recover we need to take bold action to attract investment and jobs in Ontario. I fully support an initiative that strengthens our economy and the prosperity of Ontario families.

This afternoon, Minister Duncan will be introducing legislation that proposes significant personal income tax cuts; 93% of Ontarians will receive a personal income tax cut to the tune of \$10.6 billion; 90,000 Ontarians will no longer have to pay personal income tax; and by cutting the lowest income tax bracket by 17%, it will make it the lowest in Canada. Minister, how will these tax cuts affect the people of Ontario and those in my riding of Mississauga South?

1110

Hon. John Wilkinson: What this economy and what our province need is more jobs. Because of this global economic recession, which didn't start in this province or this country—it has affected families. They have lost their jobs, and we need to give them hope by having a new tax reform package in this province—the first substantial tax reform of sales tax since 1961, designed specifically to make sure that our businesses are more competitive on the world stage, because frankly that's exactly where we compete today; 80% of what we manufacture in this province is exported outside of this province. So it is important to give our businesses that competitive advantage, because what it means for families is that there will be 591,000 more families in the province of Ontario that will be able to tuck their kids into bed at night knowing that mom or dad has a job and that there is a brighter future for them. We have tax measures that are designed specifically to make sure that this reform is very progressive, and I look forward to—

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

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, Jason Grier has been very successful as George Smitherman's top fundraiser.

Over the past two years, Grier helped raise almost a million dollars for George Smitherman. That's three times more than the next-best fundraiser among the Liberals and 10 times more than the fundraiser for the Premier himself.

How much did Grier raise from clients who got government contracts from former minister George Smitherman?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's always a lot of fun to be had in opposition when you go on these speculation missions. I just don't believe they add much to the public interest.

What I do think adds to the public interest is that any Ontarian who chooses to get involved in the political process helps strengthen our democracy. Obviously that's something that Mr. Grier has done in the past. The accusation they made a moment ago was that he was involved in getting the government to spend money.

In fact, it was the federal government who spent the money; they spent it on Gardasil, which is an important medication that is aimed at vaccinating grade 8 girls against HPV. We think that was an important and well-justified use of federal taxpayer dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: This is not speculation. While Smitherman awarded more than \$106 million in taxpayers' money to Grier's clients, the clients donated large sums to Smitherman's and the Liberal Party's coffers. For example, Emergis contributed over \$9,000, while Abbott—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the honourable member—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I don't need any help from the government House leader, thank you very much. For that, stop the clock, please.

I just ask the honourable member to be cautious in his words of impugning motive. As well, I've let this go to a degree, but I think we need to be cautious that we do refer to members by their riding names.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Abbott Laboratories contributed over \$10,000. Merck Frosst gave over \$17,000. Premier, you promoted former minister George Smitherman, member from Rosedale, to your elite budget committee on Saturday, then you accepted his resignation the very next day. Is it because you discovered former minister Smitherman was for sale?

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Sorry, Speaker. Is it because you—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague tells us something about what he claims are contributions to a particular riding association. I don't have the facts and figures with me here to tell me how much those same companies contributed to the Conservative Party. If they

did, that would not be a bad thing; that's how the democratic system works.

But again, I'm not clear as to why my colleague opposes a three-year program funded by the federal government aimed at vaccinating grade 8 girls against HPV. We think that was a good use of taxpayer dollars, even if those were federal taxpayer dollars.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est également pour le premier ministre. This morning, people from Port Perry have joined us for question period. They are the personal support workers and nurses who provide the personal care and support to residents at the community nursing home in Port Perry, and they are being laid off. They are here today because they want you to stop the major cuts to their residents' care.

Premier, before you pat yourself on the back and talk about past investments, why, in spite of these investments, are we seeing layoffs and reduced care for frail elderly in our long-term-care homes?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know that all members of the House agree that caring for our precious seniors or our people who are in long-term-care homes is one of our true responsibilities as a government.

We remain committed to improving the quality of care when it comes to long-term-care homes. I know that my colleague the member from Nipissing did some excellent work in this regard, and we've continued to build on that. When it comes to the quality of care in our long-term-care homes, we remain committed to it.

I look forward to the supplementary, where we can discuss that a little bit more.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: How can we improve quality of care in long-term-care homes when staff are being laid off? A total of 250 hours of personal and nursing care will be gone each and every week because those people are being laid off.

The home is already struggling to provide the care that the residents need, and soon there will be 34 fewer minutes of hands-on care for each of those residents. That's less time for bathing, toileting and feeding, and the list goes on.

Will the minister reassure the patients, their families and the staff that the money that has been invested will go to care, not to profit, and that it will halt the layoff of those important health care providers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am more than happy to look into the case of this particular home, but I can tell you that we are increasing staff capacity. We're adding 2,500 more PSWs and 2,000 more nurses. We've already raised the level of daily care to 3.26 hours, and we're working toward raising it even further, to 3.5 hours, by 2011. We're also building more capacity. We're building new homes, and we're improving those that already exist, those that are old.

I can tell you that our record speaks for itself. We've increased funding for long-term care by over \$1 billion—that's a 50% increase—and we've funded 6,100 new full-time staff, including 2,300 nurses, who are delivering 11.9 million more hours of hands-on care.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. On Friday we heard that the list of priority groups eligible to receive the H1N1 vaccine has been expanded to include all children aged 13 and under, and adults 65 and older with underlying health conditions. This is welcome news for parents in my riding who have been anxious to get their children vaccinated. They urgently want to protect their families from the spread of this virus.

The expansion, however, does not include children over 13, the kids in high school. This could prove to be inconvenient for families who have children in both elementary and high schools, as they would not be able to take them to get their vaccine at the same time.

Minister, please explain to the families in my riding and throughout Ontario why only children 13 and under have been added to the priority groups at this time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member is right: We want to protect Ontarians from H1N1 as quickly as we possibly can. However, as long as the supply of vaccine that we're getting from the federal government is limited, we simply must roll out our vaccination program in phases. This strategy ensures that those who need the shot the most get it first.

I think every parent in this province can agree that we want to protect our kids from H1N1. That's why we recently announced that we are opening up the vaccine program to all kids aged 13 and under. The decision was made based on available supply of vaccine. We don't yet have enough to vaccinate children of all ages, and we need to protect young children, who are most at risk.

I certainly understand the concerns of parents who want to vaccinate all their kids, and I can assure them that as we get more supply, we will roll out the vaccine to more groups, including older children.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I know that Ontario parents will be relieved to know that their children can now be immunized against the flu, starting this week.

But Ottawa has a vaccine shortage and has temporarily stopped public clinics until it receives more vaccine, which is worrying for many of my constituents. Parents in my riding will want to get their children vaccinated, but they can't do that if the clinics are not open. There are also still others in the priority group who have not yet received their vaccine. I understand Ontario receives the vaccine from the federal government and that we will get more very shortly.

My question for the minister is, has this vaccine been received yet, and when will Ottawa's portion be delivered

so that they can restart clinics for our kids and other priority groups to get protected from H1N1?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This week, Ontario's allocation of vaccine is 414,000 doses of the adjuvanted vaccine, and we have hopes that we will get an additional 272,500 later in the week. We have received the bulk of the 414,000 doses, and workers at the government pharmacy are busy repackaging the vaccine for distribution today.

I understand the concerns of the member and the parents in his riding. It's unfortunate that Ottawa was short on supply and had to temporarily stop the public clinics for a couple days, but I'm pleased to be able to report that we're shipping out 30,000 doses to Ottawa this morning and will be shipping more vaccine to Ottawa as soon as we get it—hopefully, more this week.

I'm hopeful that, with this supply, Ottawa will be able to restart their public clinics as soon as possible and begin to immunize children. In the meantime, of course, many parents are—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is for the Premier. The eHealth scandal has cost you a second minister, Premier. Now that George Smitherman is out of cabinet, now that the member for Toronto Centre—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the honourable members to use riding names, please.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Now that the member from Toronto Centre is out of cabinet, he doesn't have to answer who got rich off taxpayers' money, how they are connected to the McGuinty Liberals and why a senior public civil servant who blocked the auditor's investigation wasn't disciplined.

The \$837 million wasted, member for Toronto Centre, wasn't their money, wasn't your money; it was the hard-earned money of Ontario taxpayers. Why are you rejecting our call for a public inquiry and standing in the way of the public knowing who misspent their money?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Ontarians expect their tax dollars to be spent wisely. So do I, and so does our government. That's why we have moved forward to enthusiastically embrace the recommendations of the Auditor General. We have greatly reformed our procurement policies. This is the right thing to do. I thank the Auditor General for making the case that it's something we should do. We've curtailed unnecessary expense claims. We have additional mechanisms for accountability and transparency.

It's very important to acknowledge that we are proceeding with the implementation of eHealth. It's critical to the sustainability of our health care system that we embrace the technology through eHealth. That's why we're expanding the number of doctors who will have access to

eHealth technology. We know that patients get better care—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: You know that you tied the Auditor General's hands during the inquiry. The Premier knows who got rich off taxpayers' money, because the McGuinty Liberals did the deals. The Ontario taxpayers who are footing the bill for the billion-dollar boondoggle don't know.

I'll be introducing the eHealth Ontario Spending Accountability Act later this week. Will the Premier tell his caucus to give swift passage to my bill and order the public inquiry now?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The successes at eHealth are significant. All of our hospitals are now filmless. The day of the old X-ray films is over. All of that imaging is done digitally. This is of better quality and much less expensive for us. We have four million Ontarians already with electronic health records, and we're moving to bring in six million more over the next three years.

We have a drug profile viewer in our emergency room, so that emergency room physicians can very quickly find out what drugs have been prescribed to a patient in their emergency department. These would include patients who are recipients of the Ontario drug benefit plan—so our seniors, our people with disabilities and people on social assistance and so on.

The RFQ for our diabetes registry closed on August 28, and those—

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

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Finance. As the minister should know, Windsor is a hard-hit community. The unemployment rate there is nearly 14%. Since last December, almost 10,000 jobs have disappeared. Tourism is a key sector in Windsor.

My question is this: Why is the minister bringing in a new tax on gasoline, hotels, air, train and bus travel?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The job creation plan that we put forward in the budget will create 591,000 net new jobs. Why doesn't she answer why she doesn't support the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, who says that this will allow them to produce more vehicles in Ontario? Why doesn't she quote the tourism industry, who is supporting this plan with a whole package of changes we made? Why? Because she doesn't want to tell the whole story.

You know, when she takes the unemployed in my home community and uses them for cheap political fodder in this Legislature, she ought to be ashamed—just like when she opposed us helping the auto industry several months ago. In fact, we put together a package that will create jobs in 10 years. It is supported by the automotive sector and supported by many other industries that employ people in my community. That's why we're

doing it. It's about jobs, sir. It's not about sitting back and doing nothing.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: British Columbia's council of tourism associations estimates that the move to the HST there will cost 5,200 direct tourism jobs and will take a 545-million-dollar bite out of the provincial economy each and every year. Ontario's tourism sector is much larger than BC's and employs more than 200,000 people, including thousands in the Windsor area.

Why is this minister plowing ahead with a tax that will surely kill even more jobs in hard-hit Windsor?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have a whole package of reforms that are aimed at helping the tourism sector. We've been working with the tourism sector.

What this tax will do, what this package will do, according to independent advice, is create 590,000 net new jobs in the next 10 years. That's why the vehicle manufacturers support it. That's why the forestry sector supports it. That's why a range of other business groups support it. The other reason, the other part of this package, which the member conveniently ignores, is that those people that have suffered the most in my community will pay less in taxes. Those people that are getting their jobs back, those people that are back to work in the auto plants today—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That's why the food banks have supported the policy. That's why she ought to listen to Hugh Mackenzie, who I know has spoken to her on numerous occasions. That's why the NDP's Fair Tax Commission suggested doing this some years ago.

This is the right package to create jobs for communities like Windsor. This party is seizing the future. That party is locked in the past. This is about jobs. It's about—

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

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, yesterday marked the conclusion of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. Every year I visit that fair and every year I see the excitement there. The fair, with its focus on agriculture and rural life, provides those in the urban areas of Toronto and the GTA a real chance to experience life in the agricultural sector.

Minister, can you share with us what, from your point of view, were some of the highlights of the fair, and how did the fair showcase agricultural and rural life here in Ontario?

1130

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to respond to this, first of all to thank the organizers, all of those involved at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair for the excellent job that they do to put on a show every year when the country comes to the city.

Those of us from rural Ontario think it's very important that our urban customers, if you will, have an understanding and an appreciation of the significance of the agriculture industry, that industry that feeds us. Also, anyone who visits the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair would see a number of initiatives that are supported by the provincial government, some in partnership with the federal government: the Growing Forward campaign, they can get information about the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence, the Pick Ontario Freshness—there are lots of booths there that are promoting—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, events of this size bring in really big tourist dollars to local economies. The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair certainly did. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people come to the Royal. It provides an economic boost to Toronto and the GTA. Restaurants, hotels, retail shops and entertainment venues are patronized while attendees are visiting the city.

Minister, can you give us some more information on what we expected in terms of numbers of attendees and the economic impact on the local economy?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, I think it's very important for members of this House and all the people of Ontario to understand how important this event is in educating all people in Ontario about the significance of the agriculture industry in the province. I commend not only the organizers but the schools that last year there were 500 schools that had students come to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. There are over 300,000 visitors to this fair annually, where they can see the very best of rural Ontario showcase what they do. It's also an advantage for those in the agriculture industry who participate in the competitions at the fair. When they win, it makes their product—whether it's meat, animals, vegetables or whatever—more marketable. It has more value to them. So there's no question that—

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Ministry of Government Services. Minister, as of February 2010, Ontarians can buy a licence plate bearing the distinctive Support Our Troops yellow ribbon logo. This is a good idea that was already introduced by my good friend and colleague Garfield Dunlop, the member from Simcoe North. His private member's resolution asked that the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation support our troops by incorporating the yellow logo on the licence plates. The disappointing part of this, Premier, is the fact that you've turned this into another tax grab; a good idea—now it's a tax grab. Minister, can you explain how much this new Support Our Troops logo is going to cost?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I am very proud of our Canadian troops and the outstanding work they do all

over the world and inside Canada. It is important for us to take any opportunity to showcase their work and raise awareness about the kind of work they do all over the world, and we are very, very pleased to partner with the Canadian Forces personnel assistance fund on the new yellow ribbon graphic plates to raise awareness and show support for our troops. Ontarians will be able to purchase, as the member said, vehicle plates with the yellow ribbon logo from Service Ontario beginning on February 1, 2010. Like any other charity, the Canadian Armed Forces applied to the graphic licence program, which has been in place since 1994, and we have used the standard ways to pay royalties to all the charities. The NDP government has done it, the Conservative—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: So I thought, at the True Patriot Love event, which was held last week on Remembrance Day eve, it was rather cynical of the Premier to introduce this motive that night. However, the article in the Toronto Sun brings out the real points for a reality check: What is the cost of the new plates? While we all know that the personalized plates are \$314 and the other plates are \$77, what you're actually going to give to the Canadian Forces personnel assistance fund is \$2 or \$4. Where is the 98% of the new revenue from this source going? Is it going to fund programs or is it going to fund the troops?

Minister, my question is, when drivers decide to buy this new yellow licence plate, are they really supporting the troops or are they supporting Dalton McGuinty?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: It's really unfortunate that they are trying to politicize a very good idea to support and create awareness for our armed forces.

Let me just read what the Department of National Defence has to say: They are pleased to have engaged in an endeavour that will allow individuals to demonstrate their support for the Canadian Forces. Any amount of charitable donations are welcome and will be used to provide financial assistance to CF members and their families.

Let me also read from what Karl Walsh, president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, said: "The Ontario Provincial Police Association is extremely proud of our troops. We thank the Ontario government for listening to our request to include the yellow ribbons on our licence plates and for giving Ontarians the option to express their support."

Mr. Speaker, I can read one more. This is from the sergeant—

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

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The minister will know that in just a couple of short weeks, Greyhound is slated to discontinue bus services across northwestern Ontario

between Sault Ste. Marie and the Manitoba border. Many people wonder what is going to happen.

People, especially seniors, who need to schedule trips to Thunder Bay or Winnipeg to see medical specialists or for surgeries don't know if they should or if they can, because they don't know if they're going to have bus service. Students who are away at college or university need to know, is there going to be a bus service so they can get home for Christmas and back again? Other people who are trying to make travel plans need to know, is there going to be a bus service to the airport in Winnipeg or Thunder Bay or Sault Ste. Marie? This has gone on now for many weeks.

Can the minister tell people if Greyhound is going to continue the bus service, or are people going to be left high and dry by the McGuinty government again?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, despite the comments the member made about Greyhound—they were not very glowing comments, previously—we have been working, along with Greyhound and along with others in the area, to ensure that there is a replacement service should they make a final decision to discontinue it. In fact, there are at least two other companies that are interested in pursuing the routes that are there.

The member will know that this has already happened, where Greyhound has made a decision in the past to abandon a service. Greyhound ended its bus service between Hearst and Thunder Bay. You'll recall that Caribou Coach Transportation Co. is now providing bus service between Hearst and Thunder Bay. Last summer, Greyhound ended its service between Fort Frances and Thunder Bay. Caribou Coach Transportation Co. is now providing the bus service between Fort Frances and Thunder Bay. We anticipate that this will happen once again—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: This is astounding. Bus service may end in two weeks, and the response of the McGuinty government is, "Well, we don't know." Hundreds of thousands of people have no other alternative in terms of transportation, and the response of the McGuinty government is, "We don't know."

Maybe the minister can tell me this: If Manitoba can create an agreement with Greyhound, why can't the McGuinty government find common ground with Greyhound to preserve bus services to communities that have no other alternative in northwestern Ontario?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can say to the member, again, I remember he said, "I have no doubt that they're probably losing money in some places, but this is more than anything else a bargaining tactic" that they're involved in. I guess if you open the vault and decide that you're going to subsidize a company that you said was engaged in some kind of bargaining tactic—if you capitulate to them, then I suppose, in that circumstance, Manitoba may wish to do that.

At the national meeting of transportation ministers, we established a working group to deal with this on a national basis. But I can inform the member that there are

companies that are interested in pursuing this particular service, and I am optimistic that those companies will decide that this is a reasonable course of action to follow and that we will see service taking place appropriately for the people in the area thanks to the representation—

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to introduce some guests who are going to be in the chamber and some who already are: Peter Coleman of the National Citizens Coalition; Kevin Gaudet of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation; Fabio Iannicca of CI Investments, who's bringing a few friends; Armand Conant of the Canadian Condominium Institute; Dean McCabe of the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario; and Paul Bailey and Phil Slack, who are right over here to my left, from the Ontario public sector retirees coalition. They're here because they can't afford a \$3-billion tax grab.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DIABETES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm proud to recognize, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus, world diabetic day. In Canada, there are more than 2.46 million people who are living with some form of diabetes. In fact, Canada has the sixth-highest incidence per capita of juvenile diabetes in the world.

Last December, I introduced Bill 137, an act to permit students with diabetes in our schools to receive certain monitoring and emergency treatment. This bill was inspired by the experiences of my constituents Brooke and Jade Bordman, seven-year-old twins who suffer from type 1 diabetes.

Sadly, when my bill was presented for second reading, the McGuinty government abandoned diabetic children across this province and ordered its members to vote against it.

Shame on you, Dalton McGuinty, for being against helping our young children who suffer from juvenile diabetes.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Phil McNeely: Last Wednesday, over 2,600 people gathered at the cenotaph outside the Orleans branch of the Royal Canadian Legion to honour Canada's fallen war heroes and veterans during Remembrance Day ceremonies. The sun was shining and the weather was pleasantly warm during the ceremony, which began with a parade led by the RCMP Pipes and Drums.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by the Remembrance Day committee members of Branch 632, including branch president Frank Stacey; past president Bud Dion; Jim Ferguson, Woody Boudreau and Earl Patrick; parade sergeant Ray St. Louis; MC Stella Limoges; and, last but not least, Barb Shier and the rest of the members of the Women's Auxiliary, who prepared a wonderful reception afterwards.

