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**Monday 23 November 2009**

**Lundi 23 novembre 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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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  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 November 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 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. Reza Moridi:** It's my great pleasure and honour to introduce Mr. Dong Jun, vice-mayor of the city of Xi'an, China, and the delegation from the city, in the members' gallery.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** On behalf of myself, MPP Reza Moridi and MPP George Smitherman, I would like to welcome representatives from the Kurdish community to the Legislature today. In the members' gallery, we welcome the president of the Kurdish Federation, Nedim Dinar; the president of the Toronto Kurdish Community Centre, Huseyin Pinarbasi; Nazan Simsek, representing the Kurdish Women's Committee; and the president of Kurdish House, Fereydoon Rahmani.

All members of the Legislature are welcome to join us for a reception in room 228-230 following question period.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On behalf of my page, Maggie Hutchinson, I'd like to introduce her mother, Anne Hutchinson; father, Scot; and grandmother, Marilyn Hutchinson. They're in the west gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to introduce Latoya Haynes, Mary Slonim and Barbara Kennedy, who are here at Queen's Park for Literacy Awareness Day.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to welcome members of the Ontario Medical Association. They're here with us today for Doctor Day. Welcome to you all.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd like to welcome back a good friend of the PC caucus, Matt Gibson, here today in the members' gallery.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to acknowledge a former member, Bob Frankford.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Yes, we do want to welcome Bob Frankford, who represented Scarborough East in the 35th Parliament. It's a pleasure to have you back to the Legislature today, Bob.

On behalf of the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore and page Nickolas Barbieri, we'd like to welcome his mother, Anita Groman, his father, Tony Barbieri, and his

sister, Jennifer Barbieri in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery a visiting delegation of parliamentarians from the Imo State House of Assembly in Nigeria, led by the Honourable John Egbuchulam. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. The following words were said 10 years ago from this very seat in the Legislative Assembly: "Public hearings"; those two words go together nicely if you believe in true democracy...." Do you know who said those words? Dalton McGuinty, as leader of the opposition. Now, as Premier of the province, trying to ram through the biggest sales tax increase in the history of the province, we hear a different tune.

Premier, after six years in office, what happened to the Dalton McGuinty we once knew?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I always appreciate the opportunity. I want to begin by informing my honourable colleague that so far, outside of this House, members of the government have hosted or been involved in some 120 public consultations. We're proud of those.

In addition to that—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That's just on the government side—some 120 public consultation opportunities. I know that members of the opposition have also been involved in their own way, hosting these kinds of fora, and that's a good thing too.

There will be three separate opportunities to vote on this legislation. There has been tremendous opportunity—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Revenue will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, quite frankly, meetings of Liberal fundraisers and caucus meetings don't count. We're talking about going out and talking to the very tax-

payers who are going to pay that bill: the senior citizen in Belleville, Ontario, who is going to be forced to pay more for her home heating; the retired couple in London who will have to pay more for gas for their car and the attack on the mutual funds in the province.

There was once a day when Premier McGuinty, in opposition, stood for integrity, when he stood for transparency on bills, when he stood for hearing from the taxpayers who are going to have to foot this massive sales tax grab.

Premier, I'll ask you again: Will you have the courage of your convictions and hold full public hearings across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague of the position that he used to have on harmonization and corporate tax cuts, which he now rejects. At the Economic Club on April 23 of this very year he said, "To be clear, I believe that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes and policies and to collect two separate groups of sales taxes."

He was right then; he is wrong now. We plan to move ahead with this. We have given tremendous opportunity for the opposition, for Ontarians generally, to engage in this debate. It's an important one. We look forward to moving ahead with it to build a stronger Ontario and to create close to 600,000 more jobs.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, this is clearly not the Dalton McGuinty that people thought they elected six years ago. This is clearly not the Dalton McGuinty who used to stand at this desk and fight for public hearings and consultations across this province. And this is certainly not the Dalton McGuinty who was against the HST in 2008, and now has turned it into a massive tax grab on working families across the province.

The Premier has said, well, this will be an election issue, and I expect it will. But in opposition, Premier, you said, "Democracy isn't just something that takes place once every four years." That's what you said here. But now, as Premier, in his elite crowds, among his Liberal insiders and consultants, he refuses to meet with the seniors and working families who will pay the bill.

Premier, will you hold public hearings in London? Will you go down to Sarnia, will you go to Windsor, will you go to Kitchener, will you go to Belleville and listen to the taxpayers who have to pay this bill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thought for sure the honourable member would ask us today about the just-released report from Roger Martin and his task force on competitiveness and productivity, because he asked me about that very report last year at this time. I thought he would do it again. At that time, he specifically said, "Premier, will you commit to following Dr. Martin's good advice and reduce the level of business income taxes as part of a plan to grow Ontario?"

I want to call to his attention the report released just today. It says the following: "The provincial government

took a major step forward for Ontario's prosperity in improving our tax regime. By converting our provincial sales tax into a value added tax and harmonizing it with the federal goods and services tax and by reducing our corporate tax rates, the government has improved the motivations for investing in innovation and productivity.

"We have been urging this kind of reform since our first annual report, and we understand the courage required by the government to introduce these changes."

## TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Only Dalton McGuinty would quote from a report that is calling for an increase in the HST even before it becomes the law of the land.

Premier, you have lost touch with the senior citizen. You have lost touch with the hard-working middle-class family. You have lost touch with the students who are looking to find a good job and make their way forward. They are going to get nailed with this massive—

*Interjections.*

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

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, why don't you go out and meet with these senior citizens? Why don't you go out and meet with these hard-working middle-class families? Why don't you go and meet with these students who are going to get nailed by your sales tax increase?

Premier, you're moving to extend this legislative sitting for an additional two weeks to go up to Christmas-time if you so choose. Why don't you use that extra time to have weeks of province-wide public hearings to hear directly from the taxpayers who are going to foot this bill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let's hear what else my honourable colleague has said about the HST in the past. In March of this year, he said the following: "In the manufacturing sector, the problem with the PST is it cascades, so every step along the way there's a tax on tax on tax, which raises the cost of goods and particularly punishes exporters. So we understand how [a harmonized sales tax] can help the economy." He was right then; he is wrong today.

Dr. Jack Mintz has specifically said that moving ahead with a package of tax reforms will create nearly 600,000 more jobs. At the end of the day, this is a debate about creating 600,000 more jobs for Ontarians. We're for that. They remain against that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, after six years in office, what working families are seeing is a government that is out of gas, that careens from scandal to scandal, and that has lost its sight on the ball of growing jobs in the economy. The only trick they have left is a massive new sales tax hike on middle-class families and retirees across the province of Ontario. Obviously, after six years in office, the government is growing too comfortable and arrogant in the way they conduct business in the province.

I could not believe it last week. When asked about public hearings, Dalton McGuinty said, oh, they can call talk radio. They can call Bill Carroll on CFRB; they can call Steve Madely on CFRA—as if they're running the province. Working families who are getting stuck with this bill want to say directly to the decision-makers that they cannot handle another massive sales tax increase from Dalton McGuinty.

Premier, will you hold public hearings across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to take the opportunity once again to thank Prime Minister Harper and Minister Flaherty for their support on this very important issue, on behalf of Ontarians and, I would argue, Canadians as well.

My colleague was adamantly in favour, very much and enthusiastically in favour, of the harmonized sales tax in the past. Now he says he is not, which puts him in opposition to the federal government. It also puts him in some very strange company, I would argue. He now stands locked arm in arm with the Ontario NDP, the BC NDP and the Canada NDP. I guess it's up to my honourable colleague to choose the company that he keeps.

We're actually progressive on this side of the House. We're actually reformers on this side of the House. We're actually for doing those things, even though they might be difficult—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, I stand with the hard-working taxpayers across the province of Ontario who are firmly rejecting your massive sales tax increase.

We have asked the Premier over and over again to go out and face the very people who are going to be left footing this bill, to have public hearings across the province of Ontario.

I remind Premier McGuinty that when he used to stand for transparency, when he used to stand for integrity, when he used to stand for listening to taxpayers, he said, “Public hearings”; those two words go together nicely if you believe in true democracy....”

But sadly, we see a Premier who has changed after six years in office, a Premier who hangs out with the elite and won't listen to hard-working taxpayers, and a Premier who has contempt for public hearings and listening to taxpayers.

Premier, I'm going to remind you of your words—but quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if he has that kind of contempt for taxpayers, I see no point in continuing with question period today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The Premier continues to ignore tens of thousands of everyday people who are worried about a new tax on gasoline, hydro, home heating, haircuts and much more.

Why is the Premier plowing ahead with his unfair tax scheme when the House of Commons hasn't even passed legislation to make it possible?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There is a—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I sense a greater intimacy with the NDP these days.