I would also like to take this time to recognize Legion members who have passed away over the past 12 months: Gordon Armstrong, Charles Balik, Joe Banville, Bonnie Lee Bergman, Raymond Bigelow, Ray Dean, Jean-Guy Denis, Howard Drummond, Alvi Dunn, Donald Haggart, Barb Hunt, Larry Lapointe, Paul Le Courtois, Nan Morrice, Daniel Ottway, Maurice Paquette, Harry Poloz, Gerry Purchase, Paul Radelet-Beaudry and Walter Wheatley. May they rest in peace.

ADOPTION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: November is National Adoption Awareness Month, and I'd like to acknowledge the commitment that Ontario families make to adopted children in our communities.

Adoption is an integral part of ensuring a secure and stable life for Ontario children. The impact that a family can have on an adopted child is immeasurable, and adoptive families serve to strengthen our communities.

Currently, there are over 9,000 Ontario children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted. Ontario CASs have paid for over 1,500 home visits to Ontario families waiting to adopt. Clearly this is an issue that grows in importance every day.

Families, volunteers and organizations that raise awareness on this issue do so for a number of reasons: to educate Ontarians about the merits of adopting, to develop ties with those who have been impacted by adoption, and to support efforts to shape policy and legislation that will benefit the adoption community.

Adoptive families, volunteers and children's aid society workers should be commended for raising awareness on this issue and for wanting to provide children with a better quality of life.

However, with the Liberals' drastic budget cuts on Ontario CASs, it is uncertain whether the resources are available for foster children to find adoptive families. The future of thousands of foster care children is in jeopardy due to the Liberal government's unwillingness to provide adequate funding. Adoptive families and all adoption advocates need our continuous support.

RUN FOR THE CURE

Mr. Bill Mauro: In early October I had the pleasure of participating in the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure. This year's organizing committee included Kathy Barr and Karen Uchman as co-run directors, Elyse Schebesch as program coordinator, Danielle Dunn as teams coordinator, Andreas Petersen as site coordinator, Peter Whittington as route coordi-

ator, Kylee Childs as registration coordinator and Raeanne Slongo as the CIBC liaison. Additional committee members included Jody Buttman, Terry Lagimodiere, Renee Miller, Louise Nastor, Beth Wilkie, Whitney Kelly and Tiffany Schebesch.

Thunder Bay was the fourth official site to hold a run, and 2009 marked the 13th year that the run was held in Thunder Bay. The first Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation Run for the Cure had 625 participants and raised over \$35,000. This year's run had approximately 1,000 runners and raised over \$100,000, the final tally still not being in—all of this, of course, supported by a total volunteer base of approximately 75 members, continuing to cement Thunder Bay's reputation as an incredible community when it comes to volunteerism.

We also have a private member's bill on the order paper that would see breast screening services provided free of charge to women aged 40 to 49 years.

Next year's run will be held October 3, 2010. I encourage the community of Thunder Bay, not just the running community, to mark this date on their calendars and support this incredible, wonderful run.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: On Friday, November 13, Tim Hudak, leader of the official opposition, and I were pleased to tour the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. The Royal is an opportunity for farmers to show off some of the best in agriculture that we have to offer in Ontario, from the horse shows and livestock to giant vegetables and innovation in agriculture.

Tim Hudak and I appreciated the opportunity to speak to farmers from across Ontario and hear their concerns. I want to particularly recognize the soybean and grain farmers, who this year created the Soy House to demonstrate the hundreds of products which are now being produced from soybeans. It is this type of innovation and partnership with business that we need to strengthen and grow our agriculture industry in Ontario.

As they say at the Royal, this is an opportunity for the city to meet the country. It is a chance for the people of Toronto to see where their food comes from and to say thank you to the farmers we depend on.

I want to commend the organizers of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair for another great year. I especially want to thank Bill Duron and Bob Jadavji for taking the time to meet with us. I know that having the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall officially opening the fair made it a special year, but as always it is the participants who make the Royal great. On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, I want to recognize and thank all the farmers who participated in the fair and made it a success again this year.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Last Friday, I had the pleasure of welcoming Minister Dombrowsky to Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. The minister visited both

the St-Albert cheese factory and the new Optimiste Performance Hall in Rockland. At St-Albert cheese, the minister took part in a tour highlighting the modernized equipment that is now up and running. This new equipment is the result of \$1.3 million in funding through the eastern Ontario development fund. I would like to thank the minister for taking the opportunity to network with factory workers and a number of local milk producers who are part of the century-old farmers' co-operative.

The minister's second stop was at the inauguration of the new Optimiste Performance Hall in Rockland. This was an evening filled with local talent at the community's new facility for sports, recreation and cultural events. This facility was made possible in part thanks to the McGuinty government's investment of more than \$460,000 to help the municipality purchase furnishings and equipment for this performance hall. This funding is part of the rural economic development program.

Thank you again to Minister Dombrowsky. Glengarry-Prescott-Russell welcomes you anytime.

1310

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Rick Johnson: Full-day kindergarten is one of the most important investments we can make to give our kids a head start and ensure Ontario's long-term competitive advantage.

Dr. Charles Pascal, the Premier's special advisor on early learning, found that one in four children start grade 1 significantly behind their peers. He also found many never entirely close that gap. But our government's full-day learning program will help turn this around.

This program will benefit up to 35,000 children across Ontario in its first year of implementation. We will start phasing it in next September and have this optional program available across the province by the 2015-16 school year.

The young students in this program will learn from Ontario's dedicated teachers and early childhood educators during the regular school day. They will improve their reading, writing and math skills and experience a smoother transition to grade 1. Schools will also offer extended day programs.

This program will put our youngest students on the path to success in school and beyond. It is one more example of the commitment our government has made to giving Ontario's students the best education possible and making Ontario even stronger.

VETERANS

M^{me} France Gélinas: On Friday, November 6, I had the pleasure to meet with Yvon Brière and his wife, Lucie; Randy Hill; Dan Draper and his wife; and other veterans. What is the bond that ties them together? They all suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, after they served our country in the military and could not get the help they needed.

They selflessly served with the armed forces in missions overseas with the United Nations or NATO. They put themselves in harm's way and witnessed very tragic events; then, they came home to Ontario traumatized. They were different people upon their return.

PTSD is an illness. Like many other mental illnesses, it is treatable and people can get better, but they will only begin the journey to recovery if they are identified and have access to treatment.

They have organized themselves into a support group called Veterans UN/NATO Canada. In Sudbury, they meet once a week, on Wednesdays from six until eight, in Little Montreal.

Last week, this Legislature did not sit so all members of this House could attend and reflect on Remembrance Day ceremonies across this province. At this time of remembrance, we need to double our efforts to ensure that all our veterans, upon their return from their missions overseas, receive the best possible treatment they deserve for putting themselves in harm's way for all of us.

TAXATION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Our government recently announced new point-of-sale exemptions to the proposed harmonized sales tax. These new exemptions will help save Ontarians money on everyday items such as a cup of coffee or a newspaper. However, there are many other important benefits of our proposed HST that will help Ontarians keep more money in their pockets.

For instance, our proposed tax package will provide 93% of Ontario taxpayers with a personal income tax cut, and nearly three million low-income families will receive a new permanent sales tax credit of up to \$260 for each adult and child per year. This is one of the most generous sales tax credits in Canada. What's more, the HST will remove \$4.5 billion a year in embedded sales tax, and we will be providing new housing rebates of up to \$24,000 for new homes.

These are just a few more examples of how the proposed HST will benefit Ontarians by ensuring that they are able to keep more of the money that they work hard for. The HST is an important initiative that will help move our province forward and keep Ontario stronger than ever before.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO TAX PLAN FOR MORE JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PLAN FISCAL DE L'ONTARIO POUR ACCROÎTRE L'EMPLOI ET LA CROISSANCE

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 218, An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi

218, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2009 et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois.

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

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1315 to 1320.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldip	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.
Gélinas, France	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	Sterling, Norman W.
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 49; the nays are 24.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: During ministerial statements.

**WORKPLACE SAFETY AND
 INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
 (ALTERNATE INSURANCE PLANS), 2009
 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI
 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
 ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
 LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL
 (RÉGIMES D'ASSURANCE
 CONCURRENTS)**

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 219, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 to provide employers with the right

to participate in alternate insurance plans / *Projet de loi 219, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail pour accorder aux employeurs le droit de participer à des régimes d'assurance concurrents.*

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. Randy Hillier: This bill amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to allow an employer, at any time, to participate in an insurance plan that is offered by a private sector insurer instead of the public insurance plan, as long as that insurance plan meets the regulations and the requirements of employment safety.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TAXATION IMPOSITION

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I rise today to present the 2009 fall budget bill, the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009, which, if passed, would provide Ontario individuals, families and businesses with more than \$15 billion in tax cuts over three years: \$10.6 billion for Ontario individuals and families and \$4.5 billion for our businesses on both Main Street and Bay Street.

The global recession has created challenges for governments all over the world. Intense global competition for investments and jobs poses an increasing challenge to Ontario's traditional sources of prosperity. We are working to lessen the impacts on our families and businesses by making significant investments in stimulus, in skills training programs, post-secondary education and early childhood learning.

But there is more to do. As important as short-term stimulus measures are, we need to position Ontario for future prosperity to help this province get on the right track for economic growth and job creation. That's why the McGuinty government set out a plan in the 2009 budget to make Ontario even more competitive and to create more jobs.

Our government is introducing this fall budget bill to implement tax cuts for people and businesses, and the harmonized sales tax. The proposed HST and tax cuts would increase business investment, create new jobs, raise incomes and reduce prices on many consumer purchases.

La TVH et les réductions d'impôt proposées augmenteraient les investissements des entreprises, créeraient des emplois, hausseraient les revenus et diminueraient les prix pour de nombreux achats faits par les consommateurs.

This is the right plan at the right time. The proposed income taxes would mean that 93% of taxpayers would pay less in personal income tax and 90,000 low-income Ontarians would no longer pay any provincial personal income tax. We are cutting the lowest tax rate from 6.05% to 5.05% on the first \$37,000 of income, making this bracket the lowest income-tax bracket rate among all the provinces.

That's not all. We are almost doubling the property and sales tax credit for seniors. This means more money in the pockets of Ontarians.

We are proposing additional support to Ontarians during the first two years of transition to the HST. Starting in July 2010, eligible Ontario families would receive \$1,000 and individuals would receive \$300 in the form of three payments. Studies show that businesses pass on their savings from the HST to consumers. TD Bank predicts that 80% of the savings to businesses would be passed on to consumers in the first year and rise to 95% by the third year. That means lower prices for hard-working Ontario families.

A recent study by Jack Mintz, the Palmer Chair of Public Policy at the University of Calgary, shows substantial benefits to Ontarians from the HST and other tax cuts. His study finds that within 10 years, our modernized tax system would result in an estimated 591,000 net new jobs. It will raise annual incomes by up to 8.8% for Ontario families and increase capital investment in our province by \$47 billion.

Interjections.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The NDP may laugh at that, but we want to see more jobs in Ontario. That's what this package is all about.

In addition to benefiting from the HST, Ontario businesses would benefit from our proposed corporate income tax cuts. The income tax cuts for businesses would enhance the benefit of the proposed HST by attracting even more business investment into Ontario and creating even more jobs.

Les réductions d'impôt sur le revenu des sociétés rehausseraient les avantages de la TVH proposée en attirant encore davantage d'investissements d'entreprises en Ontario et en créant encore plus d'emplois.

1330

Beginning July 1, 2010, the general CIT rate would be cut from 14% to 12% and further reduced to 10% over three years. The CIT rate on manufacturing and processing, mining, logging, farming, and fishing would be cut from 12% to 10% next July, creating jobs in the north. The small business CIT would be cut from 5.5% to 4.5%, and the small business deduction surtax of 4.25% would be eliminated.

Today we saw the parties opposite vote against a plan that will create jobs and tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses. This plan contains a fair, balanced and progressive package of tax cuts for both people and businesses that, when combined with the HST, would put more money back into the pockets of hard-working Ontario families and create jobs. Now is precisely the

right time to modernize our tax system so that when the effects of this global recession end, and they will, Ontario's economy is more competitive and better able to create jobs.

We have a plan to invest in our future and position our economy for prosperity and growth. Working together, Ontarians will confront the challenges and emerge stronger and more prosperous than ever before.

DIABETES

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I rise in the House to mark the occasion of Diabetes Awareness Month, sanctioned by the United Nations and recognized in cities around the world. Diabetes is a serious disease that can give rise to very serious consequences. Right now in Ontario, approximately 969,000 Ontarians live with diabetes. This number is anticipated to increase by 1.2 million by 2010. This alarming fact is precisely the reason the McGuinty government is continuing the proud history of diabetes care in Ontario which was initiated by Sir Frederick Banting at the University of Toronto with his breakthrough discovery of insulin some 90 years ago.

With two ministries working together, the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, we are delivering an integrated diabetes strategy focusing on prevention, management and treatment of this debilitating disease. The McGuinty government's strategy will help improve the health and health care of Ontarians living with diabetes and for those at high risk for developing the disease.

The province is moving forward with a number of new initiatives that will further help people manage and prevent diabetes, including:

- creating 51 new diabetes education teams across the province;

- expanding chronic kidney condition services, including additional clinic visits and increased home dialysis treatment;

- creating up to 14 regional coordination centres to help better organize and manage local diabetes programs; and

- expanding diabetes care and prevention resources, including new education kits for newly diagnosed patients; community-based prevention programs for high-risk groups; enhanced services through EatRight Ontario and a new Stand Up to Diabetes website.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include unhealthy weight, sedentary lifestyle, family history, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Research, however, informs us that a combination of healthy eating, engaging in regular, daily physical activities and maintaining a healthy weight can help to prevent type 2 diabetes. As the Minister of Health Promotion, my mandate includes promoting healthy eating and active living to prevent disease. By providing supportive environments, information and services, we can empower Ontarians to live healthier, more active, longer lives.

One of our key programs supporting our government's diabetes strategy, which I would like to draw to the attention of all Ontarians, is our EatRight Ontario service, a resource that can empower Ontarians in the fight against diabetes. EatRight Ontario provides Ontarians with access to nutrition information from registered dietitians by calling 1-877-510-5102 toll free or by visiting ontario.ca/eatright. EatRight Ontario also offers a menu planner, a new interactive online tool based upon eating well with Canada's Food Guide recommendations to help Ontarians prepare nutritious meals and achieve healthy weights.

The Ontario government is also working on a wide range of initiatives, including funding for prevention programs, specifically with Toronto, Peel and northwestern health units. These are areas with a very high incidence of diabetes. Working side by side with these health units, we continue to develop our programs to prevent diabetes and to raise awareness of the risk factors specifically for communities that need it the most. Our efforts to prevent and manage diabetes also include public education to raise awareness of the severity of diabetes and related complications, especially for at-risk populations including low-income communities and people of aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, Hispanic and African-Caribbean descent.

Improving the health of Ontarians is a priority for our government. Our diabetes strategy is part of our government's commitment to Ontarians and to continuing to work together with our partners and with all Ontarians to address diabetes in a collaborative, concrete and meaningful way.

To all Ontarians, I say to you: Stand up to diabetes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want the Minister of Finance to look at this public gallery behind me and look at the public face of taxation. Those are the people who are going to suffer from your \$3-billion tax grab.

Indeed, the taxpayers in this province should be alarmed that the Liberals are attempting to ram through the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, using a dirty and underhanded procedural trick.

On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, I stand here in opposition to this bill. This is clearly a desperation tactic from a government that has already had to cave in and provide special exemptions on the HST. Now they are panicking, and further, trying to cut off public debate.

In the Progressive Conservative caucus, we feel that this is an abuse of power. It is the job of the official opposition, under the leadership of PC leader Tim Hudak, to protect the public interest and public trust in the face of such undemocratic moves. We're already consulting with several leading parliamentary experts on the tactics that are available to us to prevent the Liberals from succeeding in shutting us down.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They're trying to shout me out as I speak. We will use every available tool at our disposal to defend the Ontario families behind us and the Ontario families in front of us and the families to the right—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We welcome all guests. As much as you may wish to participate in the—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Stop the clock.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, I'm not stopping the clock.

As much as you may want to participate, you're not allowed to participate, and I would ask that you respect that.

Member?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On their behalf, we're calling for public consultation in every community, from Ottawa to Niagara to Windsor to Hamilton to North Bay to Thunder Bay—right across this province—because in a few short years, this Liberal government has brought us from first to worst in economic growth. They have grown our deficit by \$25 billion. We are now accepting welfare payments from the federal government because of their mismanagement, and now they want to raise taxes on the backs of these hard-working people. They want to do that; they look at them as their own personal ATM machine. This is unacceptable. That means every condo owner, every soccer mom, every hockey dad—every single Ontarian, on July 1, 2010, is going to have to pay 8% more on home heating, Internet access fees, plumber and electrical fees and cellphones—and that's all before they leave their house in the morning, because when they step outside, there's 8% more on snow removal, 8% more on maintenance fees, 8% more on gas in their car.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He can continue to try and shut me down, but he will not shut this province down—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask a number of ministers to please come to order.

1340

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Now it's the portion of my speech where I get to tell them it's more than just a tax grab because once we sign this agreement, Ontario will relinquish its constitutional tax power. As part of the HST, the McGuinty government will relinquish a significant portion of our sales tax powers to the federal government. That means this Legislature will no longer have direct control over what is and what is not subject to direct taxation power, nor will we be able to change taxation in our province.

Secondly, Ontario's support of the HST means the tax can be hidden at point of purchase. This is an important point. When the HST was introduced in 1997 by their good friend Jean Chrétien, his government allowed that once 51% of Canada's population had agreed to the HST—and that means Ontario and British Columbia—tax-included pricing could be made possible by the federal government. That means once the Liberals in BC

and Ontario agree to the HST, our sales tax may not be transparent much longer.

Despite the Liberals' rhetoric—this is my third point—that the value-added taxes are the norm in 130 countries in the provincial level, that's not the case. Even though they continually use the line, "More than 130 countries are doing this," the fact is only Brazil, a developing nation, has a value-added tax at the national and subnational level.

Finally, once implemented—this is the most important point—it is impossible to repeal. And they know that. They've locked us in for five years. We're not allowed to reduce it until two years—and you know it, and you have got to be held responsible and accountable to the people of this province. Hold the public hearings and hold them across the province.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure and in some ways my pain to speak on behalf of New Democrats in the introduction of this Liberal government's harmonized sales tax bill today.

Today, November 16, we all know in the province of Ontario, evidenced by the tabling of this bill, that this McGuinty government just doesn't get it. They don't get what the needs of the people of this province are. At a time when families need help with the growing cost of living, what do they get? They get a bill that makes life much less affordable. At a time when we need to restore consumer confidence in the province of Ontario, at this point in time during the recession, what do we get? We get a bill that does the exact opposite. We get a bill that will dampen down consumer confidence because everything is going to go up by 8%. At a time when the government should be encouraging job creation, what do we get instead? We get a bill that makes it harder to find a job in the province of Ontario.

You know what? New Democrats provincially and federally oppose this 8% tax on gas, home heating, hydro, haircuts, vet bills, Internet access—the list goes on and on and on—taxi fares, domestic travel. The Minister of Finance shakes his head and he knows that the list goes on and on and on. Unfortunately, in five minutes I don't have time to name all the items that are going to be impacted by the HST.

Two hundred thousand jobs have been lost just in the last year in this province. Ontario families are looking for a plan to create jobs, a plan that's going to make our economy work for them. Instead, they get a new tax on the basics, a new tax that, according to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, will kill up to 40,000 jobs every single year. The chamber of commerce predicts 3,300 fewer jobs in construction, 9,800 fewer jobs in professional areas, 3,500 fewer accommodation and food service jobs, 4,600 fewer manufacturing jobs. This is what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce says. This is their information, their study.

The harmonized sales tax should raise a lot of money for public services like health care, but it's not going to

even do that. Instead, the money is going to corporate tax giveaways. That's where the money is going to go—corporate tax giveaways. For every single dollar that the HST is going to cost consumers, \$1.06 will be going out the door to business tax cuts. Meanwhile, the McGuinty Liberals are telling Ontario families to brace themselves for coming cuts because of the deficit that is currently being run by the province. "Pay more," McGuinty says, "and get less."