Let me just say that we are very much looking forward to moving ahead with this initiative, and I think it's important to understand it in its entirety. We're talking about reducing personal income taxes. We're talking about reducing corporate income taxes for our largest businesses. We're talking about reducing taxes for our small businesses as well. In fact, we're talking about putting in place a support package for small businesses to help them in their transition to the HST. We're talking about, in the end, creating nearly 600,000 more jobs for Ontarians.

I think that when all is said and done, there is nothing to which we attach greater value today, in the face of a global recession, than a job creation strategy. That's fundamentally what this is all about. I know that the NDP in fact support anything that we can do to create more jobs for Ontarians.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In backroom meetings, Harper Conservatives were very excited about shifting the tax burden onto everyday people. They were okay with sticking it to people who will pay 8% more to heat their homes and fill up on the way to work while businesses get a no-strings-attached tax break worth billions and billions of dollars, but now that same Harper Conservative government has seen the public anger. They're starting to scramble, to distance themselves. The Premier is at the altar, but there's no one rushing to his side. How can the Premier be so sure that the HST is actually going to get through the House of Commons when no party in Parliament wants anything to do with it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We look forward to moving ahead with this initiative because we believe it's the right thing to do. There's an important section to be found in Roger Martin's latest report, his eighth annual report, and I'd refer my colleague to page 50. It's called “Most HST myths do not stand up to scrutiny.” Under the column of myths, which are rebutted in here, and I recommend it to my colleague, myths include:

“—increases prices paid by consumers;

“—is an excuse for producers and service providers to gouge consumers;

“—raises costs for small businesses;

“—hurts lower-income Ontarians;

“—is a tax grab;

“—is ‘business friendly’;

“—should be delayed until the recovery is under way.”

Each and every one of those myths is effectively rebutted on that page and I would strongly recommend

that to my colleague, on page 50 of the latest competitiveness and productivity report.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm going to try once more to get an answer out of this Premier. There's a good reason to believe that the minority government in Ottawa may actually reject the harmonized sales tax. Conservative MPs are scrambling to distance themselves from this unfair tax, and Michael Ignatieff has more fires to put out than Smokey the Bear. His federal Liberals were asked if they were going to support the HST legislation just last week and they would not commit to it. Jack Layton's New Democrats of course have made their opposition to this tax crystal clear for all of the people here in Ontario and BC to know where we stand. If federal legislation comes crashing down on the McGuinty government, what's the Premier's plan B?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I have every confidence that the government of Canada will do everything that is necessary to give effect to the will of the people of Ontario as expressed by their duly elected government. I think that is a legitimate expectation on the part of all Ontarians, that the government of Canada will give effect to the duly expressed intent of all Ontarians through their duly elected Ontario Legislature. I think that's a pretty straightforward matter. We have a signed agreement with the government of Canada and we fully expect and anticipate that the federal government will do everything it needs to do in order to ensure that we can put our initiative into effect.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. People are asking the Premier to listen. Here's what they're saying: Jack Rankin writes, "I think it's time you listen to the folks who put you in your jobs."

Marilyn Cephane writes, "It seems to me that our provincial and federal government leaders are dictators and they like to patronize us."

The Premier's tax scheme is unfair. The federal Parliament might not even let him enact it. Isn't it time the Premier takes a step back and actually listen to the people instead of ramming this through as fast as he can?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know we've spent a lot of time talking about the HST, and that's important, but there are other aspects to our package of tax reforms that are worthy of consideration as well. I only wish that my honourable colleague would draw the public's attention to those from time to time. Those include the following: 93% of Ontarians will get a permanent personal income tax cut; 2.9 million families and individuals will get a new annual tax credit of \$260 per person. That is permanent. Additionally, there are transition payments: \$1,000 for the typical family and \$300 for the typical individual. Taxes won't change for 83% of consumer purchases.

Those are all dimensions to our package of tax reforms that my honourable colleague has not referenced in

her attacks on the HST. Having said that, this comes down to 600,000 more jobs for Ontario families. I can't think of anything more important than us coming together to stand up for those 600,000 jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Maybe the Premier hasn't noticed, but it's the HST that the people of this province are talking about. People right across Ontario feel that their basic right to be heard is being ignored by their government. The Premier refuses to listen to their concerns about the HST; the Prime Minister denies having anything to do with this unfair tax.

Sandra Dawson of Port Dover wrote to tell me this: "Please let the Premier know that we are against the HST ... there is no listening going on ... just disrespectful and patronizing repeated attempts at convincing us of what is good for us."

Instead of telling people what to think, why won't the Premier listen to what people have to say?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The fact is, we've done a lot of listening, but there comes a point in time—and this is the responsibility of leadership—when you have to take action. The single greatest request that we've been receiving from Ontarians is to build a stronger Ontario and make sure there are more jobs.

The reports are in now that our tax package will do a number of things, including create nearly 600,000 more jobs. It will result in incomes going up by 9% more than they otherwise would have. It will result in \$47 billion more being invested in our businesses than otherwise would have been the case.

These are reports that have come in to us from experts. We have listened long and hard. We now understand what we need to do to grow a stronger Ontario, and particularly to create 600,000 more jobs. It's the right plan at the right time for the right people. That's why we're moving ahead with it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, what the people of this province are telling me is that they want a government that listens. Instead, they have a Premier who ignores them and a Prime Minister who avoids them.

Rick Bagshaw of Aurora writes this: "I suggest that you drop the legislation and start listening to the citizens of Ontario. Remember us; we are the ones who put you in power to lead a responsible government."

Ron Arnold of Port Rowan adds this: "Please open your eyes and ears and listen to the people before it's too late."

The tax scheme hasn't passed in the federal Parliament, and it may not. There is no need to rush this through. Will the Premier take a step back and agree to have public hearings so that he can listen to the people across this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I don't think I need to remind my honourable colleague that in the course of this terrible global recession, we've lost over 200,000 jobs in Ontario. I think the single most pressing and urgent need

for all of us here is to find ways to strengthen our economy and to create jobs. We understand, on the basis of all the advice that we've received—and we have done a lot of listening, but at some point in time, you've got to turn the listening into leadership. You've got to take action. That's what we've been charged with here in government, and we will not shrink from that responsibility.

We have found a way. It's to be found in our package of tax reforms. It's about permanent personal income tax cuts. It's about corporate income tax cuts. It's about cuts for our small businesses. It's about putting us on a stronger, more competitive, sustainable foundation. Most importantly, it's about creating 600,000 more jobs, and it's about building a bright future for our children.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Premier. Last December, as part of its anti-poverty strategy, the McGuinty government promised to initiate a review of our failing social assistance programs. Today, almost a year later, the government has not yet released any terms of reference for the review, it has made no indication of how it will proceed, it has made no indication of who will lead the review, and it has not said whether people living in poverty can be involved. Surely they weren't involved in the last round.

Why is the government dragging its feet while more and more people fall into poverty, and despair grows across this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The member asks a very good question. Yes, indeed, we are working closely with our partners in the poverty reduction area to develop the standards for this review. I will say to you, we will be announcing soon what we will do and how we will proceed, so please keep posted and we will announce it soon.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It seems that the government is paralyzed on this. It's taking a whole year to set parameters, never mind discussions of any consequence. The government has fumbled and delayed for a full year while more and more Ontarians suffer from a perverse and hurtful social assistance system that actually traps people in poverty and in sickness by stripping people's assets to almost nothing, by forcing a single adult to try to survive on \$572 a month, and by treating people as though they have committed a crime by being poor and on welfare.

When will this government finally take the action it promised, to make social assistance a hand up rather than a lifetime punishment?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would say this: I don't agree with the comment of the member of the opposite party. I think this government has been listening and has been acting to help those in poverty. At the end of this

month and the beginning of December, the people on social assistance and ODSP will have seen an increase of 11% since we came into power, we have moved forward with the Ontario child benefit, which will take the children out of the social benefits area, and we have increased the minimum wage. We will be building affordable housing, and in the school area, we have invested a lot to help children—

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

### TAXATION

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** My question is to the Minister of Revenue. Today at Queen's Park we are being visited by Laubach Literacy Ontario, which is a member of the Ontario Literacy Coalition. The Ontario Literacy Coalition is a group that exists so that all adults in Ontario reap the full benefit of literacy. This will be accomplished efficiently and effectively with the greatest return on investment possible. They support over 250 members, and more than 46,000 adult learners are served by the 200 adult literacy programs supported by the OLC.

While the HST was introduced to create jobs and make our economy stronger, it is important to make sure that we don't forget the fundamentals. What will the HST mean for books and other reading materials, such as newspapers, in Ontario?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my colleague for the question, and we want to welcome our friends today, who are great proponents of literacy in the province of Ontario. What I can share with you is that on July 1, when the HST comes into being, the provincial portion of that tax will still exempt books and newspapers. That's something that they enjoy today and it's something that they will continue to enjoy, because literacy is a fundamental building block of our economy.

Our plan is designed to help create some 600,000 more jobs in the province of Ontario, jobs that are good-paying jobs. Good-paying jobs require people to have those literacy skills that are required in the 21st century. It's why we've decided to make that exemption.

I think all Ontarians understand that the world has changed, and it is important for us to change with it so that we can prosper in the 21st century. That's why literacy is so important. It's why we've decided to put in that exemption. Despite the cost; we understand how very important it is to Ontarians—

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

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** The Ontario Literacy Coalition states that leading researchers are highlighting the connections between literacy, employment and the economy. Measures like exempting books are a step in the right direction.

No one chooses to struggle in supporting their family, and we can support Ontario families by helping people to get back to work. Income tax exemptions, tax credits and

transitional cheques will help struggling families as we move to create a more competitive system.

Targeted exemptions will greatly assist families in both the short and long terms. These exemptions include children's clothing and footwear, all infant and child care seats, diapers, feminine hygiene products and meals under \$4. What will these measures mean for low-income Ontarians?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to say, particularly to those citizens in our great province who are struggling with the fact that they have a low income, that we have ensured that our tax package is designed to assist them and to actually put them in a better position. Let me tell you how we're going to do that.

Yes, indeed, we are harmonizing the sales tax. We're taking that money and permanently cutting income taxes for 93% of Ontarians. We're not cutting income taxes at the top end, I say to my friend; we're actually cutting taxes on the first \$37,000 of income. But for those people who are struggling without a job, they know that today they receive the GST rebate from the federal government; that's some \$240, and \$140 for a child. On July 1, that will be more than doubled. We'll be adding \$260, tax-free, for every individual in that family, adult and child.

Our tax reform package means that some 90,000 lower-income Ontarians will not pay provincial income—

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

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Across the province, hydro users are being hit with billions of dollars in extra charges due to something called the provincial benefit. On some hydro bills, the benefit is clearly marked; on other bills, it's completely hidden. At a time when the economy is struggling and hard-working Ontarians are about to be hit with an 8% tax surcharge on their home heating bills, why is your government hiding a hydro surtax that's costing ratepayers billions of dollars?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I appreciate the comment, and I think the public probably would appreciate this message on pricing: If you look at pricing on electricity over the last five years for both industrial and residential, it essentially is unchanged over a five-year period; I think the member probably knows that. So in terms of electricity prices: unchanged over a five-year period.

One thing I will agree with him on is that the language in the bill is frankly not as clear to the consumer as I think it should be, and I want to assure the member that our ministry and I are looking at that to find a way that would make it clear. But on electricity pricing I say again that over five years, for a variety of reasons I can get into in the supplementary, it's essentially unchanged. That's been good news for the consumers and, frankly, good news for businesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Minister, that's not what my constituents are telling me about their hydro bills. If you're actually going to be looking at this, when are you going to introduce the changes so that everyone can see how they're being hit by this hydro surcharge?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'm sorry that is what your residents are hearing, because the fact of the matter is, that is what has happened to electricity prices. I just urge them, really, to take a good look at their bills.

Again, I am looking at this as we speak. I'm determined to find ways that the public—you know, we have retailers out there doing business with the public. I'm anxious to find a way to make our bills even more clear for the consumer. I think they have a right to understand in clear terms what they're buying and what the bill contains. I can't give you a date, which I'd love to do, but I will tell you that we will deal with this in months, not years.

But on pricing, again I say: Have the people who talked to you look at their bills closely, because over a five-year period, frankly, for a variety of reasons the price has not gone up.

#### AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Just after Thanksgiving, we heard that discussions were ongoing with regard to a policy that prevented large-scale organic turkey farming in Ontario. Organic farming is a booming area of the agriculture sector. I have many organic turkey farmers in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, and so, naturally, I was really disappointed to hear the difficulty of Ontarians in obtaining fresh, Ontario-grown organic turkeys.

I've heard that a decision has been made that will be well-received by Ontario consumers looking to purchase organic turkeys in the upcoming holiday season. Minister, could you please inform the House of the decision that has been made and the impact it will have on Ontarians who are looking to purchase Ontario organic turkeys in the holiday season?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** On the weekend, I was very delighted to learn that the Turkey Farmers of Ontario have decided why it is so very important to implement policies that will enable Ontario consumers to actually purchase Ontario organic turkeys.

Now, we're delighted that in the province of Ontario we have many wonderful agriculture sectors, and the organic sector is one of the most successful. In fact, it increases by double digits year over year, so there's a tremendous demand. Ontarians are looking for Ontario organic products. There was a challenge there. The Turkey Farmers of Ontario had regulations in place that prevented the production of organic turkeys in Ontario and they changed that. They announced they will change that, and we congratulate them for that. That's a very important move.



1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Thank you, Minister. A report by the Organic Trade Association in 2008 noted that organic sales have been growing at an enormous rate of 17% to 23% each year over the past 10 years. However, traditionally organic foods in Canada have been imported. With this dramatic year-over-year increase in organic food sales, this sector presents abundant opportunities for Ontario farmers.

Minister, what is this government doing to assist Ontario farmers to transform their operations to take advantage of, how shall I say, to gobble up, this growing opportunity?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'd like to thank the honourable member for her question and for her humour in this, but this is a really important issue for turkey farmers and for all organic producers in Ontario.

As I indicated, it is a very healthy sector. We have partnered with the organic sector on a number of initiatives. During the past two years we've invested \$400,000 in the Organic Council of Ontario to help identify needs and develop this sector. Some of these funds are now helping farmers transition to producing organics.

Last year we invested more than \$500,000 in three new research projects for organics. OMAFRA will continue to invest in our own ministry so that we have people on staff to better support those in the organic sector who are looking for advice, support and direction as well.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. In Hamilton, the welfare caseload has risen by 2,682 households since October 2008. High unemployment and a lack of good jobs have forced thousands more families to seek help from food banks and social assistance programs in my city. Hamilton city council has put more than half a million dollars into a food voucher program for a growing number of people in need. Since it is clear that Ontario's poverty reduction strategy is leaving many Hamiltonians without enough to eat, my question is a simple one: What is the McGuinty government going to do to come up with a more permanent solution for the people who are suffering in my community?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've got good news for the people of Hamilton on a number of fronts. I had the opportunity recently to speak with the mayor of Hamilton, and I congratulated him for the support he gave us in landing the Pan Am Games. That's going to result, in the city of Hamilton alone, in a new swimming pool at McMaster University, a new stadium and a velodrome, which will be the best of its kind in northeast America.

Why is that important to the people of Hamilton? Because it means jobs, jobs and jobs. We're talking over \$200 million in infrastructure investment, with a deadline. It's got to be done by 2015.

On top of that, we're going to move ahead with a package of tax reforms that will create some 591,000

more jobs. My honourable colleague knows that the HST in particular will benefit our manufacturers, and if there's a community in Ontario which is heavily dependent on manufacturing, it is the city and the people of Hamilton. That's one more reason for us to work together to move ahead with this package of tax reforms.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** One year ago there were 10,000 recipients; today there are nearly 13,000 recipients, and that number continues to climb. In December 2008, the McGuinty government promised to review social assistance rates, but nothing ever came of it. Hamilton has \$16.5 million of social services bills that belong to the provincial government, not including the cost of the emergency food measures they're taking right now. When is this McGuinty government going to announce its plan to assist municipalities like Hamilton with their growing welfare rolls?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague is well aware that Hamilton, like Ontario, like Canada, like North America, has not been sheltered from the terrible consequences of a global economic recession. It has affected all of us. But we have done a few things to help. For one thing, every single year we keep increasing the rates of social assistance. We've also accelerated the Ontario child benefit so that it is there for parents in our low-income families in a more meaningful way. Beyond that, of course, we are moving ahead with a package of tax reforms which are designed, centrally, to create more jobs.

If you ask the people of Hamilton, ask the mayor of Hamilton and ask Hamilton city council what it is that they need in their city, they will tell you that they want a stronger economy that creates more jobs. That is what we're all about. That was what the Pan Am bid was all about. That's what our HST package is all about. It's about creating more jobs for the people of Hamilton and, indeed, all the people of Ontario.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Health care continues to be the issue I hear from my constituents most frequently. They want good-quality care for their loved ones, close to where they live and when they need it. It's crucial that we continue to strive to reduce wait times for key surgeries so that Ontarians can get the care they need as fast as possible and move on with their lives.

As the minister knows, our hospitals in London are health care leaders and have made good progress in reducing wait times.

Could the minister please update this House on the progress made to provide faster care for Ontarians across the province and in London?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I agree with the member that we need to do more to continue to reduce wait times in surgeries, but let's take a minute to recognize how far we've come.