But not everyone loses with the McGuinty Liberals. We've all seen this. In this plan, profitable corporations get \$2 billion of income tax cuts. That's \$2 billion every year to companies that are doing just fine. Instead of rewarding companies for creating jobs or helping struggling companies that are forced to lay off workers and roll back wages and benefits, the government is helping to reward companies that simply don't need the help right now.

There are other winners too, and we've seen them: well-connected insiders and consultants at \$1 million a day; that's the priority of this government. The priority of this government should be the people of this province, who need life to be more affordable, who need to get real jobs, who need a government that understands the role of government to help people get through a recession, not to whack them when they're down and not to hurt them when they're already hurting.

DIABETES

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is hard to believe that the Minister of Health Promotion was standing in this House and telling us that diabetes is a priority for this government. She's certainly not there to listen to our answer, and she presented Diabetes Awareness Month on a day when nobody is paying attention to diabetes because we're kind of busy with the HST right now—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member about making reference to members' attendance.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can tell you that diabetes awareness is something that is important to the members of the New Democratic caucus, and it is something that we have tried to put forward solutions to. The decisions for healthy eating bill is something that would help the obesity epidemic and certainly help with the diabetes epidemic, but the Minister of Health Promotion hasn't seen fit to bring this bill forward to committee. There's lots that can be done—

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

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke do not want the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ 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 \$400,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for”—the petition is outdated now—“meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees”—of course they’ve backed off on that—“and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax ... 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’d like to thank Ed and Eleanor Quesnelle from my hometown of Barry’s Bay for doing such a great job of getting petitions signed. I sign this and send it down with Robyn.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition called “Stop the Unfair Tax Grab,” signed by 840 people mainly from the London area.

“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” Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to cancel the scheduled implementation of” the harmonized sales tax.

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

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.”

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

1350

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This petition was signed by people before the Libs backtracked on a couple of things.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my name to it and give it to our newest page.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition asking for a PET scanner for northeastern Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service...; and

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

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

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

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would like very much to thank the members of the Effort group for having supplied it to me, and particularly Tariq Noor and Ali Chaudhry. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Iman to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition signed by literally thousands of my constituents in Oxford county.

“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.”

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition has to do with exploitation of vulnerable foreign workers. It reads as follows:

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

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

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

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

“Whereas, in Ontario,” former governments “deregulated and eliminated protection for foreign workers;

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

“We, the undersigned, support” the government’s bill, “the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law.”

Since I agree, I’m delighted to sign this petition.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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

“Whereas the town of Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada, with a population that is expected to surpass 100,000 people by 2014; and

“Whereas the Milton District Hospital is designed to serve a population of 30,000; and

“Whereas young families, seniors and all residents of Milton are currently unable to access quick and reliable health care; and

“Whereas the excellent doctors and nurses at Milton District Hospital are constrained by unacceptable conditions and a lack of resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately approve and initiate the process to expand Milton District Hospital and to provide adequate interim measures to prevent further suffering for the people of Milton.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition as I agree with it and pass it to my page Alana.

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I’m pleased to present this petition, addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on behalf of ErinoakKids on North Sheridan Way in Mississauga. I especially thank Ian Fernandes and Anya MacNeil for having collected these signatures. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the population in Peel has tripled from 400,000 residents to 1.2 million between 1980 to present. Human services funding has not kept pace with that growth. Peel receives only one third the per capita social service funding of other Ontario communities; and

“Whereas residents of Peel cannot obtain social services in a timely fashion. Long waiting lists exist for many Peel region service providers. The child poverty level in Peel has grown from 14% to 20% between 2001 and 2006...; and

“Whereas Ontario’s Places to Grow legislation predicts substantial future growth, further challenging our already stretched service providers to respond to population growth;

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

“That the province of Ontario allocate social services funding on the basis of population size, population growth, relevant social indicators and special geographic conditions;

“That the province provide adequate growth funding for social services in Peel region; and

“That Ontario develop, in consultation with high-growth stakeholders, a human services strategy for high-growth regions to complement Ontario’s award-winning Places to Grow strategy.”

I very much agree with this petition. I’m pleased to sign and support it and ask page Cairistiona to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition on the dreaded HST, which reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign this, endorse it and send it to the table with Nicolas, one of the new pages.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition has been received and sent to me by the Consumer Federation Canada and has to do with the fastest-growing crime in North America, identity theft. It’s to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services and reads as follows:

“Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America; and

“Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

“Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

“Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one’s good credit rating;

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“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature... be brought before committee, and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and loan account numbers.

“(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

“(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

“(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate.”

Since I agree, I’m delighted to sign this petition.

SALE OF DOMESTIC WINES AND BEERS

Mr. Toby Barrett: I’ve got 1,752 names on a petition from my riding alone entitled “Say Yes to Beer and Wine Sales in Convenience Stores,” distributed by the Ontario Korean Businessmen’s Association.

“Whereas the province of Ontario restricts the sale of beer and wine to the LCBO, a few winery retail stores and the Beer Store, and the three large beer companies are owned by multinationals;

“Whereas other provinces (notably Quebec) have been selling beer and wine in local convenience stores for many years without any harm to the well-being of the public;

“Whereas it is desirable to promote the sale of beer and wine in a convenient manner consistent with a contemporary society;

“Whereas it is essential to support local convenience stores for the survival of small businesses;

“Whereas it is obvious from the current market trends that the sale of wine and beer in convenience stores is not a question of ‘if,’ but ‘when’;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Liquor Control Act to permit the sale of beer and wine in local convenience stores to the public throughout the province and to do it now.”

I sign this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, that pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 19, 2009, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of public hearings on the bill and on Thursday, November 26, 2009, during its regular meeting times for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on Tuesday, November 24, 2009. At 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 26, 2009, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, November 30, 2009. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

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

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

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

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The time allocation, of course, is a drastic measure that this government seems to have taken. It's something that has been used from time to time in this House. However, on a bill of this size, which contains two complete bills within it, it is somewhat surprising that this government would bring in a time allocation bill after a mere—I think there have been six and a half hours of debate on this bill, and that seems to be rather modest for debate on a bill of this nature.

A few weeks ago, when I spoke to this bill on second reading, I said, "I suspect that we're going to see a time allocation motion on this bill sometime in the future. I hope that time allocation bill is in the distant future." It appears that I was absolutely correct in that statement, that this government would time-allocate this bill. I am extremely disappointed that the time allocation took place with such rapidity.

There are any number of quotes that could be used regarding the time allocation bills that have been introduced in this House before. Many of these comments have been made by members of the government.

Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines, has been very vocal about the use of time allocation motions throughout his career here. I quote from his comments on December 10, 2002: "I find it most unfortunate as well that this bill will be rammed through with what we call a time allocation motion or what is known as closing off debate. If nobody cares about this, governments will continue to do it. No matter what those governments are, they will continue to do it. It's not healthy for the democratic system. It relegates individual members of the Legislature to the status of robots, and that's most unfortunate." That was from a minister of the crown who sits on the other side of the House, Mr. Bradley, who is the member for St. Catharines. Those were his comments. And he goes on—there are about five or six different quotes that he has used, talking about time allocation motions and how they stifle debate and how they shut off that democratic process.

The Minister of Community Safety, Mr. Bartolucci, said on November 25, 2002, "I stand to speak against any type of time allocation motion because in this instance, as in other instances, it stifles debate in this House and doesn't enhance the democratic process. In fact, it does not allow the general public, the people in Ontario, to have a say in the important bills that this government should want to be taking out to committee and to have input etc." His quote was made on a bill to amend the Highway Traffic Act, which was one specific bill; it wasn't a compilation of many, many bills. It wasn't 324 pages long, as this bill is. It didn't incorporate two other bills in it.

It's most unfortunate that these time allocation motions have come before the House in the way in which they have.

I've also mentioned how the Liberals have short-changed democracy with this bill. This time allocation motion has flushed a bit more democracy down our drain. This motion cuts off the voices of Ontarians.

This time allocation motion seems to follow a Liberal pattern: bad government in the name of good government—because this bill is called the good government bill, and the way it's going through this House, I would suggest that it's a bad bill and it's a bad way of running government. So it's bad government in the name of good government. It's a lack of accountability in the name of accountability. It's a scandal that this thing is taking place, and that scandal, of course, is covering up other scandals that this government seems to have got itself involved in during the summer of scandal in Ontario.

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The Liberals are doing this as they introduce the new accountability act. An example where the Liberals are rejecting accountability, such as the billion-dollar eHealth scandal—there's no accountability in there. The Liberals snickered and sneered as the Progressive Conservatives called for a full public inquiry that would ensure a full, independent and fair examination of the scandal, yet this bill, which is time-allocated and will pass in about 10 days, will restructure the way in which public inquiries take place. It will give the government a lot more control over how those public inquiries take place. If you read the new process that public inquiries will operate under, one would suspect that the government could scope the conclusions of an inquiry, taking away the independence of a public inquiry.

I wonder if the quality of persons who have served in the past, doing some of the wonderful public inquiries that we've had in the past in Ontario—whether the quality of persons who do those and do them because they are totally independent—whether they will want to serve on a public inquiry if in fact their hands are tied in many of the instances that they are dealing with in public inquiries. That would be a shame, because I think a public inquiry from time to time is something that is extremely necessary in Ontario in any democratic government, as are royal commissions. Royal commissions are perhaps a leg up, of a higher stature than public inquiries, and those things can be extremely valuable to democracy, can be very valuable to Ontario and can be very valuable to the way in which this province operates. To constrain any one of those processes, as this bill tends to do, I think is a great shame and a great loss of one of the truly valuable tools that democracy has in the province of Ontario.

The Auditor General acknowledged that there are questions which remained unanswered in this billion-dollar eHealth scandal. In his report, he was not able to delve into areas in which he thought that perhaps contracts were let in an unusual way. He fell short of saying that they were illegal, but he wanted to inquire further into that area and find out whether those contracts were indeed inappropriate in the way in which they were let, especially untendered contracts. What did the Liberals say when the Auditor General asked those questions? They said to Ontarians, "No, we will not undertake a full examination of how your money is spent." They said no, very clearly. This Liberal government said no to accountability.

During this scandal, we have seen two ministers, both implicated in the billion-dollar scandal, resign, two ministers who, as a result of their resignations, will not be able to address questions in this chamber; two ministers who have avoided responsibility; two ministers who have ducked the question, "How was your \$1 billion wasted?" Again, the Liberals say to Ontarians, "Sorry; accountability doesn't apply to us." I sometimes wonder whether Ontarians understand how much money \$1 billion is. I'm not sure that the concept of \$1 billion is well understood. We can call it 1,000 million, but the concept of \$1 billion—it's such a vast amount of money that I'm not sure that people understand how big a chunk of dough that really is.

The Liberals, as they sneered and snickered at our call for accountability, also voted down bringing the former eHealth CEO, Sarah Kramer, and the former board chair, Alan Hudson, before the legislative committee to be questioned. I haven't spoken to either of those people, but I would suspect that Sarah Kramer would love to come before a committee to clear her name. Her name has been dragged in the mud and she has been listed as perhaps one of the people who were responsible for some of this action. I would think that she would look forward to an opportunity to come before a committee, come before a public inquiry, and to clear her name and to re-establish the reputation that she had prior to this experience.

The former board chair, Alan Hudson, someone who volunteered their time to run as chair of the eHealth operation—again, I'm sure he would find it a good thing to come before a legislative committee to be questioned, and I'm sure he would look forward to the public inquiry and to telling us what he knew and why things happened as they did. He might also tell us how the Liberal government was involved in some of those decision-makers.

Two more key figures in Ontario were denied the opportunity to demand account of how you spent your money—two more denials for accountability by this Liberal government.

I'm not sure if the Liberals have forgotten, but the \$837 million that was wasted by George Smitherman, the member for Toronto Centre, and the \$240 million wasted by his follower, David Caplan, who is from Oriole, I believe, wasn't their money. It didn't belong to those two ministers. It didn't belong to the Liberal government. It belongs to the Ontario taxpayers. It's taxpayers' money, and when you're dealing with someone else's money, you should treat it with a great deal more respect than this government has shown for this huge squandering of public funds.

To put it in another frame, the Gomery report—Adscam, the advertising debacle that brought down the Liberal government in Ottawa, was in the \$100-million to \$200-million range, about a 10th or a fifth the size of this billion-dollar scandal which happened only in Ontario. So it was a huge undertaking to rush that much money out the door.

It isn't the first time it's happened to this government. We had the so-called Collegate scandal, where the

leftover money in one March—what was it, three, four years ago?—went flying out the door as quickly as the Liberals could write cheques on it. The Toronto Cricket Club received \$1 million. They hadn't asked for anything, but they received \$1 million because the money was left over at the end of a fiscal year and this government thinks that's fine to just give that money away. Well, it's not your money. It belongs to the taxpayers of Ontario and it should be treated with respect.

This eHealth scandal would be totally predictable, given the way you've handled taxpayers' money in the past. It's disgusting that you would treat other people's money with such disrespect. I'm beyond words that, at the same time as the Liberals are introducing the new accountability act, they are denying accountability to Ontarians. Now we have this time allocation motion which is going to cut off any opportunity that the two opposition parties have to bring accountability to this government, and believe me, this government needs a lot of accountability. It has conducted itself in ways which have been extremely disappointing.

In schedule 6, the Public Inquiries Act, 2009, the new act permits the Lieutenant Governor in Council to call an inquiry when it is in the "public interest." Currently, the bill provides this power for "any matter connected with or affecting the good government of Ontario or the conduct of any part of the public business thereof or of the administration of justice therein or that the Lieutenant Governor in Council declares to be a matter of public concern...." So it's making it far more difficult to meet the terms required to call a public inquiry, and I think that's a very bad thing for the province of Ontario.

It's a very important piece of legislation. It would be an important piece of legislation that the people of Ontario should have an opportunity to comment on, and yet that's not going to happen. The people of Ontario are going to have one day of hearings, probably in Toronto. The people across this province of Ontario will not have an opportunity to comment on the how they feel about what's been removed from them in this one small section of the bill. There are 79 schedules in this bill, and this is just one of those schedules.

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I am also concerned about how this new wording will be interpreted, because all the wording of this act is subject to interpretation. Because it is far more narrow than the previous act, if it were to be interpreted in a very narrow form, it would make the process of conducting a public inquiry even more difficult. There would be a much more narrow opportunity to conduct such an inquiry.

The Attorney General said that a fair interpretation will see that the new act is broader. Well, frankly, the Attorney General has a funny way of playing with words. True, it is broader, in the sense that it creates different provisions for small and large tribunals. But it is not broader when we look at the provision by which a large inquiry is ordered. Honest interpretation would acknowledge the fact that it is now more narrow.

The Liberals, by denying our call for a public inquiry into the eHealth scandal, have shown that Liberal interests can be used to determine what is in the public concern. I can only imagine how they would interpret the broader language of public interest. We will put forward an amendment to address this concern later this afternoon.

I have a few more problems with this new bill. I fail to read any requirements to make reports of the commission or the budget prepared by the minister publicly available. The bill I will be introducing, hopefully tomorrow, does ensure that accountability.

I fail to read anything in this bill about using the Internet to increase public accessibility. Surely the government would be interested in being as transparent as possible. They talked about that in 2003 before their election; they talked about running a transparent government. Of course, that was forgotten just after the October 2003 election, and there hasn't been very much accountability or transparency in this government.

One of the things that happen is that you put in a freedom-of-information request, and attached to any freedom-of-information request is the cost of the request. The cost can run anywhere from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on how much information you have requested. Surely, in a transparent government, those costs, which are restrictive to the research budgets that are allowed to the official opposition parties—if there is truly going to be transparency—the government can't restrict access to that kind of information by making it unavailable through its high cost. That appears to me to be a subject this government has used to its advantage in failing to be accountable to the people of Ontario.

I also fail to read anything about using the Internet to increase public accessibility. Liberal quotes miss the purpose of accountability in the Public Inquiries Act. On November 2, the minister said, "When a public inquiry is going to be called, what you're looking for are a series of recommendations to address specific issues that can be received in time to be of benefit to society, to the government, to the Legislature." Again, you're trying to fit public inquiries into time frames, but these things always run longer than they're planned to run, and putting further restrictions like this on the ability to run a public inquiry, I think, is a thing that makes for a weakening of the democratic process.

I also think you're going to find that it's going to affect the quality of the individuals you get to serve in a public inquiry. The more restrictions they have on them, the less interest top judges, like those we have had in the past, are going to have. They do public inquiries now because there are literally no restrictions on them. They can do what they feel is necessary in order to get to the bottom of the question on a matter, and that is probably a very, very good thing. In changing this legislation and making it more restrictive, you're going to find that people who are asked to do public inquiries will be less inclined to do so because of the restrictions that have been placed on them.

This new bill also—I failed to read any requirement to make publicly available the reports of the commission or the budget prepared by the minister. Surely all the reports—not the main inquiry, but the sub-reports that are done in order to support various points in the inquiry—should also be made public. Almost without exception, they are made public today in the process under which we currently operate, and to remove that also removes a huge amount of transparency in the way the public inquiry takes place. That’s a bad thing for democracy.

I failed to read anything about using the Internet to increase public accessibility. In today’s world, I think the Internet is a key part of keeping up with the business of this House. To have it excluded from this bill is another area which creates a lot of problems for me.

There is an interesting article concerning this bill in the *Ottawa Citizen*, November 16, written by Kent Roach. Professor Roach is a professor of law at the University of Toronto and was project director for the Ontario Law Reform Commission’s 1992 report on public inquiries. This is a man who knows a bit of what he says. He talks about, “Buried in Ontario’s recently introduced 322-page ‘good government’ bill, a proposed new act for public inquiries threatens to undermine the ability of inquiries to act independently of the government they are investigating.” I think, given Professor Roach’s knowledge and background, that it’s a very important and somewhat damning statement.

He also suggests, “The proposed new inquiries act would compromise the independence of public inquiries.” It’s something that I’ve been talking about, but this isn’t me talking; this is Professor Roach talking. “Under it, the provincial cabinet would have a statutory right to terminate the appointment of any commissioner at will or to revise the inquiry’s terms of reference,” even during the process, while it’s taking place. Of course, that would be untenable to many people who would serve as chair or commissioner on a public inquiry.

He goes on to say, “All commissioners and those working with them would be subject to an overbroad statutory gag that would prohibit them forever from disclosing information about an inquiry that was not made public.”

They did an inquiry and found damning evidence against the government, and they put the whole thing under wraps. There is a lifetime gag on all those who worked on and for a commissioner in public inquiries, and that goes totally against any transparency, accountability or anything to do with public inquiries.

It also goes on to say that, “Inquiries appointed under the new act could be little more than private studies of the existing record.” There are lots of ways in which the government can do those private studies without appointing a public inquiry. It’s too bad that this bill is gutting all those important processes.

“Defenders of the bill can argue that it simply builds on the fact that public inquiries have always been a creature of the executive. Nevertheless, a firm convention has developed that inquiries, once appointed, should

operate independently.” That is being broken by this bill. That’s something that has been built on over the years and has been the tradition in the province of Ontario. Here we are seeing that tradition torn asunder to make way for a much more restricted way of conducting public inquiries.

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Professor Roach goes on to say, “There is nothing wrong with giving inquiries the tools to do their jobs in an efficient manner, but efficiency should not compromise the independence of inquiries.” He questions, very seriously, that the independence of inquiries is being seriously threatened in this piece of legislation. If the government wants to conduct an inquiry on a short leash, they have other options. They can start and stop internal studies at will. There are other options that don’t need public inquiries. To put a public inquiry on a short leash is a very dangerous thing for democracy in the province of Ontario.

Professor Roach talks about, “Ontario Attorney General Chris Bentley has said that the proposed new act is not intended to compromise the independence of inquiries. Nevertheless, some provisions of the proposed new act do threaten the independence of inquiries.” That’s a sad thing.

As the time winds down on this time allocation motion that has been put forward—all members of the House from time to time have spoken against time allocation and yet it’s still there; it’s still part and parcel of our democratic process. But to have it used on a bill of this nature, a bill of this length, a bill of this complexity, I think is a sad day in the history of the Legislature of Ontario.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: On behalf of New Democrats, I am pleased to have a few minutes to address what is happening here. So that people at home understand, the Liberal government, in an attempt to limit debate on this bill, has brought in a time allocation motion, which essentially shuts the Legislature down in terms of this bill and shuts down debate.

If this were a minor bill, if this were a bill that only dealt with a couple of specific and concrete issues, you might be able to mount a plausible argument for limiting debate. But this is a huge bill and a bill which touches many aspects of life here in Ontario. It is a bill with all kinds of complexity to it. The more opportunity that we as opposition members have had to look at this bill, the more we are concerned that this government is trying to limit debate to essentially shut the public out of knowing some very important things that would be affected by this legislation. New Democrats think that is fundamentally wrong.

The people in this province deserve to know when important pieces of legislation are being changed, when people’s rights may be affected, when people’s privileges may be affected or when fundamental changes are going to be made to important public institutions. All of these

things—not just some of them, but all of these things—potentially can happen should this legislation be passed. So it's just fundamentally wrong—not just for this government but for any government—to try to limit debate on a bill that is so complex, that touches so many aspects of people's lives and fundamentally will change a number of public institutions in this province. We just think it's absolutely, fundamentally wrong.

With that in mind, I want to present a motion. I move that the motion for time allocation on Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, be amended in the following manner:

(1) Paragraphs two and three be deleted and replaced with:

“That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter recess for the purpose of public hearings on the bill, and that the committee be authorized to make decisions on adjournment and time allotted for public hearings in keeping with public response to the call for oral presentations;”

(2) Paragraph four be deleted and replaced with:

“That the committee be authorized to establish a schedule for the deadline for filing amendments and dates for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill with respect to the time frame selected for public hearings on the bill;”

(3) Paragraph five be deleted; and

(4) Paragraph seven be deleted.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Hampton has moved an amendment to government notice of motion 142.

He has moved that the motion for time allocation on Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, be amended in the following manner:

(1) Paragraphs two and three be deleted and replaced with:

“That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter recess for the purpose of public hearings on the bill, and that the committee be authorized to make decisions on adjournment and time allotted for public hearings in keeping with public response to the call for oral presentations;”

(2) Paragraph four be deleted and replaced with:

“That the committee be authorized to establish a schedule for the deadline for filing amendments and dates for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill with respect to the time frame selected for public hearings on the bill;”

(3) Paragraph five be deleted; and

(4) Paragraph seven be deleted.

Mr. Hampton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: As I pointed out, the reason for this amendment is because this is a government that does not want to have public hearings on this legislation. This is a government that doesn't want the people of

Ontario to know what is contained in this legislation. This is a government that doesn't want the people of Ontario to know the rights that will be overturned, the rights that will be restricted and the public institutions that will be fundamentally changed by this legislation. That is why we should be holding public hearings. People across the province whose lives may be affected by this, whose rights may be affected by this, deserve to know what the government is doing.

What I really find reprehensible is that the government would bring forward this kind of very complex legislation, very far-reaching legislation, and simply try to call it the Good Government Act. If ever there was an act of camouflage, if ever there was an attempt to hide from the public, this is it. That is what's so fundamentally wrong with this.

I am urging even members of the government caucus to have a look at this amendment and think about all of those people whose rights might be affected by this legislation, whose lives might be affected by this legislation, and the public institutions that could be fundamentally changed by this legislation, and consider that that is why we need public hearings, that is why we need to consider what is going on here.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: This good government bill is about a number of different things. It is about—I think the clock needs to change; sorry. I'm happy to take my colleague's time, but in the interests of fairness—a lot of different provisions, but the overwhelming majority of them are technical or substantive amendments to legislation. These types of issues arise all the time. There just isn't a specific legislative vehicle in which to place them. That's why you put them together in something called a good government bill.

There are a few pieces in here that are more substantive, that address specific issues that have arisen as a result of consultation with different levels of government, as a result of inquiries themselves that have made recommendations, or as a result of circumstances that have evolved, and I simply wish to address a few of those.

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It's interesting to hear the comments and the fulminations and the concerns about the motion that has been brought on this piece of legislation from members of parties that regularly used closure motions. In fact, the party opposite, the official opposition, I believe brought closure motions on almost half of the pieces of legislation that they introduced. They didn't let many of them go to third reading, didn't have committee hearings, so it's interesting to hear the expressions of concern over this type of motion.

It's also interesting, in the context of this piece of legislation: We offered technical briefings to all members of the House. Technical briefings, for those who don't know, and that would be probably most of us, are briefings by ministerial staff on the specific issues in the bill, so you really get a sense of what the bill is all about.

Those technical briefings were taken up by two members, I understand, from the parties opposite, and a third member's staff. That's not a great uptake on the specifics of a bill when the concern is now about attempting to bring this to a conclusion so we can implement these provisions and get on with improving legislation in the province of Ontario.

I want to address just a few issues. With respect to the public inquiries provisions raised by my colleague from Halton, I would simply say that it's interesting to compare and contrast his comments. At one and the same time, he seems to be in defence of the existing provisions in the inquiries act, yet he speaks about the necessity of using modern tools such as the Internet. In fact, what we're proposing in the course of this legislation, in this good government bill, are means to strengthen the inquiries act so it can deal with modern circumstances. We have a fast-moving and ever-changing society, and if a government calls a public inquiry, it needs an answer that's directed to the reason for calling it. Sometimes you need an answer sooner rather than later. Sometimes you need an answer to specific questions. And sometimes you need answers that are much more broad-ranging.

Inquiries can take as much time as they take, but let's be clear about a few fundamental issues.

The independence of any inquiry called is as strong under this legislation as it has ever been. Nothing in this affects independence.

The provisions in the inquiry act—and it's important to address a few of the comments not only made by my colleague from Halton, but also made in the article by the academic Kent Roach. First, the notion that a government would have the ability to terminate an inquiry, which has been placed specifically in this legislation: It already exists. We've seen examples of that. All the legislation does is make it clear and transparent by putting it in the act rather than having it off hidden somewhere.

The notion that there would be a reporting deadline: Think about why you're calling an inquiry. It's more than an exercise; you're trying to get answers or advice on certain pressing issues. That's why you call it. Of course you need some of that advice by a certain timeline so you can address important issues. What this act does is provide for a broader range of inquiry with a broader range of tools to support each type of inquiry. It does not in any way, shape or form take away from the ability to call the time-honoured, endless-time inquiry that could take years. That can still be called if necessary. But for a society that moves a little faster than that, it also has the ability to call a very intensive inquiry. We've seen some examples of that, like the Goudge inquiry—very important inquiries that move expeditiously, that deliver answers on important issues and that use modern-day evidentiary and case-management techniques, all the while maintaining the full independence of the commissioner. Nothing strikes at that.

Indeed, much of what this bill does is to make clear and transparent powers that already exist, either in government, through orders in council, or otherwise. They

already exist. It just makes it clear and transparent, and that of course is essential.

The commissioner would still have a full range of powers to elicit information in ways such as the ones suggested by my colleague. There is nothing in the proposed legislation which in any way, shape or form would take away from the ability to call the full, broad, open, timeless, infinite-number-of-witness inquiries that can be called today. But there is the ability to make sure that when you need an answer quickly, you can get an answer quickly, and when you need to scope the inquiry, you can get the inquiry scoped—and always that you do stand up and protect the public interest, including the public purse. It is important that the public purse be protected.

I just want to address a few other issues here, and those are the fair interpretation of the public inquiries provisions that we have outlined—a fair one, which would have been apparent if all had taken advantage of the technical briefings in the act.

A few others, including the Juries Act—well, we had a commission by the privacy commissioner that recommended certain changes and recommended those changes happen now, bang, and they are in here. They're in this legislation, so of course we need to get on with it.

The commissioner suggested that we report back by certain dates, to make sure that we were making progress on her recommendations, and we are. This will create an independent means of ensuring that the requirements under the Juries Act and under federal legislation are being met by people who are not on the front line of arguing a case. That's a great recommendation, a very important recommendation. We've already indicated that we're moving on her recommendations, and in this piece of legislation is clear and consistent evidence of that.

The Provincial Offences Act: Now, that's the act that supports the prosecution of offences which are not Criminal Code offences. A previous government left that to municipalities to do. There was a working group set up between the province and municipalities to see how it could work better. A number of recommendations were taken, and we put those recommendations in this legislation, quite a number of them, to make sure that it's more effective—maintaining rights, but more effective—that it moves faster, safeguards the public purse, is more transparent, and takes advantage of modern technology: video-conferencing, teleconferencing, all those other modern tools that my colleague from Halton spoke about.

You know, when you actually analyze the objections that are made to this piece of legislation, there aren't a lot, and that's because this piece of legislation, as large as it is, is overwhelmingly technical amendments, small little changes. The few substantive pieces that are in here are really ones that have bubbled up from good advice.

Why do we bring the motion? We need to get on with it. We need to get on with it to support the most effective government and the most effective legislation in the province of Ontario. I urge all members to support this motion.

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

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Mr. Ted Arnott: It's good to be here this afternoon after a week's break, when most of the members were in their ridings in honour of the Remembrance Day events that we all would have wanted to attend, and I attended many. But the fact is, this afternoon the government has surprised us with a time allocation motion on Bill 212. We just heard from the Attorney General, who talked about how this bill was necessary. He concluded his remarks by saying, "Let's get on with it." I would acknowledge that in my 19 years in this place, many governments have employed time allocation motions from time to time because they felt it was time to "get on with it." Certainly when we were in government for eight years, from 1995 to 2003, our party admittedly used time allocation on numerous occasions, and I think each time there was an explanation as to why time allocation was necessary. Even as the government House leader announced this time allocation motion today, I didn't hear a defence as to why it was necessary, other than because the government is getting impatient with the legislative process.

Of course, they've got a new HST bill that they introduced today to raise taxes in the province of Ontario—a massive tax hike—and they want to get on with it. But the fact is, Bill 212 was introduced on October 27. It is a huge bill, as has been pointed out—almost 300 pages—and I dare say there are very few, if any, members of the Legislature who will have likely read this bill from front to back.

Certainly, I have tried to solicit feedback from my constituents on this bill. I sent an e-mail to the municipal politicians in my riding to ask their opinion of the changes to the Municipal Elections Act and the Municipal Act, because it affects them; they're directly involved. To the best of my knowledge, I haven't received any responses yet. That's not to criticize them; they're working on countless other things. I think they need to have an opportunity to review the contents and get back to their member of provincial Parliament, being me, so that I have an opportunity to bring those concerns forward in the Legislature. There are, I'm sure, other members who have done the very same thing, trying to get feedback and trying to make sure they understand the full implications of this bill.

Again, the Attorney General said in his comments that most of these things were just housekeeping, not to worry. He said "most," not "all," which means logically that there are a significant number of changes in this bill that have serious ramifications for the people of the province, without question. It's his bill, and he would lead us to believe that all is well. But we, on our side of the House, have some very serious concerns. For my part, you won't be surprised to know that for those reasons I intend to vote against this motion this afternoon.

I'm glad to see that the Minister of Agriculture is in the House today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to her about some of the issues I have heard about in my

riding—because this is an omnibus bill, Madam Speaker, I assume there is greater latitude in the discussion. Many of the farmers in my riding are extremely concerned about the issues and the general climate they are facing these days, with enhanced regulation being brought forward by this government, increased cost of production and limited government support for their sector. I've heard from pork producers and I've heard from beef producers, and there's a whole range of serious concern in the farm community. I know that the minister is aware of that, and I wanted to bring that to her attention.

The Minister of Community and Social Services is in the House today, and she should be aware of the issue involving the children's aid societies in our riding. Certainly you have an interest in this too, as we all do. The fact is, our children's aid society in the Wellington county area—Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin—is experiencing a deficit of about \$2 million, which, without government assistance at year end, will necessitate massive layoffs at that agency, resulting in reduced care and support for families. That's a serious concern.

The Attorney General, who talked a few minutes ago, talked about the virtues of this bill, but he's neglecting some of the big issues under his responsibility that aren't included in this bill and that we need action on. There is a serious need for new courthouses in the province, and there is also a severe shortage of justices of the peace.

I have a whole list of local issues that I'm going to continue to bring to the attention of the government, hopefully in an appropriate, constructive way, but certainly in an increasingly insistent way if the government is unwilling to respond, whether it be the need for a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus or the need to ensure that GO train service from Wellington–Halton Hills through to Kitchener–Waterloo is established before the end of this government's mandate in 2011. We all know we're going to be here until then, but after that, of course, the people will have their say. Also, I've talked many, many times about the need for a Highway 6 bypass around the community of Morriston in Puslinch township. We need to see a firm commitment from the provincial government and the Ministry of Transportation as to when that project will be built. The environmental assessment has been done, we're ready to go and we just need the go-ahead from the government.

I've got a whole list of other issues as well, but it's also my responsibility, on the part of my caucus, to move an amendment to the amendment that was just moved by Mr. Hampton. My amendment is: That the amendment filed by Mr. Hampton to the time allocation motion by the government House leader with respect to Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, be amended as follows:

In the first paragraph, by deleting the phrase "and time allotted for public hearings in keeping with public response to the call for oral presentations" and replacing it with "and shall be authorized to meet on Thursday,

November 25, 2009, and on Thursday, December 3, 2009, in Toronto for the purpose of public hearings on the bill.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Arnott has moved an amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion 142: “That the amendment filed by Mr. Hampton to the time allocation motion by the government House leader with respect to Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, be amended as follows:

“In the first paragraph, by deleting the phrase ‘and time allotted for public hearings in keeping with public response to the call for oral presentations’ and replacing it with ‘and shall be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 25, 2009, and on Thursday, December 3, 2009, in Toronto for the purpose of public hearings on the bill.’”

The member for Durham.

Mr. John O’Toole: The amendment moved by my good friend is appropriate. I think that’s what this is about. Technically, when you look at Bill 212, as has been said by almost all speakers, it’s the omnibus bill from hell.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It’s a Greyhound bus.

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s actually a Greyhound bus going through the liberties of people in this precinct.

I would say that, quite honestly, the real point here is that the member from Pickering–Scarborough East should know that if he would stop sleeping in the House, we’d all be further ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member from Durham to—

Mr. John O’Toole: He did wake up there, which was good to note. But let he who is without sin throw the first stone, shall we say.

This amendment is really quite simple. What it calls for is hearings on an omnibus bill. The Premier himself said—I believe it was in June 2003—that omnibus bills are the root of poor legislation, and I would say that I concur with his observation then and his observation now.

I would expect that members here today would look at the bill—and there are several parts, and I’m not going to go into all of them. If you looked under the finance portion, you’d see some interesting provisions under schedule 16, and I would encourage members to turn to that page. I am raising the question here because in my riding of Durham, there is a nuclear plant, and the big issue is, “What do you do with nuclear waste?” I’ll read it here:

“The rules of law and statutory enactments relating to accumulations do not apply and are deemed never to have applied to a trust fund required by subsection 9(1) of the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (Canada).”

There are several ministers present here, and I would ask them, in their rebuttal or response, to address that issue.

If you look further, there is another provision here. This is troubling, the detail in this bill, an omnibus bill dealing with waste nuclear fuel, and they can’t answer this question. I put it to you that most of the members on the government side haven’t even read it. If they want to refute that, they can stand in their place and do it.

I’m going to refer to the Perpetuities Act, section 11, still under schedule 16, which says as follows:

“The rules of law and statutory enactments relating to perpetuities do not apply and are deemed never to have applied to a trust fund required by subsection 9(1) of the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (Canada).”

“In perpetuity” means forever, virtually, that these funds must be accrued in value to deal with nuclear fuel waste. Now they’re deemed never to have applied. What does that mean if they deem, sometime in the future, that spent fuel is becoming a hazardous waste substance and that people’s lives or livelihoods could be affected by it—which we’re seeing in India right now, actually, if you’re watching the issue of nuclear fuel within India. It’s a huge issue.

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What’s this part in the bill doing? I put it to the government, if you want my support, explain just that one small section in this omnibus bill and you will have at least redeemed some of your integrity.

My point as well is, if you look at the provisions under the Municipal Act, they’re removing under the Municipal Act—some members aren’t paying attention; I’m so disappointed. If I could get their attention. The member from Pickering–Scarborough East had so much to say about everything but really nothing of any substance.

My point is this: Under the Ontario Municipal Board they are denying the right of appeal. To the members opposite, they should say that they’re not allowing, under schedule 21—section 9 of the act, which authorizes the use of equivalent materials under the building code, is repealed. We’re talking about, in an innovative economy, you’d be looking for new materials to replace wood and other things that were perhaps less combustible. Under that section, material substitutions and building design—“is repealed”; in other words, you can’t use substitute materials. I can’t for one moment believe that the people here have actually either read this, or if they have read it, how come they’re allowing it?

There’s another thing here, in the few minutes that I have left—this is another important one. FSCO, which is the financial regulator in Ontario, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario: “Section 10 of the act grants immunity to certain persons who carry out their functions under the act in good faith.” So an inspector would be granted an immunity even if they breached something, the rights of someone else under the securities provision. We know the market itself today is in breach of good behaviour itself, Bernie Madoff and others.

There is another provision dealing with income tax, as well as insurance, the Mining Act. There are so many small provisions in here that I determined right now that most of the members there haven’t got the foggiest clue

of what they're voting on. If they want to refute what I'm saying, they should stand in their place and demonstrate some competency; otherwise, keep your opinions to yourself. Other than that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I rise to talk about this bill today. New Democrats are outraged that this government is yet again shutting down the debate on this legislation. Why is the government, yet again, using the heavy hammer of time allocation to end debate? Time allocation only ensures that as few people as possible are allowed to speak at public hearings. Why is this government closing down debate? It is afraid Ontarians will start asking questions and get to the bottom, to the real impact of the legislation.

So, just to be clear here, we're basically dealing with truncating the time that we're going to have to debate this bill in the House. For the government to argue that somehow or other the world is going to come to an end if they don't move ahead with this time allocation on the debate is quite a stretch. To suggest that somehow or other time allocation is about efficiency or disposition of business, if we brought that argument forward to every democratic thing we do, I think we'd be in big trouble.

There are sufficient rules within our Legislature to provide members an opportunity to express themselves on legislation that they have reservations about. Time allocation is not an efficient way to deal with business. To allow that to happen is a disservice to all of us because we are all diminished by it.

Rather than making time allocation motions, this government would better serve the people of Ontario by rewriting the rules so that we can divide a piece of legislation and vote on sections of it. What I mean by that—it's the same when they stand up in the House and say, "Well, your party voted against the budget." Yes, we did, because it's not broken down into individual paragraphs or amendments; either you like it or you don't. There could be five things you like in the budget and 55 things you don't like in the budget. That's why the opposition votes against the budget. So when the Minister of Finance stands up and says, "Your party voted against that," certainly they did, because there were a million things wrong with it. So, it really fools the people of Ontario when they see those kinds of shenanigans going on in this House.

Municipal councils do this regularly, and good parts of legislation actually get enacted and those without support get sent back to be rewritten. Municipal councils go by amendments. They go clause by clause. I sat on municipal council; I know what we do. If we don't like stuff, we send it back to the individual departments to rectify it. That's what this House should do, not put a bill on the table and say, "Like it or lump it." The outcome of this is that the public can actually see what is hidden in the bills, as members ask to vote on individual sections that they agree with. It is a more transparent way to do business

and allows our constituents to speak to specifics and have a real say in the laws that we pass in this House.

There are many things that I could point out in this bill that are wrong or haven't been looked at well. There are some good things.

Schedule 12, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade: another example of a potentially major and negative change in the bill that few have noticed.

Amendment to the Development Corporations Act: Traditionally, this act allowed government to set up economic development corporations to help underemployed regions—for example, the Northern Ontario Development Corp. Now it is being expanded to allow government to set up, through regulation, any kind of corporation, including those that are not development corporations: section 5(2).

The government is also being given the power to employ any persons in these corporations, whether they're part of the public service or not. This is a significant expansion of regulation-making powers of the government. It allows the government to bypass the Legislature and expands the government's growing tendency to set up new, so-called arm's-length agencies. The expansion of these agencies is not necessarily in the best interest of Ontarians.