I'm pleased to report that not only did Ontario get five As in the Wait Time Alliance's report card this past June, but a recent Fraser Institute report released last month, called *Waiting Your Turn*, said Ontario has the lowest average wait times in Canada for key surgeries.

We're making real progress on wait times across the province: Wait times for hip replacements are down 185 days; knee replacements are down 262 days; cataract surgery is down 197 days. In London, hip replacement wait times are down 328 days at LHSC and knee replacements are down 450 days. That's well over a year of enjoying life, playing with grandkids—

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Another area of importance for my constituents is how long they have to wait to get emergency medical care when they need it. When people have serious health issues that warrant a trip to the emergency room, the last thing they want to do is wait for hours, with the possibility that their condition can deteriorate.

I know that a lot of work has been done to provide enhanced services in my community so that only people with very urgent issues have to go to the emergency rooms.

Can the minister please explain what the government is doing to reduce wait times in emergency rooms?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Reducing emergency room wait times is a top priority for us. Last winter, we set ambitious wait times for our emergency departments. We also began posting the amount of time that Ontarians spend in ERs on our website. We did it because we govern on the principle that if you track it, you can improve it.

We are improving ER wait times. Compared to one year ago, Ontario hospitals have reduced ER wait times by nearly an hour. That's five million hours of time saved—one hour for every visit an Ontarian made to an ER over the course of a year. When you break it down, five million hours is about 570 years in saved time. That's meaningful to Ontarians. We're making progress and we're determined to keep on making progress.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. A couple of weeks ago, I asked the minister what the government could do for the 2,000 laid-off sawmill workers from across northwestern Ontario who, under the laws of Ontario, are entitled to severance pay and termination pay from their employer, the Buchanan Group of Companies, but who can't get paid. Regrettably, the minister had no answer.

Today, I want to ask about the dozens of contractors from communities like Geraldton, Manitouwadge, Nipigon and Armstrong who are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars by the Buchanan Group of Companies for contracts they have completed but can't get paid for.

Is the McGuinty government prepared to do anything for those thousands of laid-off workers who can't get paid and those dozens of contractors who can't get paid either?

**1120**

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** As the member will know, we've been working very closely with all those involved in the challenging aspects of the forestry sector in northern Ontario. One thing I can say is that I'm very pleased that our government has been able to offer a conditional \$25-million term loan to Terrace Bay Pulp to help finance the restart of the mill, and indeed, if that is successful, that may augur well for all those involved in the forestry sector in the north.

It's important to be clear that our offer of support is only one part of the equation in terms of the restart of the mill. It's conditional on Terrace Bay Pulp securing additional financing and also completing the court actions needed to allow them to exit from the CCAA process. But unquestionably, this is good news for the Terrace Bay-Schreiber area and good news ultimately, potentially, for people who are employed by Buchanan Forest Products through the Terrace Bay Pulp operation, and we're very hopeful this will lead to more good news.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister may be proud of that announcement. I have to tell him that it's not going to do anything to put people back to work, even in Terrace Bay, for the next three months, and it's certainly not going to do anything for the laid-off sawmill workers in Sioux Lookout, in Atikokan, in Thunder Bay, in Dubreuilville, nor the contractors in Manitouwadge or the contractors in Dryden or any of these other communities.

Minister, these are people who need to pay the bills. They have children to feed. They have rent to pay, mortgages to pay. Some of them have been out of work now for two years. They're legally owed this money. You've been very generous with the Buchanan Group of Companies—I think the total now is up to \$120 million—but what are all these workers supposed to do? How are they supposed to pay their bills? Where is the provincial government in enforcing the provincial laws that say these people are entitled to be paid for work that they have done?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Clearly, the best solution for all is to get the forestry sector and the operations back up and running. We are hopeful that with this offer of conditional support to Terrace Bay Pulp, which is an important asset—I mean, this is an operation that really is an anchor in terms of the use of wood fibre between Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, and again, the member for Kenora-Rainy River knows that well. We are obviously hopeful that indeed they are able to move forward and get further financing. Further, we are hopeful that that will move us towards a possibility and the opportunity for other operations to open up for the company as well.

There is no doubt, and the member knows this well, that it has been an extremely challenging time. I've worked very closely with the subcontractors who have

been involved, worked very closely with all the companies, in fact, that have been going through this very difficult time in the forestry sector, and we're doing everything we can to continue work. But this is good news, this is potentially very good news, and ultimately we hope it will lead to some very positive things in terms of having jobs back for many people in northwestern Ontario.

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

In August, I had the good fortune to travel to Ontario's north, visiting the communities of Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Chapleau with the committee on general government for hearings on both the Mining Act and the Far North Act. While there, the committee heard from many First Nations representatives who stressed the importance of having these communities consulted in the decision-making process of lands being developed in the far north. I remember Councillor McKay of the First Nations saying, "What you call the 'far north' is not the far north to us; it is our home. We need real participation in decision-making." It's vitally important that First Nations communities have a key role in the decision-making process of how land is used in the far north.

Minister, I understand you've just recently returned from a trip to the northern Ontario community of Pikangikum. Can you please tell the House how your ministry is considering consulting and working with this First Nations community on land use planning?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'd like to thank the member for the question. It is absolutely vital that the First Nations are involved in the community land use planning, and that's why the government introduced the far north legislation. If that legislation is passed, in fact, the First Nations take the lead role in making a determination on that land use planning.

We were fortunate to work with Pikangikum First Nation as they went through with their planning called Keeping the Land, which was finalized in 2006. Since then, we've been working with Pikangikum First Nation as they move forward to implement their plan. We just jointly signed the terms of reference to support the protected areas and the forest management planning in the Whitefeather Forest. This actually will ensure that the planning takes place and that by 2012 we will have a plan in place.

But this also means that a total of 36% of the Whitefeather Forest and a total of—

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

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** The residents of Ontario's far north live beyond our traditional road and rail network. Some of these residents have criticized the Far North Act. As with elsewhere in the province, a common challenge is how to balance economic activity with environmental protection.

Minister, climate change is a real issue facing our world today. I understand that this proposed legislation

will work to protect vast amounts of boreal forest and peatlands, which in turn will act as a large carbon sink and help to guard against global warming.

However, how will the Ministry of Natural Resources ensure there's a balance between adequate protection as well as adequate opportunity for economic development? Will the minister state for the record how her ministry will work with First Nations to find a balance between ecological protection and economic activity?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I can answer this quite plainly: We will ensure that there's a balance of protection for the environment and economic activity by working closely with First Nations communities as they develop their community-based land use plans.

There are eight First Nations communities that have established land use planning teams, and they are making very significant progress toward the preparation of their community-based land use plan. In total, there are 25 First Nations communities at various degrees of engagement with the Ministry of Natural Resources, and this level of engagement ranges from initial dialogue right through to the land use planning terms of reference.

I was delighted to be able to have a chance, as you heard, to sit down with Pikangikum First Nation in our extraordinary far north to discuss how they're going to proceed with their land use planning. I'd like to commend, in particular, elder Oliver for his vision as to where he felt that his First Nation needed to go, and for the—

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

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Premier. You probably know that there are approximately one million condo owners in Ontario and most of them are in the area of Toronto. I think you probably know as well that there are many young people and many seniors living in these condos.

You might also have heard that property managers say—and they all agree—that the condo fees are likely to increase anywhere from \$27 to \$32 a month. Have you thought about the economic implications this is going to have on those young people and seniors who own a condominium?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the member for the question. We have taken that into account. It's why our income tax reforms are specifically geared to seniors on a fixed income and people with low income.

I want to say particularly to those who own condos, it is true that a condominium charges a condo fee that's provided by the property management company and that there are services that will attract a higher fee, but for every one of those services that the condo corporation engages in, all of those services—the price of business for those companies is going down because of our tax reform package.

So it is important for consumers to be aware—and I say that particularly for those who are on condo boards—

to say to the people who are running those condominiums, "Wait a minute. We understand about this HST, but let's not forget the other side of the equation."

It is true for all of those companies. Their cost of administration is going down, their taxes are going down, and for the very first time, they'll be able to claim input tax credits on the PST that they have been paying. So it is important—

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** For the condominium owners, there is no other side. They know one side, and that is that they're going to get whacked by an additional \$27 to \$32 a month.

Eighty per cent of the condo fees connect to a service that's going to be charged—80%—and the other 20% is for reserve funds, and those too are going to go up.

We have been having meetings in my riding, and they are all very worried about the effect it's going to have on their ability to pay the extra \$27 to \$32 a month.

This is going to be devastating. It's not wrong, Minister of Finance: This is going to devastate a whole lot of people who live in condominiums. They will not be able to afford it, and nothing you have said so far alleviates the fact that they're going to get whacked, and whacked seriously.

Have you seriously thought about how this is going to affect them year after year, from now till the end of time?