As we have seen from repeated Auditor General reports, there is a lack of accountability in many such agencies. We have watched the debacle for the last few weeks and months in this House, where agency after agency has been brought to task for wrong spending, too many consultants, hundreds of millions of dollars. The government has decided to make 22 of those accountable—22 out of 586 that they oversee. I don't even want to think how much money has been blown in the other 558. It's pretty scary stuff. To date, I think it's about \$400 million with those 22, and that's probably not all of it: such agencies as the OLG, eHealth, Cancer Care Ontario—the list goes on and on. I can't wait to get into WSIB. That's going to be a nightmare.

More is often spent on setting up agencies with expensive consultants than would be spent if work was done in-house.

As the member from Durham has said, I'm not sure that everyone has looked at these.

Schedule 8, the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act: Members of the opposition party raised concerns about a change that allows the director to reduce enforcement. We have looked into this change. The amendment appears to address the problem that sometimes arises with the continuation of enforcement after a child ceases to be entitled to child support under an agreement or order, based on his or her age or educational status. In some cases, the parent recipient of the child support does not co-operate with acknowledgment to the Family Responsibility Office that the obligation has ended, thus leaving the support payer paying sometimes well beyond the period of obligation, with sometimes very little chance of recovering the cost of his or her overpaid support. If the payer is obligated to start a

court application to end the obligation, it can be financially punitive to the paying spouse.

It would appear to address a narrow range of cases and is not an open-ended opportunity for FRO to use discretion to enforce orders and agreements. On the other hand, it is important that the section not be interpreted widely and have unscrupulous payers pretend that an obligation has ended, thus putting the onus on the recipient to show otherwise. The director should only be able to end payments under this provision if the order or agreement is relatively clear on its face that the obligation has ended.

The Municipal Elections Act: A councillor in Ottawa, Councillor Alex Cullen, has expressed concern about the requirement for photo ID for voters. He said it is of grave concern, as many seniors would be disenfranchised due to their lack of photo ID. That's another good point.

The Canadian charity law: There are a number of changes, including the repeal of the Charitable Gifts Act, which had provided that an Ontario charity may not own more than 10% of the interest in a business. Ontario was the only province to have such a restriction, and it applied to all charities. That is probably the most significant change in this area.

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Although there were workarounds with trusts etc., such a restriction, in Blumberg's view, never made much sense, and with registered charities having to comply with the "unrelated business" rules under the Income Tax Act, there is a system in place to regulate charities involved with business.

Louise Harris, of the Ontario Bar Association: The changes to the charities act come from them; also the change to the Solicitors Act—interest on the unpaid accounts.

On the Assessment Act, this question was put to the government people: "What is the purpose of deleting deadlines for municipalities to make tax policy decisions?"

Here is the answer we got from the government bureaucrats: "The current legislated deadlines do not give municipalities sufficient time to conduct their tax policy analysis and make decisions. As a result, the Minister of Finance extends these deadlines annually by regulation. Removing the legislated deadlines would provide municipalities with greater flexibility and autonomy to make decisions about their property tax policies, and would eliminate the necessity to file new regulations each year."

You might want to take a good, hard look at that answer. It doesn't quite cut it.

City of Toronto Act: "Explain the nature and purpose of the changes to sections 148 and 154 (re: regulation-making powers applying to secondary corporations)."

Answer from the bureaucrats: "The city of Toronto has made a request to allow its city services corporations to create corporations (i.e. 'subsidiaries') as a means of increasing the city's economic competitiveness, innovation, economic readiness and flexibility in meeting its

needs and may facilitate project financing and joint ventures with outside parties."

Hmm, I smell more consultants here.

"The current City of Toronto Act does not allow for the province to directly regulate these 'subsidiaries' to help ensure accountability and transparency in their creation and operations."

Another one you might want to take a look at as a local council.

Question: "Please describe the nature and purpose of changes that allow [the] city to pass bylaws respecting alternative roof services that achieve similar levels of performance to green roofs. What types of 'similar surfaces' are being considered? What types of performance measures are being considered?"

Answer: "Under the City of Toronto Act, the city has authority to pass bylaws requiring and governing 'green roofs,' which are defined as roof surfaces which support vegetation"—I'm not quite sure what that means; what's going to be growing out of these roofs?—"over a substantial portion for the purpose of water conservation and energy conservation."

Interesting. I wonder how that's going to be delivered.

"Under the proposed good government bill (Bill 212), the city would be given additional authority to require and govern alternative roof surfaces that achieve similar levels of performance to green roofs. This responds to a request from the city.

"Examples of alternatives to green roofs might include 'white roofs.' White roofs reflect sunlight, thereby reducing the cooling load during the summer and reducing the urban heat island effect, both of which may promote energy conservation. Additionally, white roofs may be less expensive and more technically feasible for certain building types and easier to maintain."

How true. If all the roofs in Toronto become white roofs, I'm not sure I'd want to be a pilot flying over there. Sun reflection alone could be [*inaudible*]. Being exposed to the flight of planes, I understand a pilot's concerns about a whole city of white roofs.

"The content of the bylaw and the alternatives selected are the responsibility of the city of Toronto as a mature order of government."

I have some concerns about the Municipal Act, as it has been over the years. I know there has been nothing in this bill to discuss whether councillors can run for higher office and still maintain their positions. There is nothing in here to discuss that. That has been a bit of a problem, because they sometimes take a leave of absence to seek a higher office, but they can get their job back if they don't succeed. I'm not sure it's fair to other people who are running against them when they're assured of their position if they lose. They can take a leave of absence and go back where they were. I'm not sure it serves the people, the municipality or the province very well when they're on sabbatical.

Secondary corporations: "Similar amendments are being proposed for the Municipal Act so that all municipalities may benefit from the ability of municipal ser-

vices corporations to create secondary corporations (i.e. 'subsidiaries') and to allow provincial regulation of their creation and operations."

This is far too much control by the government over regulation of the creation and operation of large corporations.

Question: "Please clarify and describe the purpose of change to section 42."

Answer: "Among other things, section 42 of the Planning Act provides direction on the use of funds that municipalities receive as a condition of the development of land in lieu of the conveyance of land for park or other public recreational purposes. The act provides that the funds are to be spent only for 'the acquisition of land to be used for park or other public recreational purposes, including the erection or repair of buildings and acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes.'"

In the past, there has been some confusion about the scope of how the funds could be used. That's putting it mildly. A lot of funds that were allocated for certain projects seemed to go into other projects.

The proposed legislative change would broaden the language in the legislation to clarify the permitted use of the funds that can include improvements to park and public recreational buildings. This clarification will assist municipalities in utilizing the funds for park and recreational purposes. I'm hoping that they can enforce that. I hope that what they recommend, if the municipalities will follow the regulations—because they may need work in roads and they may need work at their water and sewage treatment plants. If this money is going to be allocated strictly for parks and recreation, is this government going to be able to keep a handle on what municipalities do with the money that they transfer to them for these projects? I'm not sure. I don't think this has been looked at very well.

Here's a very hot item: the Residential Tenancies Act.

The question was, "Please clarify and describe the purpose of changing section 74(11) regarding tenant payment options on money owing to the landlord and tenant board."

Answer: "The proposed change to section 74(11) provides a tenant with the option to pay the full amount owing to the LTB or landlord for the purposes of setting aside an eviction order. In administrating the RTA, the Landlord and Tenant Board ... has found that in some circumstances tenants are paying the amount owing directly to the landlord to set aside an eviction order. In addition, according to the LTB's guidelines, the board interprets section 74(11) as permitting the tenant to make the entire payment to the landlord. The proposed change to section 74(11) provides a tenant with a payment option and reflects tenant practices. In addition, in some circumstances it may be more convenient for the tenant to provide payment to the landlord directly compared to travelling to an LTB office."

I think there could be some problems there. I don't think they've looked at this too well either.

I could go on for hours here about the technicalities that are wrong, the oversight that has not been not applied in these cases.

Also, "The LTB requested that section 78(11)(b) of the RTA be amended to provide greater clarity with respect to amending the terms and conditions of previous applications or mediated settlements. In practice, when an order is set aside, the RTA as it is currently written serves to reinstate existing conditions—which in some cases tenants are not able to comply with. To address this situation, the LTB has been applying section 204, which permits the board to include in an order whatever conditions it considers fair in these circumstances"—whatever it feels are fair in these circumstances. I'm not sure it works both ways. I think it kind of weakens the tenant's position.

"The proposed introduction of section 78(12) clarifies that the LTB has the ability, where appropriate, to alter or amend an order with respect to a previous application or the existing mediated settlement."

Who is going to conduct these mediated settlements? Is it going to be an appointee of the municipality or an oversight appointee from the provincial government? It's not spelled out at all. "In practical terms, this is the application of section 204" again. "This proposed change provides greater clarity to tenants and landlords," in their opinion. I don't think it spells it out enough.

Now, let's get into the environment, the Environmental Protection Act.

Question: "How is section 34 being changed? It appears that the right to appeal tribunal decisions to the LGIC is being removed. Is that the case? What is the purpose of this change?"

Answer: "Yes, petitions to cabinet would be removed. This is consistent with the removal of such appeals under the Ontario Municipal Board Act and tribunals that refer to the OMB Act."

When I sat on council, we had more than our share of troubles with the OMB. Frankly, I wouldn't be upset if it disappeared. The Ontario Municipal Board has been a disaster, and they have stopped all kinds of municipalities from going ahead with projects. I would say that most people who appeal to the OMB from a private situation lose 75% of their cases.

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"As discussed in the technical briefing, the scope of appeals from decisions of such bodies has been gradually reduced over the years. Extremely few petitions are brought nowadays, and still fewer succeed." I guess I kind of spelled it out. It's like another bureaucratic level that's a waste of time. "For example, between 1993 and 2008, there was only one petition to cabinet regarding the Environmental Assessment Board (now the Environmental Review Tribunal). The bill would leave recourse from tribunal decisions with the courts"—where it should be.

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry:

Question: "Are the responsibilities of the ministry changing, or only the name of the ministry?"

Answer: “The main change would be the name of the ministry, to add ‘and Forestry’ to it. However, the provisions of the new subsection 8(b) of the act (in section 3(6) of schedule 23 of the bill) are new, as are the provisions of s. 10(1)(b) of the act in s.3(7) of that schedule of the bill.

“8. It is the function of the ministry to,

“(b) establish and administer policies, programs and services throughout Ontario,

“(i) supporting mineral resource development and management and the mineral and geoscience sectors, and

“(ii) supporting forest resource development and management and the forestry industry.”

As you know, our party had a lot of problems with the bill that came forward governing mining. Once again, we were shut down. And what the public doesn't realize is, when you go to committee level—and I'll reiterate; I do it many times in this House—when you go to committee to discuss a bill, there are five Liberals, two Conservatives and one NDP member. We lose 99% of the bills, even though our amendments are good, constructive information, and very rarely do they take our advice or use our amendments, because they're not theirs. It's absolutely unbelievable—if people knew how things worked.

I can say that in the years that I sat on municipal council in my area, I saw a lot of problems in dealing between the levels of government and a lot of stretched-out things. Yes, there are things in this bill that may expedite some of those problems that municipalities had, and I'm all for that—to alleviate some of the red tape, so to speak, and the things that happen on local councils—but I also don't want to run into it. I don't want to miss something or leave something at the bus stop. I want to do it right, and I don't understand why the Liberal government in this House continues to push these things through. If you're going to do it, do it right. And if you're going to do it right, there may be some good ideas that come from other members across the floor. Maybe you might want to consider it.

I wish that the whole governmental set-up was different. Some people wish they were all independent, so they could think for themselves and vote the way their people want them to, instead of following the direction of a Premier or the direction of a House leader or the direction of the head of the party. A lot of people would like to see that in this province, and I've heard it a thousand times. I wouldn't mind it myself, but I don't think that will happen.

All I can say is, we've got to deal with what we've got in front of us. But if you're going to deal with it, and this level of government is going down to the level of municipal government, then you've got to understand that what we decide here is going to have a positive or negative impact on our municipal governments, making it very hard for them to operate on a day-to-day basis when they're dealing with their constituents in their area and dealing with the local problems, which are numerous, as you well know if you've served on council—

everything from potholes to fixing the arena to doing something at the parks, waterworks. It goes on and on and on. If we're going to be the guiding light, then I suggest we're going to have to guide it properly.

The member from Durham made a point. He said that maybe a lot of people don't read the bills, and I think he's right. But I can assure you that we've looked at this bill, and we look at all bills. We may be small, but we're very effective. We do pick out the points that could be improvements to the bill, and we point them out on a daily basis in here. Trust me, it falls of deaf ears. I think the people of Ontario are starting to realize it. I think the people of Ontario are starting to see through the maze. I think they're seeing who's doing the work, who's really concerned about their well-being. I think things are changing, times are changing, and I hope that we can make an impact in this House to make things better.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to be able to make a few remarks today. Indeed, it is good to be back in the Legislative Assembly here at Queen's Park in Toronto after a great week, a constituency week, back in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

I do want to just make one highlight that's sort of off topic, Speaker, with your indulgence: I want to congratulate St. John Ambulance in my riding of Thunder Bay, who last week launched a campaign called Operation Red Nose. As we get near the Christmas season and we all begin to be a little bit worried about that drinking and driving phenomenon that tends to persist, they are offering a volunteer service for people who find themselves in a difficult circumstance. This has operated in many other jurisdictions in the province, and I want to thank them for launching that in Thunder Bay for the first time.

Before I begin my remarks, too, I feel the need to respond to some of the comments that were made by the member from Durham. From time to time over the past six years, going on seven years, here in the assembly, I've taken the time to occasionally enjoy the comments of the member from Durham, but I must say that today he's a little bit off his game. Being such a senior member of the Legislative Assembly, to put forward the personal commentary that he did today about one of our members—I'm not sure if the traffic was bad coming in from Durham today. I don't know what got him in a bit of a foul mood, but he's a bit ill-humoured today, and I'm sure somewhere in the future he's going to have an opportunity to address those off-the-cuff remarks he made that perhaps he's wishing he had not made. Anyway, I'll leave that with him. I was just a bit surprised to hear that.

There has been a bit of discussion on the time allocation motion, most of it coming from the members of the official opposition. That part is a little bit surprising, I guess, when you consider that from 1995 until 2003 the official opposition—and I'm not sure it would be much of an overstatement, if one at all, to suggest that perhaps

they were addicted to closure motions during their eight years in power. Very, very little third reading debate on many bills came before the Legislature in that eight- or nine-year period, and often very little committee work went on in relation to different pieces of legislation that went on during those eight or nine years. So I think it's a bit surprising for all of us to hear that criticism.

In terms of the omnibus bill, I would state only this: Yes, there is room for criticism, I suppose; there is a lot in this particular piece of legislation. But again, the official opposition, speaking directly to this one, introduced what would likely be characterized as the granddaddy of them all, in Bill 26. I noticed that the member from Durham, even before I got the words out, knew what I was going to say when we talked about Bill 26. I mean, this is a bill that brought in what was anticipated to accommodate about \$3 billion worth of cuts—some people said maybe as much as \$6 billion or \$8 billion worth of cuts—in an omnibus bill that had very little debate. I think as time went on—that bill was introduced in 1996—post that legislation, the people in the province of Ontario learned very clearly the results of what was contained in that bill and the effect that those cuts had on almost every single riding, I would suggest, in the province of Ontario, whether it was the loss of nurses or a variety of other services in the province.

There are three pieces of this legislation that I want to speak to that primarily deal with the municipal elections part. I was fortunate to have two three-year terms on council in Thunder Bay and to go through two municipal elections there. Our Attorney General spoke earlier on a piece, and our member from Willowdale here very shortly will speak on another piece. I'm only going to take about three or four more minutes to speak on these pieces that I think are worth highlighting in this good government bill, Bill 212, that deal with the municipal sector.

The first is about accessibility when it comes to municipal elections. I must say, as someone who went through two municipal elections, I am surprised that I didn't know or wasn't even completely aware of this—and I guess I'm surprised that it hasn't been done sooner; that no other provincial government has found fit to introduce amendments in this regard: Up until the point of this introduction, polling stations in municipal elections have not had to be accessible. For me personally, I can say I'm surprised to hear that. I did not know that. I don't know if other members in the assembly were aware of that. Perhaps in future they will have an opportunity to address why their governments were not interested in amending this piece of legislation. I think it is something that is important to let people in the province of Ontario know that we are doing.

1530

I can think of community advocacy groups in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. I think of PUSH, Persons United for Self-Help, and Ron Ross, and the great work that they do in terms of advocacy for the disabled community, and of Al Buchan and the HAGI

group, the Handicap Action Group Inc., who do a tremendous amount of advocacy for this certain segment of our population. I know that those two groups and many others will be very interested to learn that with this particular piece contained within Bill 212, if passed, beginning in 2012 we will find ourselves in a position where all polling stations will need to be accessible.

The second point that I want to touch on is this idea of a war chest, where candidates in municipal elections heretofore have been able to accumulate a significant amount of resources that they have been able to fundraise, and once that particular election has concluded, they have been able to carry that financial resource forward and use it in the next election.

Of course, the point of us changing this is that now, if that occurs, those candidates will have to either use up all of the resources that they have fundraised or, if there is any left over after the municipal election has occurred, give it to the municipality in which it was raised. They will not be able to carry it forward. This particular piece will, I think, make it fairer and easier for those who are willing to put their name forward on a municipal ballot and challenge an incumbent to begin the competition with a bit more of a level playing field going forward.

The last piece that I want to comment on under this particular part of Bill 212 is this idea that's been put forward by the minister—and I commend the minister for this particular piece—that he will strike a committee, should this legislation pass, that will review instances in municipal elections where some councillors will challenge other councillors, or members of the public will challenge individual councillors, successful or otherwise—especially those who have been successful—in terms of whether or not they have overspent their allotted amount of money in that particular election.

This one rings very near and dear to me. In my second term on municipal council in Thunder Bay, we had a situation like this that occurred, where there was a challenge from one councillor to another and then a second challenge, from the challenged councillor back to the one who put the first challenge forward. I remember very clearly the difficulties that many members of that particular council were having in dealing with this issue. They were having difficulty deciding how it was that they should vote.

For me, quite frankly, even though I don't agree with the perspective, I understand that many people did have a hard time with this. For me, it was simple: I'll put up my hand and say yes to challenging them both. I think if you are a municipal councillor or someone with their name on a ballot provincially or federally, if that happens, the only way that you can clear the slate is to say, "Yes, go ahead. Investigate." So for me, it was simple. There were only two of us out of 13, however, who voted that way, who said yes to reviewing them both. I talked to both of the people who were involved individually. I said, "This is what I'm going to do and this is why, and I would think that would be what you would want to occur," but there were many other members of council who did not necessarily feel that way.

I think the point of this, though, is the public's perception. For the public, they want to know that it's not an in-house deal being made. If a councillor votes not to investigate the expenses of another councillor, obviously to the members of the voting public this does not look that great, and so that is what this piece is aimed at changing. So a committee would be struck, should Bill 212 pass, and in the future, on a go-forward basis, should expense challenges arise, this is the situation that we would find ourselves in.

I see that my time is up. In fact, I've gone over my time—I'm getting the wink from the wings here—so I thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate? Further debate? Oh, sorry. The member for Willowdale.

Mr. David Zimmer: Way off in the far corner of the rump. Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me, although I'm way over here in the corner of the rump.

I do want to speak to this. This is a time allocation debate. When we're thinking about the time allocation debate, it's important to keep in mind the philosophy behind Bill 212, because when we keep the philosophy behind Bill 212 in mind, you will see why it is imperative that we get on with the vote on Bill 212.

What is the philosophy behind Bill 212? Well, it reflects the government's commitment to making sure that Ontario statutes are up to date and effective. If Bill 212 is passed, it's going to streamline a whole lot of processes contained in the various acts covered by Bill 212. It's going to ensure that a whole lot of the laws that are referred to in Bill 212 are clear, current and relevant. When you think of those words—getting things up to date, making things more effective, streamlining processes, bringing clarity to legislation and making the legislation relevant to today's issues—that's why it's very important that we deal with Bill 212 and move it ahead. That's why we brought this time allocation matter.