1130

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I would say to the member that he may want to read an independent report by TD Economics that was penned by Don Drummond, a leading economist in this country. He says that within the first year, some 80% of business savings will be passed through to the consumer. It's not only at Zellers where the lowest price is the law, I say to the member. People do not willingly overpay for anything. It is important for the consumers—those who own a condominium, who express their will through the property manager—that they expect them to negotiate the best price.

For all of those companies that will say to them, "We must charge you more for tax," each and every one of them, their price is going down. That's why Don Drummond has said that for the entire economy, some 80% of that will be passed through, but only if the consumer is aware.

I say to the member, the message that one has to get to your constituents is the importance for them to understand that they must demand those lower prices. They have that power—

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

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Mike Colle:** A question to the Minister of Finance: In the western part of my riding, in the Caledonia-Dufferin corridor, I have a lot of small manufacturers. Over the last few years, I have to tell you what has

happened: There has been de-industrialization taking place, with a lot of small factories closing down.

What I'm really interested in knowing is, this new change in the single tax, the HST, how is it going to try and—the NDP are laughing. These people have lost their jobs; they can't pay their rent; they can't pay their mortgage. It's nothing to laugh at. They're saying, "What can the government do?"

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The former leader of the NDP thinks it's funny.

These people want to know what our government is doing with this new single tax to try and bring some of the jobs back. What can they do to maybe hold on to some of these jobs? How can—

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

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I thank the member for the question and for his genuine concern about the future of our economy and job creation. The tax package we've brought forward is indeed intended to create jobs. Now we have a range of economists of all political stripes saying that this package will create jobs: Mr. Mintz says some 591,000; a variety of other sources make the same kind of claim. It's backed up by economists such as Hugh Mackenzie and Jim Stanford, from the other side. Canadian vehicle manufacturers, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have all endorsed this package because it will reduce the tax burden overall, not only for businesses but for consumers. It will make our tax system more efficient, and it will, in fact, create jobs. That's the purpose of it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Especially with the manufacturing jobs, supposedly right now the manufacturer is paying double and triple PST. It gets replicated. In other words, they don't pay it just once, they pay it two or three times. So if we bring in this new tax reform, is it going to result in them lowering their production costs or administrative costs? Will it mean they can actually stay in Ontario, stay in my riding and provide hope for people who right now don't know where to turn for these jobs?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The overall package, including the harmonized sales tax itself, will in fact reduce the tax burden to businesses and lower prices for consumers.

Roger Martin, in his task force on competitiveness, put out five myths about the HST.

The first myth is that it will increase prices paid by consumers. The reality is prices will come down as manufacturers and retailers pay lower sales taxes. There's evidence of this from eastern Canada, sir.

The other myth: This will raise costs for small businesses. In fact, costs will decrease as small businesses recover sales taxes they have to pay on goods and services they purchase, and it lowers administrative costs.

The third myth: This is a tax grab. The fact is, increased revenue from the HST is matched by reductions in tax cuts and tax credits. The effect is revenue-neutral.

This is the right plan to create jobs. This government, this party—

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

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A question for the Minister of Culture: There was supposed to be a permanent PST exemption for theatres that was crushed with the introduction of the HST. This is going to hurt theatre all over this province. What are you going to do about it?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I understand that the honourable member is coming forward with a private member's bill to ask the government to extend tax credits to live productions here in this city akin to our tax credits that exist for TV and film production. I think that this is an issue he wants to see brought forward to the House, and we'll do so. It will give members of the House the opportunity to discuss the relative merits of that suggestion, so I would await such legislation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I don't think the minister heard the question, but I will go along in the vein that many musicians represented by the American Federation of Musicians play weddings and parties. They know they can't pass on that HST; they're going to have to eat it. How are you going to help freelance musicians who are going to see their income drop as a result of this tax?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I think this government has a remarkable record on the investments we have made in the industry wherein those very performers benefit from employment and from increased activity, and we've done so by a whole series of tax credits that benefit the entire industry.

It's always easy to take one particular segment and carve it off, but I think one has to look at the track record of this government and what we've done for the cultural industries as a whole, recognizing as we do that they contribute \$20 billion a year to our GDP. We see them as an industry of the future and we see the Ministry of Culture as an economic tool to assist the enhancement of that sector. So I don't think it's at all fair to take one piece and say, "But they don't have this particular set of tax credits, ergo they're not part and parcel of the huge success of the cultural—"

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: You have often chastised members of the House for matters of decorum, and I want to say that you haven't had to do that with members of the House today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. That is not a point of order. I thank the honourable member.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Many of you know that today is Laubach Literacy Ontario's Awareness Day here at

Queen's Park. There are a number of people here from across the province. I'd like to mention in particular some who are in the gallery today: Sue Bannon, the president; Lana Faessler, the executive director; and Carol Risidore, the vice-president; Gary Porter, who is a board member and a former student; and, from the Midland area reading council, Jennifer Ellis, the program coordinator; Bob Sture, a board member; and Lin Sullivan, a board member.

I wish everybody in the House would give these people a warm welcome of appreciation today.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to introduce Arden Ryshpan, the executive director of Canadian Actors' Equity; Jim Biros, the executive director of the Toronto Musicians' Association, affiliated with the American Federation of Musicians; Paul Taylor, from the International Association of Theatre and Stage Employees; and Lynn McQueen, also from Canadian Actors' Equity. I'd like to welcome them here as well.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### TAXATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise today to share the concerns of my constituents in Parry Sound–Muskoka regarding this government's proposed harmonized sales tax. Here's a small sampling of the hundreds of e-mails I've received.

"Mr. Miller, please do all you can to stop the proposed HST. I am living just outside Parry Sound, self-employed and working hard to save for retirement.

"This HST will drive all of the costs of living up, and in a time of economic difficulty, I am greatly shocked that the Liberals are pulling this stunt.

"Please help stop the proposed HST and the gouging of the Ontario taxpayer."

That's from Dave in Parry Sound.

Another letter:

"Dear Norm:

"My wife and I live in Barkway, near Gravenhurst. We moved here three years ago to retire.

"We have never had to really complain till now. The McGuinty government has really done it this time. Since we are on a fixed income, how are we supposed to survive?

"Thanks for listening and please fight for us retirees."

That's from Bill in Barkway.

Another e-mail: "There must be a better way for the province to deal with its budget deficit. We, as a retired couple, have calculated that our living expenses will go up at least \$2,100 a year. This is outrageous." That is from Hans and Jeanette.

It is clear from the hundreds of e-mails I'm receiving that the public wants to be heard on this new proposed HST, so that's why I'm asking for public consultations on Bill 218 across the province.

### KURDISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to welcome the Kurdish community to the Ontario Legislature and to do my best in giving my colleagues and the public a better understanding of the Kurdish people and their rich history.

Kurdistan, literally meaning “the land of Kurds,” is an extensive plateau and mountainous area in the Middle East, inhabited mainly by Kurds. It covers part of eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran and part of northern Syria.

The people of the region of Kurdistan have a rich history, filled with tremendous influences of cultures and traditions which have moulded their people into a very unique community in the region.

After years of political oppression, the Kurds have been able to move forward in the last few years. Kurds residing in Iraq have a provincial government representing them which has been recognized by the international community as an autonomous federal entity. The Kurds residing in Iran are also considered a minority and have a province named Kurdistan in western Iran.

I wish to once again welcome the Kurdish community to the Legislature and extend my warmest greetings and best wishes.

*Remarks in Kurdish.* Welcome and thank you.

### CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I rise in the House today to bring special attention to the funding crisis at Ontario children's aid societies.

I've had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Durham children's aid. Like the majority of Ontario children's aid societies, they are facing a budget shortfall. The Durham Children's Aid Society has established a budget based on its legal obligations and the best interests of vulnerable children and youth. If the provincial government forces the Durham children's aid and other children's aids to balance their budgets, drastic cutbacks will be forced in programming, staff and services.

I would urge this McGuinty government to put the interests of children and families first, above all. Reduced funding means reduced protection for children at risk. This government must honour its commitment to fund child welfare services in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act.

It's just like the issue with respect to the HST: They won't listen; they won't have public meetings. This is one more example of a failed government.

### DANFORTH EAST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to talk about an amazing group of people in my riding who deeply care about our community and the neighbourhood in which

they live. The Danforth East Community Association, or DECA, as they're more commonly known, is a fledgling group of residents who want to help make our neighbourhood more beautiful, vibrant and, particularly, more safe. DECA's boundaries are between Coxwell Avenue and Main Street, and from Mortimer/Lumsden down to the train tracks south of Danforth. My constituency office is located in this great neighbourhood, and we're very proud to be part of that community.