The bill proposes a number of items that are technical changes or what are sometimes characterized as housekeeping measures. What are housekeeping measures about? Housekeeping measures connote tidying things up; again, clarity, streamlining, making things better, moving the issues along. If passed, Bill 212 is going to clarify a number of outdated mechanisms and clarify some existing legislation that's very complex.

How is it going to do that? It's going to do that by modernizing terminology and replacing obsolete terms. What could be more important than bringing modernization of terminology to some of our archaic and complicated legislation here in Ontario? What could be more demanding? What could be more fulfilling than replacing a lot of obsolete legislative terms that just serve to confuse people and, indeed, to confuse legislators. That's why it's important that we get quickly to the point where we can vote on Bill 212. That's why we're having this time allocation debate.

I want to just speak briefly to a number of matters that particularly affect legislation that comes under the purview of the Ministry of the Attorney General. There are changes dealing with the Change of Name Act. The proposed amendment here is intended to overcome the problem that can occur when a protected witness and others at significant risk of harm have recently arrived from another province and require a secure name change, but can't meet the act's one-year residency requirement for a name change. That's something that is clear and simple. We should move ahead quickly on this. The amendment would, if passed, facilitate a safer and more expeditious name-change process for those who need it by alleviating the need to wait a year before obtaining a new entity.

Let me speak briefly to the Crown Witnesses Act. Here, a proposed change to the Crown Witnesses Act would make it a provincial offence to disclose a witness protection program participant's change of entity or whereabouts. There are a number of other amendments in this legislation, the things found in the Crown Administration of Estates Act and in the Municipal Elections Act.

Essentially, when you look through at all of these amendments, it brings us back to this need to "update"—that word is used—to be effective, to streamline matters, to clarify matters. That's what good government is about. That's what this legislation is about: updating things, making them more effective, streamlining things, bringing greater clarity to various processes under this legislation. That's what good governance is about. It's imperative that we deal with this bill as quickly as possible.

1540

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

Seeing none, I will now put the questions.

We will deal first with the question on the amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion 142.

Mr. Arnott moved that the amendment filed by Mr. Hampton on the time allocation motion by the government House leader with respect to Bill 212, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain acts and by enacting two new acts, be amended as follows:

"In the first paragraph, by deleting the phrase 'and time allotted for public hearings in keeping with public response to the call for oral presentations' and replacing it with 'and shall be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 25, 2009, and on Thursday, December 3, 2009, in Toronto for the purpose of public hearings on the bill.'"

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment to the amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I think the nays have it.

We're going to call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

I've received a notice of deferral. "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Mr. Arnott on the amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion 142 be deferred until November 17, 2009," given to me by the chief government whip. So all of the votes will be accordingly deferred.

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 204, An Act to protect animal health and to amend and repeal other acts, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25, 2009, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill and following routine proceedings on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on Monday, November 30, 2009. At 5 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 2, 2009. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, on the day the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question

necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

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

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'd like to move an amendment, if I might.

I move that the motion by the government House leader, with respect to Bill 204, Animal Health Act, 2009, be amended as follows:

—by deleting the third paragraph and replacing it with, "That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet as follows: on Wednesday, November 25, 2009, in Toronto; on Monday, December 14, 2009, in Stratford"—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member opposite might want to take care of the Toronto Cricket Club, but he doesn't want to take care of his animals.

—"on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, in Guelph; and on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, in Lindsay, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and on January 13 and January 20, 2010, during its regular meeting times, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill."

—in the fourth paragraph, by deleting "Tuesday, December 1, 2009" and replacing it with "Monday, January 11, 2010;"

—in the fifth paragraph, by deleting "December 2, 2009" and replacing it with "February 16, 2010;" and

—in the seventh paragraph, by deleting "one hour" and replacing it with "six hours."

So moved.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Chudleigh has moved the following amendment:

"That the motion by the government House leader with respect to Bill 204, Animal Health Act, 2009, be amended as follows:

—by deleting the third paragraph and replacing it with 'That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet as follows: on Wednesday, November 25, 2009, in Toronto; on Monday, December 14, 2009, in Stratford; on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, in Guelph; and on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, in Lindsay, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and on January 13 and January 20, 2010, during its regular meeting times, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.'

—"in the fourth paragraph, by deleting 'Tuesday, December 1, 2009' and replacing it with 'Monday, January 11, 2010;'

—"in the fifth paragraph, by deleting 'December 2, 2009' and replacing it with 'February 16, 2010; and

—"in the seventh paragraph, by deleting 'one hour' and replacing it with 'six hours.'"

The member from Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Of course, I'm very disappointed to have to rise today to speak to a time allocation motion on Bill 204, the Animal Health Act. I've been in this Legislature, I think, for over 14 years now, and I cannot remember a time when we had two time allocation bills brought in on the same day. In fact, I believe I probably can't remember that because the rules didn't allow it. Today, under the new rules that the Liberal government with their majority have put forward, it is allowable now to stack up time allocation bills in something that doesn't have a lot to do with transparency, doesn't have a lot to do with accountability, and in my opinion has nothing whatsoever to do with democracy.

There is any number of quotes that I could use from the Liberal benches and their opinion on how they felt about time allocation bills, the motions that were brought in. I used a number of those quotes in the comments that I had on Bill 212 about an hour and a half ago, and they would stand for this debate as well.

I'm disappointed because this motion is limiting the opportunity that farmers, agricultural organizations and members of this Legislature will have to contribute to making this legislation better. I want to tell you that Bill 204 could use a lot of help. It needs to be made a lot better.

The agricultural community was asking for a bill to help them in marketing their products, in traceability, so that we know where sick animals came from, and that's all well and good. That's how a modern agricultural industry should be operating.

This bill doesn't do that. The industry expected it to do that, and it doesn't. It is enabling legislation that may allow that to happen in the future, but how it happens, when it happens and who pays for it—especially who pays for it—won't be the subject of debate; it won't be the subject of hearings regarding this particular piece of legislation.

1550

The time allocation motion the government has introduced cuts off second reading debate, limiting committee time to four hours next week in downtown Toronto—downtown Toronto during a period of time when, I bring it to the government's attention, there are a lot of farmers out there who are harvesting crops right now. The weather is good. Corn is coming off. You don't always have this kind of weather during harvest time. The crops are coming off, and they are going to continue to come off.

Farmers don't have time to take a day off and come to downtown Toronto. They may go in to a rural centre some place and make comments at another period of time of the year. They may even write submissions on the bill, but right now, during harvest time, this bill has been timed—perhaps on purpose—to ensure that the comment is extremely limited.

It has limited debate in committee on clause-by-clause and has reduced third reading debate to one hour or 20 minutes per party—one hour for third reading. It's unbelievable that a bill that is somewhat complex could

be limited to one hour for third reading. This is a government that talked about accountability and transparency. Where is the transparency in a one-hour third reading debate?

We all agree with the principle of the bill: to improve animal health and food safety, but the way the Animal Health Act is written causes us great concern, not just for the PC caucus but for agriculture stakeholders throughout this great province of Ontario. We need to ensure that the agriculture industry gets the opportunity to raise these concerns so they can be addressed before the legislation is put in place.

One of the things that agriculture groups were looking for in this bill, as I said, was a traceability system, and Ontario is a forerunner in the traceability systems. The dairy herd improvement act traced every dairy cow in this province from 1947, I believe it was, until today in most cases. Today it's voluntary but that traceability continues to happen, and we've been tracing dairy cows over that period of time. So Ontario has a history in that area, and it could be put together with little problem.

However, the government has chosen not to do that in this bill. They have chosen to make this bill one of enabling legislation so that the system that does come into place—and who pays for it—will not be the subject of public debate but rather the subject of regulation.

Unfortunately, the only thing this bill does is give the Minister of Agriculture the ability to set up the traceability system at some point in the future, by regulation, meaning that it could all happen behind closed doors where there is no requirement to consult with the public.

I'm sure that the minister will assure everyone that she is committed to getting public input by giving the time allocation being debated today. I'm sure we can understand why some stakeholders would question her word on that subject.

We have heard a number of other concerns from stakeholders about this legislation. No warrants will be required for searches of agricultural property—searches that may be as minor as to see whether or not proper licences are in place. Surely to check a licence isn't so urgent that it needs unwarranted entry. This government seems to be running roughshod over those tenets of democracy. To get a search warrant is a fairly easy thing to do. Police officers and inspectors have available to them, 24/7, the ability to get an electronic search warrant. To give this huge power that a person can walk on to your property and into your barns and office to examine things is going way over the top.

This bill also seems to be very heavy on red tape, with new requirements for licences and fees. The cost for every one of those licences and fees comes out of the pockets of the farmers who are hard-pressed under today's agricultural environment. There's nothing in the bill that says who is going to pay for that, but I guess we all know that the farmer is going to pay. If the farmer has to pay all these extra fees, those fees come off the bottom line; they come out of his pocket. It's adding insult to injury when you require people who are in desperate

straits to continue to pay more and more and more. It also says the minister “may” provide compensation, leaving it up to her discretion.

We need to strengthen the section on the chief veterinarian to make it equivalent to the chief medical officer of health. It states in the bill that the chief veterinarian has to be a civil servant, a public servant. That’s not the case for the medical officer of health. I think they become a public servant when they take the office, but they don’t have to be at the start. I think that’s a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

We could have worked together to address these concerns and ensure that the final legislation worked out best for farmers. The farmers would be more than happy to work in the best interests of their organizations and of their industry and to make this a better piece of legislation. However, that opportunity has been denied to them—denied to them, again, by the actions that the government has taken on this double-hit day of two time allocation motions. They sure won’t get an opportunity for input into this bill in this—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Not so. Absolutely—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Oh, they’re going to get a whole four hours of hearings in downtown Toronto during harvest time. The minister, of course, doesn’t understand what it’s like to drive a combine for 18 hours a day. Instead, the McGuinty government is cutting off second reading debate, limiting committee hearings and only allowing each party 20 minutes to speak to the third reading of this bill.

When Better Farming magazine called to ask the Minister of Agriculture why this bill was being rushed through, she said that “this bill is receiving the same due process that I believe the majority of bills that have been passed by this government have received.” Given that this is the second time allocation motion we’re debating today, perhaps that is accurate, but it certainly isn’t something I’d be proud of if I were a minister or a member of this government. This motion—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Six hours of debate so far.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Six hours of debate.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Six and a half.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: If the minister thinks that six and a half hours of debate on a confused bill, on a comprehensive bill like this, is an adequate way to address the future of farmers in this province, the minister is sadly lacking in her perspective on what the agricultural industry of this province needs and deserves.

This bill needs a lot of work. It’s not going to get it with a time allocation motion. This government, who talked about transparency, who talked about openness—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Hollow promises.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: —has shown us today that this promise is absolutely hollow, like all the other promises have been hollow: about tax reductions, about no increases in taxes, about almost everything this government touches. They have lacked the sincerity to follow through on their promises, to the point where today in

Ontario, when a promise is made, people have the opportunity to ask, “Well, is that a real promise or is it a Liberal promise?”

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I have a few comments on this bill. Once again, I’m extremely frustrated by time allocation basically cutting off debate. As the member spoke, six hours is hardly enough for the farmers of this province to get their points and concerns across, and having it one day in Toronto isn’t really conducive to having a broad spectrum of people in the farm industry able to get their points across. I think it’s once again, “Push it through, get it done, and worry about things after. Don’t do it right the first time.”

I have updated information from November 12. The National Farmers Union issued the following release:

“Ontario Animal Health Act Raises Questions

“‘Could the provincial government’s Animal Health Act shut down organic livestock production in Ontario? Given the experience of certified organic turkey production, that is a real worry,’ says National Farmers Union (NFU) Ontario coordinator Grant Robertson.” Here we go again, Madam Speaker; this is his quote: “‘Getting this legislation right should be the priority for this government, not rushing it through,’” like all the other bills they’ve done in the last two years.

“Robertson was reacting to the news that the Ontario government has begun to limit debate on the Animal Health Act in the Legislature. But even more troubling is that only one half day has been allocated for consultation, and that is set for November 25 in the heart of downtown Toronto—far away from Ontario’s farm communities.”

1600

Somehow, I can’t see any tractors rolling down University Avenue to deal with this situation. I really don’t believe that farmers are going to take them seriously. Farmers are not going to take the time to come to Toronto to say what they know—and they’re the ones who know it better than anyone. This minister can do her road show and visit everybody, but then put ahead her ideas and not listen to anyone else. That’s quite possible too.

“The NFU, like Ontario’s farmers, supports the principles this bill is based upon. For farmers in Ontario, human and animal health is top priority” to all people. “‘This is particularly true for the NFU as many of our members sell directly to eaters in local markets,’ stated Robertson.

“‘Under spurious animal health conditions, the Turkey Farmers of Ontario effectively eliminated certified organic turkey production in Ontario for farmers with more than 50 birds through their regulatory powers,’ said Robertson. ‘Farmers worry that we could see similar things happening with a variety of livestock, where providing natural, healthy outside access is a major part of the raising of that livestock.’

“The NFU is also concerned about other provisions of the act including:

“(1) Compensation for farmers is discretionary, meaning that farmers could potentially have their livelihoods devastated if animals are ordered to be destroyed—a common precautionary action. This could create a situation where well-meaning farmers might be afraid to come forward with disease concerns” because of economic devastation.

“(2) The cost implications of the licensing and fees the act will create for farmers, especially for small and beginning farms. Because of the way food is sold and marketed, there is simply no mechanism for farmers to recoup these costs from the marketplace as there would be in other” types of businesses.

“(3) A new regulatory regime may need to be created for farmers that currently fall outside the supply-managed inspection criteria. As an example: Someone raising 300 chickens in Ontario for local consumption does not have to comply with all the regulatory burden a large chicken operator now must. Will a new layer of red tape be created between Ontario’s eaters and Ontario’s farmers?”

“There is simply no good case for rushing through this act and risk getting things wrong,” said Robertson. “Limiting consultation to a few short hours in Toronto on an act that could have profound”—I repeat, profound—“implications for a large number of Ontario’s farmers just makes no sense if your goal, as it should be, is to make sure this act does not create more animal and human health problems than it is intended to address, along with even greater financial burdens for Ontario’s farmers.”

Additional notes:

The NFU is particularly concerned about those farmers—mostly small family farms serving local markets—who raise their livestock with outside access finding themselves targeted.

Animal health was the justification the turkey farmers used.

Without the NFU card campaign, which got the notice of a Toronto Star reporter, turkey farmers regulation effectively banning organic turkey production would have just sailed through.

Even now, it is hard to tell if it is going to get fixed.

It is not hard to imagine the powerful forces in food production that are dependent on the industrialized model using that power to eliminate “hazards” to that model.

If we really want to do something about BSE, for example, we could just test all animals, get rid of all this 30-month stuff that keeps causing problems and regain lots of closed markets—but we don’t do that. That would be better from both a cost situation and food safety, but the powers that be don’t want that.

NFU is also concerned about the language around discretionary compensation. That has the potential to create haves and have-nots in the awful thought of having an outbreak of something in Ontario.

The government needs to either fully fund this stuff or quit pretending they’re trying to do anything.

Additional media coverage:

“New Ontario Animal Health Act Looms

“Better Farming, November 11, 2009

“Ontario’s proposed Animal Health Act could be approved by early December, if the provincial Legislature approves a motion to move from second reading debate to public hearings.

“But Ontario’s Progressive Conservatives say the timeline in the Monday motion is too fast.

“If passed, the motion would reduce industry stakeholders’ opportunity to deliver feedback to four hours during a Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly session, scheduled November 25. It would also return the proposed act to the Legislature December 2 for its final reading, warns Tory agriculture critic Ernie Hardeman in a news release.

“Four hours of committee hearings on one afternoon in Toronto is an insult to the thousands of farmers who are going to pay the cost of this bill,” the release quotes Hardeman.

“Provincial agriculture minister Leona Dombrowsky says the proposed act, Bill 204, ‘is receiving the same due process that I believe the majority of bills that have been passed by this government has received’”—I guess that’s good, six hours—“and after 6.5 hours of debate in the provincial Legislature, ‘It’s time to get some public input.’”

A whole six hours, and the public has to come to downtown Toronto to get their points across. Good luck.

“Dombrowsky says although the time for presentations is fixed, the public can submit comments in writing.” That’ll go a long way. That’ll fall on some bureaucrat’s desk and into the garbage can. “The committee will consider these while reviewing the bill.” I can’t wait. That’ll be exciting.

“Hardeman ‘should know that,’ she says.”

Mr. Hardeman should know that you can put in written submissions.

“Hardeman could not be immediately reached for comment.

“His release states the Tories support the bill’s principle—to protect animal health and food safety—but he has concerns. These are:

“Compensation for orders under the act, such as destroying animals, is discretionary;

“It permits inspectors to enter and search properties without a warrant; and

“It creates red tape and expenses for farmers through licences and fees.”

Not only is that going to create problems between the local enforcement agencies, the ministry, the police, and the farmers—people coming on their property they may not have been alerted about or don’t know. We could have some problems there. It could even result in violence. Have they taken that into consideration? I don’t think so.

“Dombrowsky says the bill is consistent with what the province’s agricultural industry has said it wants and the Liberal government sees it as ‘a very important piece of legislation.’”

Every piece of legislation that leaves this building should be important, but it also should be discussed properly. Every point of view from every type of farming in this province should be involved in the discussions, not a select few, not picking certain people who may support the party to talk about bills. You want to get it from every aspect of our society, every corner of this province. Every farming industry in the province should be involved.

“She notes that similar legislation is in effect in other provinces. A power such as warrantless entry is not commonly used but ‘is a provision that’s there when the (province’s) chief veterinarian would be of the position that to not to enter would compromise the safety and security of the food system.’”

We agree that if he was not allowed in there to inspect it could cause a problem. But if there is a problem and it’s the person’s whole livelihood, are they going to come forward and just volunteer the destruction of their flock or of their beef cattle without a bit of a fight or “Maybe it’ll go away. Maybe I’ll wait a week.” Sure, the veterinarian should be allowed in there. But could he be mistaken about something? Can veterinarians make mistakes? Sure. Can doctors make mistakes? Sure. They may misdiagnose something. We don’t know. The guy could lose his whole herd.

“Have concerns about H1N1 motivated the legislation?”

“Diseases such as H1N1, avian influenza and BSE were considered in the development of animal health legislation, Dombrowsky says. But the bill is ‘a reaction to the industry saying we need to have measures in place’ to enable the province’s chief veterinarian to take action to protect food safety standards and ‘animal health on farms.’”

We’re not going to argue that. That’s true. There should be a mechanism in place that allows veterinarians to do their job and to protect the health of the people of Ontario. I’m not quite sure what they’ve put in the bill is going to cover all of that.

“Tackling the specifics of handling H1N1 outbreaks is the kind of detail that is left to regulations and these haven’t been written yet, she adds.”

These haven’t been written yet. Well, why would you put a bill forward when these details that are left to regulations haven’t been written yet? I personally wouldn’t do that. I would do it right, put all the regulations in place, put the concerns up front, deal with it all, before I rush a bill through just to satisfy somebody; I don’t know who. As an Ontarian and a consumer of food and drink, I certainly want to be protected. I don’t want anything rushed through when it comes to my family’s health or food or drinking situations. I don’t want people just to do a bill halfway; I want it done properly, completely, no ins and outs—especially when it comes to food and beverage.

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I’m not an expert in agriculture, but it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that there are things that are

missing in this bill, and if you don’t allow people to discuss it, if you don’t allow people who are knowledgeable to come to the forefront and talk for three, four days—you might get more people. Some people are tied up. They can’t come that particular day. You’re not offering them any alternatives. You come to Toronto for four hours and say your piece, and away we go. That doesn’t cut it, and I think they’re going to have some real problems if they continue in this pattern.

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I’m happy to have the opportunity to respond to some of the comments that have been made so far on Bill 204, which is the Animal Health Act. There have been comments made by members on the other side of the House about the intent, about marketing food products—the wonderful Ontario food products, and that is, I think, a consequence of having good animal health legislation in place in any jurisdiction—and so on.

I think that it’s important to focus on the purpose of the Animal Health Act, and that is to protect the health and well-being of the animal, of the herds in Ontario; to ensure that we have measures in place when there may be an event so that the appropriate civil servants—in this case the Chief Veterinarian of Ontario, who is specifically trained in animal health issues—will have the ability to go on a farm to assess a particular animal health situation and make the appropriate decisions in terms of how the operation perhaps should be. Maybe it’s quarantine; maybe there is a surveillance order that needs to be placed on the facility or on the farm. We don’t have that in place in Ontario. They do in other provinces in Canada, and so our producers have told us why it is important that we move forward and ensure that we bring good-quality animal health legislation to this assembly; that we debate; that we engage them as well and then move forward as quickly as possible. Because with respect to marketing, when we are able to say that we have the safest and best-quality food anywhere, we know that helps with marketing the food product, but it relates directly to the health and well-being of the animals and the farm operation that they’re raised on.

So that is what this bill is all about. It’s about putting in place systems that will ensure the prevention of animal disease, that will enable or facilitate the detection of animal disease and that will also control animal diseases and other hazards on farm. That is what this legislation is all about.

We have, over the course of very many months, heard from a number of stakeholders who have pressed the point with us: why it is important to move forward with this legislation. They have identified those jurisdictions where there is good legislation already in place. They have shared with us how they believe that in Ontario, we can even improve upon what is in place in other jurisdictions. We have listened very carefully to what they have told us, and I think the document that you see before you is a document that we’ve been able to bring to

this assembly because we've listened very carefully to our stakeholders and what they told us they needed to see in this legislation.

I wanted to talk about the traceability portion of this legislation and that it is, in fact, enabling legislation. This province has been very clear with our stakeholders and we've been very clear at the federal-provincial-territorial table that we fully support, in the province of Ontario, a national traceability system. We believe that producers across Canada would benefit tremendously from a national system, and we think, of course, that a national system should be supported at the national level too. We do also recognize that in order to facilitate the implementation of a national system, we need to have enabling legislation in place in the province of Ontario to move that forward. That is what is contained in Bill 204, where the minister would be able to enact a traceability system, and, I would say, presumably in this case, in partnership with the federal government.

We've heard from producers across Ontario who recognize that a national traceability system is absolutely the way to go when setting up the system, because those products that are marketed beyond our borders are marketed as Canadian food products, not necessarily as Ontario food products. People in Ontario have a great affinity with and attraction to Ontario food products. But beyond our borders, it's the Canadian maple leaf that makes our food products most appealing, and that is why we are looking for a national traceability system.

It's very important as well to clarify statements that have been made about Bill 204 adding to the red tape of farmers and producers across our province with more licences and more fees. That is an issue that we want to take just a little bit of time to correct, because that would not be the case. If you go to the second-to-last page of the bill, you will see that this bill does repeal certain acts: the Bees Act, the Livestock Community Sales Act and the Livestock Medicines Act. Those bills are repealed. But what it means is that, for the most part, the provisions in those acts are now contained in this Animal Health Act, because the provisions in those acts are consistent with animal health.

The authority to issue licences is a necessary part of this bill because it will allow for the future consolidation of the substantive content of the bills that I mention: the Livestock Medicines Act, the Livestock Community Sales Act and the Bees Act.

With respect to farmers who are in the business and for whom the acts that I have identified, that I have mentioned here—it doesn't touch their business. They are not required to have licences now, at the present time. Going forward, there is no additional burden on them. They will not be required to have licences. It will be only those individuals and businesses that are now required, under the three acts that are mentioned, to obtain licences—they will still be required to obtain licences, and that is what is described in our act.

The third point I want to make is with respect to compensation. There have been comments made on the

other side of the assembly that there's some question about the compensation: Is it adequate? What I would say is that the compensation provisions, as they have been outlined in Bill 204, are absolutely consistent with the way compensation is delivered to producers in an animal health event in other provinces. Again, we have paid very close attention to what our stakeholders have told us. They have identified those models that they think are reasonable and workable and fair. We certainly want to be fair about this. Those are the provisions that are contained in this act.

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We do look forward to hearing from our stakeholders and from members of the opposition about the compensation piece, to understand where it can be strengthened and, I think, where it can be strengthened in light of what is in place in other jurisdictions as well. As I indicated, there are many other jurisdictions in Canada where we can go to look at what has been put in place.

I also want to speak to some of the comments that have been made about the committee times we have set aside for those who are interested in improving this bill to have an opportunity to make those points. We have located the committee hearings here in the city of Toronto. We have located them here at a time immediately following, in one case, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture annual meeting—they're having their meeting two days prior to the day we have set aside for a committee hearing. So I'm certainly hopeful that some of those folks who have come into the city to attend the annual meeting will also be able—I expect that some of them will be making application to be heard at the committee.

We also know that there is, of course, the tradition in this place that people can submit in writing to committees their positions, their points, their issues on any piece of legislation. I think it would be wrong to present that personal presentations to committees are the only way that the public can participate in having their issues and their voices heard. We will be very eager to consider all the submissions that will be made to committee, both in person and in writing. There will always be that. That is consistent with the way other bills have been managed and have made their way through the process, and that is what I certainly expect, should this motion be passed today.

It's important to remember that we think it's time to go to the people and hear what they have to say. We've had fully six and a half hours of debate on this legislation in this assembly. We'd now like to hear what some of the stakeholders have to say. We have heard some comments from the National Farmers Union, but there are other farm organizations in the province of Ontario that have been largely supportive, and I know they will be making points that will enable us to improve the legislation that we have here.

I very much look forward to the next few weeks ahead of us as we work very hard—all of us in this assembly—rolling up our sleeves to get the Animal Health Act in the

condition that will enable us to pass it as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise to speak to Bill 204 today. Agriculture is a very important segment of the Sarnia–Lambton community. It's somewhere around the second-largest income producing business in Lambton, so this bill will be very important to the farmers in my riding and in many other ridings in Ontario.

A number of criticisms we have, on this side of the House, are that we feel the bill goes far beyond what is required to protect animal and human health, and creates a system of permits and licences that are more red tape and cost to our farmers, but there is no compensation for the time, paperwork and expense.

Stakeholders have asked continually for a traceability system, which is largely absent from this legislation. I understand that there is a small section that allows the minister to set up a traceability framework by regulation, meaning that it all gets done later and behind closed doors.

While we all agree with food safety, this bill goes too far in removing the rights of individuals, in many cases without any foreseeable benefit either to animal or human health. For instance, it will give inspectors the right to enter premises without a warrant to see if proper licences and permits are in place. This is not a circumstance in which there is enough urgency to justify entry without proper process. We, on this side of the House, feel that the bill could be amended to remove the section that would allow these new permits and licences. In addition, the bill should be amended such that the consent of the owner or a warrant is required to enter private property in all but the most urgent circumstances. We also feel there should be an amendment to strengthen the section on compensation and remove the discretion unless there were extenuating circumstances such as fraud or negligence.

Agricultural organizations are still speaking in favour of a traceability system. Many of them thought there would be more emphasis on that in this bill; there isn't, and they're disappointed.

The communiqué issued at the end of this summer's federal-provincial-territorial meeting committed all agricultural ministers to setting up a system such as this by 2011 at the latest. These farmers believe that government needs more tools in order to deal with disease outbreaks and ensure animal health. They also believe that having animal health legislation and a traceability system in place would allow them to demonstrate these high levels of food safety, and that's why they passed that type of legislation.

A number of the ministers spoke about how a number of agricultural organizations are in favour of this, and we have letters they sent to us. Here's one from Ontario Pork, representing 2,800 farmers who market hogs in the province, including hog marketing, research etc. This adds some 33,000 jobs in Ontario. The total industry

output from farm gate sales is estimated at \$4.7 billion into the Ontario economy. Ontario Pork says, in this letter to the minister and to us, that it "sees a need for further clarification within the act regarding mandatory reporting...." The proposed legislation—and I'm just reading some parts of it—"must work toward reducing the regulatory burden on the livestock industry and its ancillary industries. The legislation should include provisions to revoke and replace other legislation...." Legislation in "areas that are not directly related to animal health will be excluded from this legislation."

"One example of this is animal nutrients, which are already regulated under two existing pieces of legislation. Duplication must be avoided in all areas, including the administrative level, in order to keep requirements for documentation from becoming yet another burden on producers."

Ontario Pork says, "We request the development of a regulation relating to fair compensation or indemnification policies for direct and specified indirect losses for any producers whose animals have been ordered destroyed by government, or whose income has suffered as a result of a disease outbreak. This could include but not be limited to losses from quarantine, extra feeding costs, lost market value due to weight or age discounts...."

Ontario Pork also insists that industry stakeholders should be "afforded the opportunity to review the exact wording of the legislation and resulting regulations prior to them being enacted in order to confirm interpretation and ensure clarity that will reduce the risk of wording changes significantly altering meaning and intent."

In closing, the letter says, "Ontario Pork would also like to be clear that only through in-depth consultation can industry acceptance of this legislation be achieved. Rushing legislation to achieve short-term goals or objectives is not always in the best interest of Ontarians or the affected industries." That's signed by Mr. Keith Robbins, the director of communication and consumer marketing for Ontario Pork.

The Ontario Cattlemen's Association wrote a letter July 20, 2009: "The Ontario Cattlemen's Association ... is a grassroots organization that represents the 19,000 beef producers in the province of Ontario. OCA advocates on behalf of its members in the areas of government lobbying" etc. Some of the things that they would like to see are traceability: "We insist that the system be designed in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The scope of traceability for beef cattle should be developed to ensure that:

"i. It does not impede or delay commerce.

"ii. Costs of the system must not result in the industry becoming non-competitive.

"iii. The technology must be capable of reading identification at a rate which accommodates normal commerce.

"iv. Tolerance ranges for readability must be acceptable to the industry standards.

"v. Producer information must remain confidential."

“Mandatory reporting”: “The list of reportable diseases for the province must be compiled only after open consultation and agreement by industry stakeholders. Additionally, if there is a mandatory reporting of risks other than animal diseases, we insist that industry is extensively consulted on the specifics, including indemnification and implementation protocols.”

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Under “Disease prevention, control and monitoring,” they go on further to say, “We request that any biosecurity standards are determined by the commodity groups in conjunction with government and other industry stakeholders. The standards should be science-based and consider the economic impact on the industry, and must not result in the industry becoming non-competitive when compared with other jurisdictions.”

They go on with a number of other things, but at the end: “We expect and support the development of both emergency humane slaughter and/or disposal policies for livestock,” and that the development of a comprehensive carcass disposal plan be part of this legislation as well.

In closing, they say, “We request the development of a regulation relating to fair compensation or indemnification policies” that are implemented by this bill. That’s signed, along with a lot of other comments, by Gord Hardy, who’s the president of the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association.

The Ontario Farm Animal Council also wrote to the minister and to us. They said, “We are also of the opinion, however, that the proposed legislation oversteps its mandate. The intent to regulate the handling and housing of livestock as described under the animal health promotion proposal must be restricted under the act to emergency measures and situations involving the containment and remediation of animal disease outbreaks and contamination. The proposed legislation should not include general animal husbandry and care within its scope.

“Wide, sweeping handling and housing regulations, as currently proposed, would be problematic from various perspectives that have previously been outlined by OFAC and other industry groups....

“Producers should not have to report hazards that do not jeopardize the health of animals outside the herd/flock or of humans. All listed hazards plus reporting requirements would need to be consistent with other jurisdictions.

“We also wish to highlight the need for a fair and adequate compensation system as well as an appeals process under this proposal.”

Animal care regulations are one of the things they’ve made recommendations for:

“... housing standards on farms should be limited to extenuating circumstances and clearly stated within the act. Specifically, such standards should be restricted to emergency measures and situations involving the containment and remediation of animal disease outbreaks and contamination....

“Where animals assemble: Animal handling and facility standards where farm animals assemble, such as

sales barns or assembly yards, are somewhat covered already by the Livestock Community Sales Act.... Any standards must be science-based and correspond to already existing protocols.”

Under “Mandatory reporting” it says that “the list of reportable hazards for the province must be compiled with care and only after consultation and agreement by industry stakeholders.”

They go on to talk about compensation being adequate and being something that’s well determined.

“Appeals: An appeals process for decisions related to compensation or licences prescribed in the regulations, similar to those provided under the Alberta Animal Health Act, should also be written into the proposed act.”

That’s signed by a Mr. John Maaskant, who is the chairman of the OFAC.

We talked earlier about this time allocation bill and the government ramming this through. I’d like to quote a number of members who were in a different position back in 2002.

Jim Bradley, regarding a certain bill at that time, Bill 216; this is December 2002: “I find it most unfortunate as well that this bill will be rammed through with what we call a time allocation motion or what is known as closing off debate. If nobody cares about this, governments will continue to do it. No matter what those governments are, they will continue to do it. It’s not healthy for the democratic system. It relegates individual members of the Legislature to the status of robots, and that’s most unfortunate.”

The same member, Mr. Bradley, on November 5, 2002, referring to An Act to provide for declarations of death in certain circumstances, said, “First of all, I must say that in principle I vote against time allocation motions. I think everyone in opposition should do so. I think there are some in government”—they should listen to this. “I think there are some in government who should, if not vote against the time allocation motion, absent themselves from time to time because they recognize this is the crushing of debate on yet another subject before the House.” The wise Mr. Bradley, again in 2002.

Here’s Mr. Bartolucci in November 2002—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Amazing, eh?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. I don’t know if he voted against it. I’m not sure.

It was November 2002 and it was a bill about the Highway Traffic Act. This is Mr. Bartolucci: “I stand to speak against any type of time allocation motion because in this instance, as in other instances, it stifles debate in this House and doesn’t enhance the democratic process. In fact,” Mr. Bartolucci said, “it does not allow the general public, the people in Ontario, to have a say in the important bills that this government should want to be taking ... to committee,” that we might have input on.

Another famous member from that side of the House in November 2002, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, was speaking to Bill 198 about budget measures—imagine—and other initiatives. He said at that time, “Stop using

time allocation the way you've used it to force closure of debate to stop the democratic process in its tracks." He said, "Let's try to work together to make this institution function the way it's intended to." Very wise suggestions. I don't know whether they meant it or if something has changed.

There is also a letter here, written by Mr. Rick Johnson. It was an open letter. No, this was written to Mr. Johnson; this was from Mr. Ernie Hardeman. This was to a newspaper: "I understand from your recent column in Kawartha Lakes This Week that your first major assignment as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture is to 'shepherd Bill 204, the Animal Health Act ... through the Legislature.'" Mr. Hardeman said, "I appreciated your repeated commitments to committee hearings on this bill. On October 19, I was pleased to hear you say in the Legislature, 'Our government has a very good record regarding bills going to committee, and I'm sure that this bill will go to committee to gather the input from stakeholders.'

"That is why"—this is Mr. Hardeman speaking—"I was so disappointed that your government has filed a time allocation motion that will severely limit the debate and consultation on this bill. In fact, farmers and agricultural organizations will be limited to four hours of presentations on the afternoon of November 25 and all the hearings will be held in Toronto. As you may know, most farmers don't live in Toronto."

Mr. Hardeman went on to write: "We believe in protecting animal health and food safety; however, there are some serious concerns with this bill that need to be addressed to make it work for our agricultural industry. Stakeholder groups, while supportive of the goal, have expressed numerous concerns and asked for extensive consultations on the bill.

"Will you stay true to your beliefs and vote against the time allocation motion that limits debate on this important issue?"

That was signed by Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford and the PC critic for agriculture and food.

We also had some notes under "General democracy." When Better Farming magazine called to ask the Minister of Agriculture why this bill was being rushed through, she said that this bill—her words—"is receiving the same due process that I believe the majority of bills that have been passed by this government has received." Given that this is the second time today, in my presence, while I've been in the assembly today, that a time allocation motion is being debated, perhaps that is accurate, but it certainly isn't something that I would be proud of if I were a member of government or if I were the minister.

This motion does more than just cut off debate in the Legislature; it also cuts off debate in the clause-by-clause committee hearings. If the government genuinely wants to make this legislation as good as it can be, why wouldn't they welcome amendments and want discussion around those amendments? Shouldn't we have a full and

real discussion about how to amend the bill to ensure that it does in fact work for farmers?

Perhaps they already know that, true to form, they are going to turn down those amendments simply because they come from the opposition or from the third party. Perhaps they've already decided what amendments they will make, and they don't want to waste their time listening to the farmers and the people affected, who are stakeholders.

I have to admit that I'm still puzzled as to why the McGuinty government is time-allocating this bill. We aren't that far apart in our goals. We're all hearing from the same stakeholders with the same concerns.

There were a number of members of the other side who had some quotes. I'll just read them. Here's one: The parliamentary assistant to the minister said, "Our government has a very good record regarding bills going to committee, and I'm sure that this bill will go to committee to gather the input from stakeholders. That's part of what democracy is all about: hearing from the people who are most affected and most concerned about this bill." This isn't a member of the opposition asking for more time. It's the parliamentary assistant saying that committee hearings are what democracy is all about.

He wasn't the only member on that side of the House who promised there would be hearings, to hear from farmers and agricultural groups. The member for Brant said, "We will take this to committee. It's going to go to committee. The stakeholders will present and discuss and advise and recommend, and the opposition will have the same opportunity time and time again, as these bills have been, to have their points made and lay it on the table."

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The member for Northumberland–Quinte West said, "I look forward, once again, to going to committee, to have a full, wholesome debate at committee, to hear from those industry stakeholders and move on and get this done."

At this time I am going to close my remarks and look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate? The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I also want to participate in the debate on this motion. I am particularly interested, of course, in animal health and Bill 204. I was listening very carefully as the member from Hamilton East was talking about 300 organic chickens, or backyard chickens, as we commonly refer to them. I got the sense from him that he felt they didn't really need to comply with the types of regulations and standards that the larger chicken farm operations currently have. For myself as a former chicken producer—my son is now the chicken producer in our family—I think that for him it's important that there be a level playing field. When that chicken goes to market—whether it goes to market through a processor or through a farmgate sale or a farmers' market—when something goes wrong and a consumer becomes ill because of the consumption of that chicken, they don't recognize whether that came from a flock of 300 or less

or from a larger operation. To them, it is a chicken and they got sick from it, the word goes out through the media that there was a contaminated chicken, and suddenly everybody has to deal with the consequences of that. That's what makes this so important for all of us and that there be standards that everyone has to comply with.

Certainly in my riding we have organic chicken farms. They have standards that they of course have to comply with in order to be classified as organic. They're already accustomed to that kind of regulation and administrative work that they need to do to prove that their product is truly organic. There's a mix of different kinds of production in my riding. I have organic grain crops in my riding, there's beef, there's turkey, there's chicken, and all of these things are there currently. As I said, they are expected to comply with certain standards, and those standards are there to protect the farmers as much as they are to protect the consumers.

I have heard different people talk about, "Well, if this is for consumer benefit"—and certainly as a farmer, in the past I've often presented the argument that farmers should be compensated when there is a consumer benefit. But I think in this case the farmers actually benefit even more, because the farmers in this case have the assurance that they are going to be globally competitive, that standards are set, and that they will have a marketplace not just locally, not just nationally but internationally. They can talk about the fact that their product has the quality that it does and that everybody is working under the same umbrella of standards. So for me as a former producer—and I have to get used to that lingo. I can no longer talk about myself in a day-to-day type of production situation.

I think, in terms of the time allocation, that we need to move this forward. I think it's been said by others as well. There's certainly the situation that happened when we were first debating this in second debate, where we had the H1N1 outbreak in turkeys. It certainly demonstrates the fact that we need something in place. We need to have standards in place on how to react and what will happen when there is an outbreak. The legislation here represents a responsive, responsible and flexible way for us to address those situations so that everyone is protected: the consumer and the producer as well.

I feel that we need to have this legislation in place, certainly, for the producers and for the consumers. There was also the discussion about, and I heard someone talk about, experience on the combine, and I do recognize that this year we're later in harvest than we should be. There's no question about it. The weather has delayed a number of things. It delayed the planting initially; then we had the rains in the early fall which have now delayed the harvest. In terms of the timing of this, we certainly recognize that, but that is something, again, that we have to deal with.