DECA is helping to bring neighbours together and foster a stronger sense of community. Its members are greening and beautifying the streets and parks, improving the commercial strip on Danforth Avenue, taking action to reduce crime, and planning community events. As the Toronto Star tells it, three years ago, a group of families and professionals formed DECA. They've been knocking on storefronts in need of tender loving care, and they've been getting it. Eight of them have been revamped so far.

When drug dealers came by, DECA was there to put a halt to it. They went to the local park. They had square dances and movies. Two years ago, they spearheaded what has become a popular farmers' market in the reclaimed space. We attend this quite often.

Tonight, they will be meeting at Melanie's Bistro, one of the new restaurants that have moved into the area, to have a cocktail party to meet and greet the neighbours.

I just want to say today how very proud we are of their accomplishments to date.

### PAN-AM GAMES

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I am excited at the great news that the Pan-Am Games are coming to Ontario in 2015. The benefits of hosting these games will be felt in many areas in Ontario, including Scarborough and my riding of Scarborough Southwest.

The Scarborough area is hosting several competitions, including swimming, diving, fencing and sitting volleyball.

To host these competitions, a new sports complex will be built at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus. The complex will include gymnasiums, fitness and training facilities, two Olympic-sized pools and a 10-metre diving tank. All new sports infrastructures will continue to serve our athletes and the local community for many years to come.

But that's not the only benefit of hosting these games. They also bring a great economic boost to my community and many other areas in Scarborough, with increased tourism and jobs.

I would like to congratulate everyone who participated in the successful bid to bring the Pan-Am Games to Ontario, including Premier McGuinty and Minister Best. This is great news for our province and my community of Scarborough Southwest, and I look forward to the 2015 Pan-Am Games. They will be a success for Scarborough, for Ontario and for all involved.

## ADULT LITERACY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Earlier, I introduced people from Laubach Literacy Ontario, who are here today for their Literacy Awareness Day, and I want to thank them for being here.

We started this sort of lobby back in the winter with a resolution I had asking the government to provide adequate funding for these organizations to exist, and I thank the government for bringing forward some money. Apparently, it's a two-year funding model, and after that, we're not really sure what's happening. Part of the lobby here today is to make sure that no matter who is in power, the government understands how important literacy is to the province of Ontario.

We've lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Many of the people who worked in those jobs don't have proper literacy skills, and in order to work in the future, they need to have these basic literacy skills to move forward.

These are the people who are actually helping those people through the use of volunteers.

1310

Their funding has been frozen for a long time. We've got a little bit more money now, but we need to make sure, through these awareness days, that all of the provincial political parties realize how important this is to the economy of Ontario so that when these people are trained, they get out, get more self-esteem and meaningful, positive jobs and help contribute to the strong Ontario economy we hope to have again someday.

## NORTHERN COLLEGE

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'd like to share with the House some good news that's happening in my riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, especially in regard to Northern College. Northern College is the fastest-growing college in this province—I'm very proud of that—and especially in two of the campuses which are located in my riding. The first-year enrolment at the Haileybury campus has increased by 46%, and there's been a 31% increase at the Kirkland Lake campus.

What's very exciting is that we opened the other day, right at the Haileybury campus in an old high school that was renovated by Northern College, a veterinary technology course. This is a one-, two-, and three-year course that is available to our young people to help all our four-legged critters, and they have lots of those in supply. There are dogs and cats there. The first year, they learn how to do grooming, and then they get into more medical procedures and research.

One of the very interesting things that's unique to the Northern College veterinary technology course is that they have wildlife rehabilitation. As we know, because we all get letters from a lot of our constituents, there's a lot of need for helping injured wildlife. We have a centre to do that and we now are training our young people to be able to do that too, so it's very exciting. Some 140 of these students are doing that, and I'm very grateful for

the northern Ontario heritage grant for helping us out with almost \$1 million to make that happen.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** The Leader of the Opposition addressed the London Chamber of Commerce on Friday and spoke about the HST. I have listened to him repeatedly use his careful wording to sway Ontarians into thinking the HST is bad when, in fact, experts and economists have agreed that it's good news for Ontarians. But even as the Leader of the Opposition thunders against the HST, he has constantly refused to answer this question: Will he commit to repealing the HST? I think Ontarians need to know. I want to know the answer to this question.

If he is so opposed to the HST tax reform package which will create nearly 600,000 jobs and cut taxes for 93% of Ontario families, then why won't he commit to repealing the HST? Once again, the opposition leader failed to answer the question. He ducked and dodged and refused to commit to reversing a single tax change that the McGuinty government has proposed.

I exposed the truth about the Leader of the Opposition and the HST to Londoners last week. Everyone in Ontario should know that Mr. Hudak has no intention of reversing the HST. Thank you for allowing me to speak and tell the people of Ontario about the position of the Leader of the Opposition on the HST, which, as I said many different times, will create more than 600,000 jobs for Ontarians.

## TAXATION

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** The leader of the official opposition says that the public is against our government's proposed harmonized sales tax, but according to the Belleville Intelligencer newspaper, the only thing Ontarians are rejecting is the Leader of the Opposition and his attempts to spin Ontarians.

An editorial in the newspaper said, "Tim Hudak couldn't draw flies on a whistle stop to Belleville and the chamber breakfast on Wednesday saw an embarrassing paucity of bacon 'n egggers to listen to Hudak tune up his campaign speech, attacking the harmonized sales tax."

But that's not all the newspaper noted. It also says he got his facts wrong about the Belleville area. "He cited Dacoma Autosystems and Stream International as being battered on the job front. Both are recalling employees by the hundreds." As the editorial says, it's not enough to place [insert city name here] in your anti-HST rants.

I think the visit to Belleville clarifies what Ontarians really oppose. They are opposed to being spun by false information on the HST, and that's why he's speaking to empty rooms.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not sure if it is a rule or if it's convention, Mr. Speaker—perhaps you can give us some guidance on this—but I believe that it is parliamentary convention that there usually be a minister in the House, and I don't see a minister in the House.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You asked and you shall receive.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Standing order 63(a) provides that “the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.”

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 19, 2009, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Accordingly, the estimates for 2009-10 of these ministries are deemed to be passed by the Standing Committee on Estimates and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

*Report deemed received.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### DRIVETEST LABOUR DISPUTE RESOLUTION ACT, 2009 LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DU CONFLIT DE TRAVAIL CHEZ TEST AU VOLANT

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 225, An Act to resolve the labour dispute between DriveTest and United Steelworkers, Local 9511 / Projet de loi 225, Loi visant à résoudre le conflit de travail opposant Test au volant et la section locale 9511 du Syndicat des Métallos.

**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 nays have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1317 to 1322.*

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

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield

Hardeman, Ernie  
Hillier, Randy  
Jones, Sylvia  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Miller, Paul

O’Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Savoline, Joyce  
Wilson, Jim

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 14; the nays are zero.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** This bill addresses the labour dispute between DriveTest and the United Steelworkers Local 9511, which is currently in its 14th week. It requires the termination of the ongoing strike that has affected some 368,000 Ontarians. If passed, this bill would return 600 DriveTest employees to work. Since the strike began, 4,000 Ontarians per day have been unable to get their licence because of the ongoing labour dispute. As a result, no applicants have been able to obtain drivers’ licences, and the economy and livelihood of Ontarians has been disrupted. This bill will end the strike that has negatively impacted the residents of my riding and of all of Ontario.

## TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT (LIVE PERFORMANCES), 2009

### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (SPECTACLES)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 226, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 with respect to live performances / Projet de loi 226, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts à l’égard des spectacles.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The bill amends the Taxation Act, 2007, to give the Lieutenant Governor in Council the power to create regulations providing for tax credit for live performances. The bill also gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council the power to specify the rules of eligibility for the tax credit, the methods of claiming and obtaining the tax credit, and any other matter relating to the tax credit.

My thanks to Equity, IATSE and the American Federation of Musicians.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s a real pleasure today to rise and read a petition from my constituents in the riding of Durham. I have thousands of these petitions and they’re all on HST, but I’ll read one:

“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 tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses use every day. A few examples include: coffee”—well, that’s been cancelled; we have to modify this, they’ve backed down on that one—“newspapers”—they’ve backed down—“and magazines; condo fees;” health services; “haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and 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” dreaded “health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes” yet “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” continuously “on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and pass it to the table with Christopher, one of the new pages here.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the residents of the city of greater Sudbury, which means the ridings of Sudbury and Nickel Belt, and they are asking for a PET scan.

“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, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Olivia.

#### 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.”

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The petition is titled Scrap the 13% McGuinty Sales Tax. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the 13% McGuinty sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for coffins, coffee, haircuts, gym memberships, newspapers, lawyer and accountant fees and meals under \$4”—and we know the government has backed down on several of these items;

“We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I affix my signature to these petitions.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a similar petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians already pay more than their fair share of taxes; and

**1330**

“Whereas the Liberal government’s proposed harmonized sales tax (HST) will add 8% to purchases like gym memberships, running shoes, vitamins, coffee, gasoline, heating oil, natural gas, hydro, newspapers, magazines, landscaping, Internet access, theatre tickets and home renovations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cancel the implementation of this unreasonable, unaffordable and untimely tax.”

I am in agreement and would sign my signature thereto.

#### HISPANIC COMMUNITY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** The subject of this petition is proclaiming April as Hispanic Heritage Month. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Canadians of Hispanic origin have made outstanding contributions in the building of this great province; and

“Whereas the Hispanic population is among the fastest-growing communities in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Hispanic population in Ontario represents 23 countries across the world, such as Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estados Unidos, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela; and

“Whereas Hispanic Heritage Month would give Ontarians the opportunity to participate in various cultural and educational activities that would strengthen our diversity; and

“Whereas the proclamation of April as Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario is an opportunity to recognize and learn about the contributions Canadians of Hispanic heritage have made to Canada and to the world in music, art, literature, film, economics, science and medicine;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” to support Mr. Tony Ruprecht’s and Mr. Mike Colle’s proclamations that April of each year be proclaimed as Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario.

Of course I support this petition. I’m delighted to sign it.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition signed by what would appear to be almost every person in my riding. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

#### CEMETERIES

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** My petition is:

“Whereas Ontario’s cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario’s inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

“Ontario’s cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province’s cultural heritage;

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

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

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

#### TAXATION

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in a

brand-new tax on income that they inaccurately claimed was going to ‘health care’; and

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: gas at the pumps; home heating oil and electricity; postage stamps; haircuts; dry cleaning; home renovations; veterinary care; and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

“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, once and for all, on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it.

#### RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

**Mr. Dave Levac:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas to cover the cost of reconstructive surgery when a patient has had extreme weight loss after bariatric surgery, as these surgeries are not covered under OHIP and are at present considered cosmetic;

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

“That when patients have bariatric surgery and lose the required amount of weight and keep it off, they also have another set of health ... issues that can be very costly to take care of. As these individuals lose weight, they end up with so much excess skin and fat pockets that no amount of exercise will take care of it. This excess skin and folds in the skin can cause anything from boils, cysts, skin infections and more that have to be cared for constantly in hospital emergency rooms and cared for by agencies like community care access centres. If preventive reconstructive surgeries are not approved, the constant medical care will cost the taxpayer much more money than said health issues would cost over time.”

I affix my name to this petition and offer it to Olivia, our page.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a 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, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4”—which is exempt now—“electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs,

commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

#### RAILROAD BRIDGE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** This is a petition to the Minister of Transportation. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Bloor Street West between Lansdowne Avenue and Dundas Street West has been identified as the only stretch of Bloor Street that has no landscaping; and

“Whereas the neighbourhood near 1369 Bloor Street West has been recognized as a priority revitalization area by a city of Toronto study in 2000; and

“Whereas items for beautification include:

“(1) Developing terraced walls with flowers and planters near the railroad bridge;

“(2) Constructing new abutment walls;

“(3) Cleaning, painting and reconstructing the rusty, dilapidated railroad bridge; and

“(4) Creating brightly lit murals underneath the bridge in order to make it more secure and more people-friendly;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request in the strongest terms that our city government immediately reactivate the 2000 reconstruction plan and CNR immediately proceed with improvements to the bridge” and that the provincial government support this plan.

“We look forward to a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape. We want to be proud to live here.”

Since I agree, I am delighted to sign my name to it.

#### TAXATION

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

“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 tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: ... gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; condo fees; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and 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;

**1340**

“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 agree with this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with Vanessa.

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from workers in my riding.

“Whereas the federal government’s employment insurance surplus now stands at” more than “\$54 billion; and

“Whereas over 75% of Ontario’s unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa’s unfair eligibility rules; and

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

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

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

I support the petition and I affix my name to it.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario’s history” at that time; and

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: arena ice and baseball field rentals; gas at the pumps; magazines; home heating oil and electricity; gym fees; golf fees; ski lift fees; and movie tickets, just to name a few;

“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,

once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I affix my name in full support.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has given me notice of his intention to raise a point of privilege. His point relates to the circumstances under which the House entered upon orders of the day for consideration of Bill 218 last Thursday morning.

I'm prepared to rule on the matter without hearing further from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

I will first say that I am satisfied with the procedural correctness with which debate was commenced last Thursday on Bill 218. After calling orders of the day, I permitted the member for Leeds–Grenville to raise a point of privilege, of which he had given me notice the previous afternoon.

After hearing from the member, the member from Timmins–James Bay and the government House leader, I reserved my ruling on that point of privilege.

At that point, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills raised a point of order, which I dealt with, and then the member for Oshawa raised a point of order, which I also dealt with. I then recognized the Minister of Finance, who called order G218. The deputy clerk then read the order for second reading of Bill 218, following which I recognized the Minister of Finance to commence the debate.

I will say that I was deliberate in following the normal sequence of events—though they were interrupted with the point of privilege and the points of order—and I have no reservation about the fact that all was in order and Bill 218 was properly brought before the House for debate.

I might also say that this matter raised by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is more correctly a point of order and not a point of privilege. The orderliness of the proceedings was not challenged at the time they occurred and so there can be no revising of them now.

I thank the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for raising this matter, but do not find that he has made out a valid case of privilege.

#### OPPOSITION DAY

##### TAXATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call on the Premier and the Minister of Finance to hold extensive public hearings on Bill 218, An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts, with such public hearings taking place over a minimum of three weeks and

in a minimum of 10 communities across the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. MacLeod has moved opposition day number 5. Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Before I begin my remarks, I would like to acknowledge those in the gallery today from the Public Sector Retirees Coalition of retired municipal, fire and police workers in this province. They have done tremendous work on our behalf. They have built this province.

I'd also like to welcome another two diverse groups. One is the camp association of Ontario, who provide charity camps for children across this great province, as well as CI Financial employees who work in the mutual fund sector and who are providing valuable advice and services for the people of this province.

On behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus, I am proud to stand today, on behalf of Ontarians on either side of the HST debate, to demand that the Premier and the Minister of Finance hold extensive public hearings on Bill 218.

Last week, when the Liberals brought forward a sweeping omnibus bill that, when passed, will usher in the harmonized sales tax, the largest single sales tax increase in our province's history, they decided that they were also going to ram the legislation through without any public consultation.

On July 1, 2010, Ontarians will be paying 8% more for everyday essentials like home heating oil and gas for their cars. They'll also be paying more for veterinary bills, haircuts and Internet access fees. With such sweeping changes, Ontarians deserve to have a voice in a debate that is going to change how much they pay for their essentials.

Denying public consultation on one of the biggest tax changes in history came as a result of some of the rules they abused last week. They have used time allocation, and will continue to use time allocation, to cripple our debate, and they have ignored legitimate points of order about abuse of process.

The PC caucus is disappointed, but we are not surprised by the tactics of this government. That is why we will continue to call for public consultation and use every available tool at our disposal to call for public consultation, to disrupt the passage of this terrible tax hike, and we will make it clear that the McGuinty Liberals are prepared to use and abuse parliamentary privilege and their majority to have their way.

In the run-up to the GST, the Mulroney government held extensive public, province-wide consultations. In its hearings, the committee heard 274 sets of witnesses. They analyzed over 1,100 briefs and other representations. The committee completed its public hearings on October 26, 1989, but Bill C-62, which would implement the GST and related changes to other statutes, was not tabled until July 24, 1990.

And here we are. We're asking that Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Duncan follow Mr. Mulroney's lead, follow the lead of a person who had the courage of his convictions, who,

when he decided to overhaul the taxation system in our nation, decided to go province to province, community to community and hear from the people before he tabled the legislation.

Once upon a time, Mr. McGuinty used this quote: “‘Public hearings’; those two words go together nicely if you believe in true democracy....” Also in a true democracy, it is the rules that prevent the tyranny of the majority over the minority. Yet time and time again we have seen in this chamber the abuse of their majority to shut us down, to shut consultations down and to shut down public debate.

We on this side are very concerned about the \$3-billion tax grab that is going to be put on the backs of the folks who send their kids to camp, the people who are retiring and live on a fixed income, and those middle-class families who desire to have a better future by putting precious dollars away in their mutual funds for retirement.

But equally concerning to us are the hidden details about this tax that the current government seems content to obscure and intent to ignore when the public raises them. We think these are all legitimate public discussion points and debate that voters and Ontario taxpayers ought to have a say about. I'm going to briefly run through them.