Someone talked about being on the combine and being on the tractor—and the minister talked about how you can do a written submission. I can tell you that some of

the best thinking time that any farmer can have is on their tractor or on their combine. You can have an amazing number of arguments and look at different viewpoints as you're sitting there thinking about an issue. Coming out that of type of time, that very productive time for most farmers, we would get some very good written submissions to the committee on what people feel are the strengths and the things that need to be improved in this particular piece of legislation. That, most farmers can do, as I said, from their combines, from their tractors. They can e-mail in, they can write in, and those things will be brought forward. So I certainly look forward to that kind of thing.

A number of organizations have been quoted by both the opposition and the government on this issue. At one point, and certainly during second debate, I heard a lot made of a letter sent to us by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I find that when we do debate, people tend to take out little snippets. They don't really read the entire content of the letter and they don't really convey the intent of the letter. When I heard people talking about what the OFA was talking about and what their concerns were, I went back to the letter and I thought, "I'm not sure if that was the same letter I read." I got into the letter and, as I read through, I realized that they actually are very much in support of this. They have things that they want to have us take very serious consideration of, but on the whole, they are in support of it.

I can certainly take the letter and read the little corners and the paragraphs out that say that, but when we do that kind of thing—like I said, if we don't read the letter in its entirety into the record, we leave an impression that there are some serious concerns or there's some serious opposition, and that is certainly not what I have seen when I talk to producers and when I read these letters. What I hear is: They think it's time we had this kind of legislation in place. We need to move this forward and we need to move it forward quickly. We have situations that can occur at any time. People want to have the assurance of a standard that will be there for them so they will know what's going to happen.

When something happens on my farm, I have a responsibility—or on my son's farm; I did it again. When something happens on my son's farm, we have a responsibility as a family to make sure that we contain that, that we don't spread that to our neighbours and to our fellow producers. That is irresponsible. If you are going to say to someone, "You can't come into my farm; you can't do an inspection"—if you are in a situation where you're not running an operation that's clean enough that an inspector can come in without a lot of notice or without permission, I have to question what kind of operation you're running, because most of us would say that we run an operation that could take a random inspection at any time without any problems and be proud to show the product and the kind of production that we have in those operations. And I know that my son is going to run the same kind of operation that his dad and I did.

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'm happy to make a few comments on Bill 204, An Act to protect animal health and to amend and repeal other Acts.

As my colleagues have already stated in my caucus, the Ontario PC caucus is truly committed to food safety and animal health. But while, on the surface, this seems like the right bill and the right thing to do, this bill goes beyond what is required to protect animal and human health. This bill, if passed, would create a system of permits and licences and would actually result in increased red tape and cost for farmers without the benefit of the good legislation that we were hoping for.

The agricultural community doesn't need to be bogged down with this government's redundant paperwork. They have too many other daily duties that they need to be taking care of and focusing on. They're the folks busy putting food on our table. This bill should be mindful of the busy schedules of the agricultural community and should be working to reduce red tape for them, not increase it.

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This bill also negatively impacts small business in urban areas. I have heard from small businesses in my riding of Burlington, and they too have concerns. Small businesses that have been in our community for over 50 years, butcher shops that have been serving our community without any incident, now have to jump through Liberal hoops. They feel that there is a lot of unfairness to small business in this bill. They are concerned that they have to go out on a limb and spend a great deal of money with absolutely no guarantee for this investment.

I also want to express my concern about these warrantless entries. This bill allowing inspectors the right to enter a premises without warrant isn't even democratic. For example, if this bill is passed, an inspector would be able to enter a premises, without a warrant, to check whether a farmer has the appropriate licences. In my opinion, and I know I'm not the only one to express these feelings, this bill goes too far and it does stomp on the rights of individuals.

This bill was sold to the stakeholders on the basis that it was about traceability. However, to our surprise, in terms of traceability, there's a small section in the bill on this, and then we have all this other stuff snuck into the bill. Even more insulting to these farmers, who have been doing their job for centuries, is that the one section allows—not mandates—the minister to set up a traceability framework. So there is not even a guarantee that this will happen. It simply allows her to do that. All these additional new government powers that are listed in this bill were never told to the stakeholders.

I would also like to touch on the position of the Chief Veterinarian of Ontario. While on the surface this seems like the right thing to do, the functions and powers of the Chief Veterinarian of Ontario are left to regulation. So at this point, we have very little insight into what the role will be. Unfortunately, as we often see, leaving portions

of a bill to regulation means that they are addressed later and behind closed doors, without input from stakeholders.

It appears that in its current form, the only criteria necessary in this bill for the CVO are that he or she is a veterinarian who holds a licence without conditions or limitations and possesses qualifications that may be prescribed. I would like to know what those qualifications will be. I don't want to know later; I want to know now. I don't want to leave it to regulation. What about experience in farm animal veterinarian practices? As a comparison, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the chief medical officer of health is required to be a physician and to have five years of service. The act also stipulates that the CMO hold office for a term of five years. None of this is clear for the CVO.

The last point that I'd like to address is whether the CVO will issue an annual report, as is mandated for our chief medical officer of health. I think that an annual report is really a mechanism of accountability, and I will be interested to see whether that is something this government can stomach: accountability for the CVO, who would have to adhere to it.

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

Mr. Rick Johnson: It's my pleasure to stand up and speak about this bill again. We've had ongoing conversations about this bill over the last couple of weeks.

As we all know, this proposed Animal Health Act provides important measures to help us prevent, detect and respond to animal health issues in Ontario. Ontario is the only province currently without its own legislative powers to act to protect animal health within its borders, and I think we all know that this is something that needs to be addressed.

All animals have the potential to carry and transmit diseases that could pose risks to animal or human health, which is why this proposed legislation includes a broader definition of "animal" that includes not just livestock and poultry but, in fact, any creature that's not human. This is consistent with legislation in other provinces and was supported by industry partners during consultations that took place over the development of this.

The ministry has and will continue to consult using a variety of different methods to reach out to its industry partners and other stakeholders. This could include postings on its website, discussion papers, stakeholder meetings and public meetings, to name just a few. Regardless of the approach we use, we are committed to open and meaningful consultation with all agricultural stakeholders. I've been contacted at my office on a number of issues surrounding this, and we have an ongoing open relationship. That's part of how this government has operated.

The ministry will also continue to post regulations on the regulatory registry, wherever there's a potential impact on business, or on the Environmental Registry, if there's a potential for environmental impact.

Province-wide consultations were held in 2006 on an animal health strategy for Ontario. On June 18, 2009, a

news release was issued announcing the Ontario government's consultation on proposed farm animal health initiatives. We've already made a lot of efforts on this, and when people want to be involved in this process, it's a matter of sending in their information.

We're consistent with the legislation in other provinces, and it was supported by our industry partners during consultations that took place previous to the legislation getting announced.

Another broad definition that is used in this proposed legislation is that of "hazard." Experience around the world has shown that there are situations other than diseases which may require action to protect animal and human health. The proposal legislation includes other categories of hazards, which are chemical, radiological and physical. By referencing hazards beyond disease, the proposed legislation will allow us to address animal health concerns such as chemical contamination or metal shards in animal feed—the whole cross-section.

The proposed legislation also includes provisions for a chief veterinarian of Ontario to be appointed by the minister and have specific legislative powers. The chief veterinarian would also be a key link between animal and human health, with close ties to Ontario's chief medical officer of health. The proposed legislation outlines provisions for reporting specific animal health risks to the chief veterinarian, who will guide the response, which could be simply confirming that the hazard is not present, notifying industry to increase biosecurity or taking further action as needed. As we've said so many times in this debate, it's about protecting our food chain from the farm to the fork.

While the proposed legislation establishes reporting categories, I'd like to stress that the specific hazards that come under each of the headings would be developed in a regulation, should this legislation be passed. Our government is committed to consulting with our industry partners when developing this regulation to make sure that reporting requirements are appropriate.

The safety of health for both animal and human is the key part of this bill. Should the chief veterinarian become aware of any animal health issue that could pose a significant human health risk, he or she would be required to report this to the chief medical officer of health. This legislation, if passed, would make sure we are all working together to protect the province from potential hazards with animal or human health risks.

There has been a lot of controversy about the role of inspectors; it's been raised as an infringement on people's rights. This proposed legislation provides for inspectors to be appointed and to work under the guidance of the chief veterinarian for Ontario. These inspectors would become the primary responders for animal health issues in the province, and would be visiting specific premises should there be a reason to believe there is an animal health issue there. This part of the legislation is consistent with the powers of federal inspectors.

In addition to entering the premises, these staff would be able to inspect animals and related items, such as

transportation vehicles. They could also take samples for testing and issue compliance or quarantine orders. It should be noted that inspectors would not be able to come into a private home unless they had consent or there was a warrant, and a warrant would not be sought unless there were exceptional circumstances.

1700

This bill outlines three escalating levels of controls that could be established to respond to an animal health risk. The first level is quarantine. Under the proposed legislation, if an inspector had reasonable grounds to believe that an animal health issue existed and needed to be contained, he or she could issue a quarantine order under the guidance of the Chief Veterinarian of Ontario. A quarantine order could involve isolating animals or related products, or posting signage to keep traffic out of the inspected premises. This is all to protect the food chain.

If the chief veterinarian believed that further monitoring for a certain hazard was required, a broader surveillance zone could be established for up to a 10-kilometre radius around the quarantined premises. Should more action be required, an animal health control area could be established which could cover an area broader than a quarantiner's surveillance zone, and only the minister could establish a control area. This could be involved where there was a problem in another province, or in another country, and we were concerned about protecting our food source. The minister could then set aside the area and set orders as to what can come into this country, because we have an obligation as a government to ensure that the food that is sold in this province is safe.

Now, this proposed legislation does establish a review system with respect to orders made by inspectors. Upon request, a director could review an inspector's order and may confirm, alter or revoke it. If it were absolutely necessary, this proposed legislation would allow for animals to be destroyed. We know that this is a necessary measure that, in certain circumstances, could be critical to the province's animal and human health. To assist the industry, should animals need to be destroyed, the proposed legislation provides the framework for compensation.

Now, under this, the ministry made a lot of information—I spoke to you earlier about the elements of the proposed animal health legislation on the ministry's website and the environmental registry. There were 34 written comments received from stakeholder organizations and the general public. All submissions were generally supportive of the legislation, while raising specific concerns and interests. Ministry staff have incorporated consultation feedback into the proposed legislation where possible. Ministry staff have also worked closely with staff at other ministries to ensure that the bill's content reflects their concerns.

You know, this is all about trying to get it right. I think the day that this Legislature comes up with the perfect legislation is probably the day when our work is all done. It's part of the process going through the whole sector and system.

Farmers need to know that we will help them with costs that they may face when addressing an animal health issue. Compensation provisions encourage reporting and are a vital part of the strong animal disease detection system. Legislation, though, is also meaningless if there are not adequate penalties for those who refuse to comply. The proposed legislation suggests strong penalties for any individual convicted of an offence under the act, should it be passed.

As you know, animal health issues not only have a devastating impact on the livestock and poultry sectors, but can impact human health and the provincial economy. It is important that this be taken very seriously, with serious penalties for non-compliance. If we know that things are taking place, we can always address those issues through a number of systems. The most serious, of course, are penalties for non-compliance. If we do this, we can move forward on things.

We've talked in here—this, of course, is controversial today—about time allocation. I would just like to say that our government has given more third reading debate time to its time allocation bills than the past governments have. Under the past government, of course, we've heard that 29 out of 66 bills, time-allocated, received no committee time, and 30 received no third reading debate. Only six of our government's time-allocated bills did not receive committee time, and only four did not receive third reading debate.

If this motion passes, when the bill reaches the standing committee, stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed legislation. If stakeholders are unable to make it to Toronto, they can submit their feedback in writing. All submissions, whether written or in person, will be considered by the standing committee. And if Bill 204 is passed and proclaimed into force, the ministry plans to consult with industry on future regulations, including the list of reportable and notifiable hazards. OMAFRA will continue to consult with industry partners as we move forward on these initiatives and work with federal and provincial colleagues to ensure that provincial-level traceability is set up.

Now, as we know, the federal government announced this past summer that they plan to introduce a federal traceability system. Our comments in this bill, Bill 204, state that the minister "may" put forward a traceability system. The reason it says "may" as opposed to "shall" is that if the federal government is going forward with these regulations, then it's incumbent upon us to work with them so that we develop a national traceability standard.

As important as it is to have that type of legislation and those types of regulations in place in Ontario, it's equally important to have it right across the country because, ultimately, it will protect the agricultural sector from coast to coast. We know that when there was the outbreak of mad cow a few years ago, the whole border was shut down. The whole industry ran into problems across the country, which had a huge cost to our agricultural sector, and this is what this bill sets out to remedy.

Just some of the issues that our government has dealt with since coming to power in 2003: We've provided over \$1.5 billion in farm income support programs; our government has committed more than \$50 million to its Pick Ontario Freshness strategy; we have increased the number of meat inspectors from 10 to 170; we have announced a three-year risk management program to support the grains and oilseeds sector, and through this program, \$50 million has been provided to farmers to date; 240 projects have been approved through the rural economic development program, with a total provincial commitment of over \$77.5 million; and we've currently got a 10-year agreement with the University of Guelph, which will provide \$300 million over the next five years to help it continue its top-notch agri-food and rural research and development programs, animal health and food testing services, and veterinarian education.

The province is recognizing innovation in our province's agriculture sector by creating the five-year, \$2.5-million Premier's Awards for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence. We've held five Premier's agri-food summits to help forge a shared vision that will allow the industry to seize new opportunities. Part of that shared-vision conversation led to the development of this bill. We've signed on to Growing Forward, a new national policy framework for the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based industry, offering \$300 million in new programming to the sector. The provincial government has committed up to \$115 million for broadband projects through Rural Connections initiatives which are to benefit our farming community and our agricultural community.

There are a number of issues that this legislation will deal with. As we know, it will also consolidate a number of acts. It sets out a detailed framework for improving our detection of and response to animal health issues to better protect our province's animals and its people.

If this bill passes, work will still need to be done to develop the regulations, and this will be done with full consultation with our various stakeholders, because we're committed to developing those regulations in consultation with our industry partners.

This bill will move forward, and I'm very pleased to be involved in the discussion today as it moves forward. There are, of course, a number of issues which we will still have to deal with, and I look forward to taking part in the consultation process and hearing from the various associations that are involved in this sector. We will eventually come up with something that hopefully everyone will support, because it's incumbent upon us to do this for our agriculture community, to make sure that our system's foods are safe. When you see a grown-in-Ontario or a made-in-Ontario stamp on food, you'll know that it's safe; you can be guaranteed that it's safe. I think that will be one of the best selling points that we can make to the world, that Ontario food products are safe and we can guarantee that.

I thank you for the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to the time allocation of debate on Bill 204, the Animal Health Act.

This is the second bill today where we've debated time allocation. We just completed debate earlier this afternoon on Bill 212, the so-called good government bill.

When you speak about good government, I would say that good government consists of making informed decisions in an open and transparent manner. What we've heard the McGuinty government do is talk about making informed decisions in a transparent manner, but certainly their actions don't match their words.

Bill 204, the Animal Health Act, is a prime example of this. It started, of course, with time allocation in second reading, and it's a practice which is being used with increasing regularity by this government, I should note. Unfortunately, on this side of the House we're getting used to that; we're used to you not listening to us ever.

But I think the real shame here is the real injustice that's being done to the people of Ontario, and particularly to farmers and members of our agricultural community. In this situation, on Bill 204, this government has decided to hold public hearings on just one day, for four hours on November 25. All of the hearings are being held in Toronto—if you can imagine, on an agricultural bill, to hold hearings in downtown Toronto on one afternoon. What we've suggested, in the amendment that has been put forward by my colleague the member from Oxford, is that a series of hearings be held in different locations across the province of Ontario, including Stratford, Guelph and—

Mr. John O'Toole: Lindsay.

Mrs. Christine Elliott:—Lindsay as well; thank you to the member from Durham for reminding me of that.

I think it is important that we take this bill to where the members of the agricultural community are. It simply doesn't make sense to expect them to come to downtown Toronto. This is a bill of significant importance, and just to hold hearings on one day in downtown Toronto is just showing how arrogant and out of touch this government really is with the people of Ontario. They don't care. They don't want to know. They don't want to hear about what's important to people.

It's also not what we were led to believe by the comments that were made by several of the members of the government when this bill was introduced. In that regard I would just like to read a quotation from the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on October 19, who said, "Our government has a very good record regarding bills going to committee, and I'm sure that this bill will go to committee to gather the input from stakeholders. That's part of what democracy is all about: hearing from the people who are most affected and most concerned about this bill." Well, so much for that.

In addition, we heard the Minister of Agriculture say, "As yet, we do not have a national traceability framework, but we are, in this legislation—and we certainly are looking forward to debating it in this Legislature, going to committee with it and getting feedback from our

stakeholders, particularly on this traceability piece." Once again, we're not seeing the actions match the words.

Unfortunately, I don't have too much more time to say anything, but I would just like to finish by saying that I would like to move adjournment of the debate on this matter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Whitby-Oshawa has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1714 to 1744.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

You can take your seats, please.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 14; the nays are 35.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

The time allocated for debate on government notice of motion 141 has expired. I'm now required to put the question. We will first deal with the amendment by the member for Halton to government notice of motion 141.

Mr. Chudleigh has moved that the motion by the government House leader with respect to Bill 204, Animal Health Act, 2009, be amended as follows:

By deleting it and replacing it with "That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet as follows:

"On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, in Toronto; on Monday, December 14, 2009, in Stratford; on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, in Guelph; and on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, in Lindsay, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and on January 13 and January 20, 2010, during its regular meeting times, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill."

In the fourth paragraph, by deleting "Tuesday, December 1, 2009" and replacing it with "Monday, January 11, 2010;"

In the fifth paragraph, by deleting "December 2, 2009" and replacing it with "February 16, 2010;" and

In the seventh paragraph, by deleting "one hour" and replacing it with "six hours."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have been handed a note.

"The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request the vote on the motion by Mr. Chudleigh to the amendment of government notice of motion 141"—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): This doesn't say that—that 141 be deferred until November 17, 2009, signed by the chief government whip. Therefore, all votes will be deferred.

Vote deferred.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND SAFETY
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT AUX NORMES
TECHNIQUES ET À LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2009, on a motion for second reading of Bill 187, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 and the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 187, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité et la Loi de 1996 sur l'application de certaines lois traitant de sécurité et de services aux consommateurs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. John O'Toole: I think this evokes one memory of the time of the explosion in York region. This government looked at it for six months and did nothing. Now they're trying to hide under the darkness of night, and they easily could have invoked another time allocation motion, but they don't want to deal with the HST. That's the story of today. They don't want to deal with the harmonized sales tax—8% more for every expenditure that every family in Ontario will be making.

We've called on this government to hold public hearings on the bill they introduced today on the harmonized sales tax: "Let the people speak," but they won't. They bring in Bill 187. Bill 187 is a—

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: What's before us is Bill 187, which deals with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, an amendment to that act. He's speaking about everything but Bill 187. He's out of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That is a point of order, and I would ask the members to keep their comments to the bill that's before the House.

Mr. John O'Toole: This is the problem. We've had two time allocation motions in one day. This is the third

bill. They're trying to confuse the public on the very important issue of the harmonized sales tax.

1750

We're pleased to debate public safety. We're pleased to debate Bill 204. But this government doesn't want the people of Ontario to see the game they're playing. Look at this; it's a shell game. This isn't about the Sunrise incident, where a propane dispensing firm blew up and caused a lot of public damage and public risk. This bill here—we certainly want to be civil about it and strengthen the safety in Ontario, but look at the mess they're making of H1N1. They couldn't manage a catastrophe if it was handed to them on a plate.

I can't believe for one moment—they've just introduced the third bill. You should probably time-allocate this motion.

So, in the interests of public participation, I'm going to move that we adjourn the debate on Bill 187.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1821.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour—

Mr. David Zimmer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm wondering—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): No, the vote is under way.

All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 4; the nays are 29.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on Tuesday, November 17.

The House adjourned at 1822.

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)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	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)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of 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)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	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 of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l’Énergie et de l’Infrastructure
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, George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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 Craitor
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
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
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**

Chair / Président: David Oraziatti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
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**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
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**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
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**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Khalil Ramal
Bas Balkissoon, Jim Brownell
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Sophia Aggelonitis, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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