Under the HST, Ontario is going to surrender its constitutionally granted taxation powers to the whim of future federal governments. Once the HST is enacted, fundamental decisions about what is and what is not going to be subject to direct sales taxation will be made, not in this chamber, not by people who have been duly elected to decide such things; they will instead be made in Ottawa. It is not hard to foresee a day when a federal finance minister from outside of Ontario will decide the fate of Ontario businesses when there is a tax dispute.

**1350**

Under the HST, it is likely that tax-included pricing, or hidden taxation, will come to Ontario. In 1997, when Jean Chrétien brought forward a change to the Excise Tax Act, he allowed for hidden taxation when 51% of the population bought into the HST. You know as well as I do that Ontarians prefer to see what they are taxed, not the other way around.

I also want to clarify: The McGuinty government will, from time to time, talk about the 130 nations that are also promoting the value-added tax. That's misleading. No other developed nation has successfully imposed a joint—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw that word.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Which one was that, Mr. Speaker?

**Interjection:** “Dalton McGuinty”?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** No. You know which one.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

No other developed nation has successfully imposed a joint value-added tax at both the federal and state levels.

In any case, Canada's federation is dissimilar to that in many OECD countries.

Finally, this is something that the Liberals don't want Ontarians to know. It's something that they would prefer hidden. It's something that they do not want to talk about at committee with everyday Ontarians. The fact is that once this HST is implemented, it will be impossible to repeal without massive penalties, and that massive penalty is that Ontario will be forced to repay the \$4.3 billion in bribe money that this government is going to be giving away right before the next election.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Unfortunately, the Liberals opposite don't understand that there was an agreement called the CITCA that actually spells this out. If you don't think Ontario can afford \$4.3 billion today, what do you think we're going to be doing in two years, after they finish this mandate?

This government has taken us from first to worst in economic growth. They've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. And for the first time next week, we're going to be celebrating the worst thing this province has ever seen, and that's one year of getting handouts from the federal government. At the same time, they're trying to bring this massive tax onto our friends in the mutual fund industry, our friends who are retired and our friends who are trying to send their kids to camp.

I'm just going to briefly conclude here, but mark my words: Even if they think that once they pass this legislation and ram it through the Ontario Legislature it's over, it's not even by a country mile, because the PC caucus does not consider the HST law until the people of Ontario are paying 8% more on July 1, 2010. If enough Ontario voters speak out, Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal backbench are going to be forced to repeal his record-breaking tax grab in his 2010 budget.

As I conclude, I've had the privilege of bringing stakeholders from across Ontario into this Legislature in the past couple of weeks to attend press conferences. All of them spoke, basically in unanimity, that we need public consultation in Ontario. I'm going to read from a few of them.

My friend Jim Garchinski of the public sector retiree coalition, who's in the chamber today, said, “We're all vehemently opposed to this HST by a government that is about to unilaterally force another massive tax grab on citizens of Ontario.”

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, “The lack of public consultation has, in part, generated mixed reviews about the harmonized tax. A recent CFIB survey of small and medium-sized businesses points to growing concerns about the lack of information and the impact on consumers.”

Peter Coleman of the National Citizens Coalition said, “We believe consumers deserve a voice. There has been zero”—zero—“public consultations, it's time they do. We would support the public consultation process.”

And finally, last week, Christine McMillan, chair of the Councils on Aging Network of Ontario, said, “We

think if they got out of their ivory tower and listened to the people on the street they would have a better understanding of the impact this will have. We would like them to really hear from people.”

So there you have it: a clear invitation from the people of Ontario and the official opposition to get out of their ivory tower and onto Main Street, to listen to the people, listen to the hairdressers, listen to the plumbers, listen to the electricians—but listen to the people who make this province what it is, because they don’t want it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise in support of this motion. This motion is a motion that surely must pass this House.

Some would have you believe that the only function of citizenship of this province and of this country is that a citizen is given power but once every four years and exercises that power by going to vote, and that that is the only and sole responsibility of the citizenry of this province. I reject that notion, and I think the members ought to reject that notion as well.

Not only do we require citizens to exercise their franchise and go out and vote every four years, but we expect a great deal more from them, a great deal more than going out and delivering some pamphlets at election time, making some phone calls, putting up signs or collecting funds to run the election. That is on the periphery.

What we expect most is that those citizens not go into a cocoon after they have voted and exercised their political rights but be participants throughout. They are every bit as much citizens today as they were during the last election in 2007, and they must have every bit as much right to go out there and do what is necessary to channel their elected people, to support them, to tell them what they want, to tell them about how they need to vote, to tell them what their concerns are and to see that expressed in the everyday debate of this House.

Some believe that a citizen’s right only extends to choosing a representative. I reject that. A citizen’s right is to participate in all things political.

Aristotle, in his great works, taught us that Man—he said “Man” in those days, Mr. Speaker. Sorry; I don’t want to change what he said—is a political animal, and that a man—and a woman, too, today—is entitled to be a political animal throughout his life, to live in a political environment, to make political decisions and to participate fully in the political process.

There was another great philosopher—perhaps some of the members opposite have heard of him: Edmund Burke. I often want to go back and look—he wrote a treatise on the electors of Bristol. I haven’t read it in full for a number of years, but I remember studying it in university.

Edmund Burke was a genius of a man who put forward two propositions: the proposition that an elected representative would be elected by the people and then would go off and do whatever he—because in those days it was only men—thought was right for the next four

years, and the electors would judge him at the end of that process.

He also put forward another proposition, with which he was much more comfortable and the one I think that people today are much more comfortable with, and that is that the person who was elected was both a representative and a delegate, because it was his responsibility as an elected representative to listen to the people who sent him there, to listen to what their grievances were, to what their hopes and aspirations were, and to put words to that. It was the responsibility of the delegated representative to vote in as many ways as the people who sent him there wanted him to vote.

That isn’t what I’m seeing here today. I am seeing a fundamentally different attitude from the members in government. They are behaving as if the people who sent them here are somehow irrelevant today.

They were very relevant at the time of the election. They were very relevant when they collected money for you and put up signs for you and made phone calls for you and entreated their neighbours to vote for you. But they somehow seem not too relevant today, do they, member from Brant? Do they seem relevant to you as you shake your head?

I’m saying that they don’t seem so relevant to me when they don’t want to hear of them. They don’t want to hear them, they don’t want them to come down to this Legislature and they don’t want to go to the many locations around the province that are being put forward in this motion. They don’t want to hear what they actually have to say.

There are some members and some people who think that representative democracy isn’t perhaps all it’s cut out to be, but I would suggest that it is the very best of systems, because not only is it the best of systems and it legitimizes what we say and do in this Legislature, but it also legitimizes what ordinary people have to say. It presupposes that the citizens have an unfettered right to have views and to have their views made directly to those who represent them. It’s important for me to know not only what the citizens of Beaches–East York who sent me to this place think, but what every citizen of the province thinks—citizens in Brantford, what they think; citizens in Pickering, what they think; citizens in Ottawa, what they think; citizens in North Bay, what they think. I need to know what the people of this province are saying—ordinary people, respected people, people who have a view, people who know of what they speak and who know what the impact is going to be upon them of any legislation, but particularly of this one.

**1400**

It presupposes that everyone and every view must be carefully weighed. I believe that the views of every individual are important. Every single individual has something to contribute to the political debate. I believe that a farmer has as much to tell me about this bill or any other bill as a lawyer does. I believe that a factory worker has as much to tell me about this bill or any bill as a doctor does. I believe that a small business has every bit

as much to tell me about this bill or any bill as a paid consultant who advises this government does. I believe that retired police officers, many of whom are present here today, have every bit as much to say about this bill and to have me listen to what they have to say as an economist, especially a paid economist who's now advising this government. All of them have something to contribute, and we owe it to them to allow them to speak out and make that contribution.

What is being suggested, in my view, is a complete reversal of representative democracy. In fact, what is being suggested here by members of the government, particularly the finance minister and the Premier, amounts to nothing more than a plutocracy. What they are trying to say and what they say here every day is that they are listening to experts. They quote Mr. Mintz ad infinitum, a person who, a few months ago, they were dissing for his beliefs. They quote people who they never thought they had any use for before because those economists were not in agreement with them. They quote them as if they are somehow experts beyond reproach whom ordinary people cannot understand and whom ordinary people cannot comment upon.

I have some huge problems with this. I have some huge problems probably with almost all economists, particularly ones in western society, only one of which—and I can't even remember his name—even forecasted that we were going to go into such a deep recession. They were all saying things were going to be fine. It is not for no reason that economics is called the dismal science, because in fact it is very dismal. It is very dismal because the prognostications very seldom come true and those who are making those hold themselves out to be experts and often see their expertise is wanting. It is these experts whom this government is relying on. In my view, the only true and real expertise that exists is the collective wisdom of the people of this province. Every four years we trust them to make a collective wisdom on who they send to this place, but quite frankly I don't see the members opposite asking for the collective wisdom when they need it most, and that is in the making of particularly contentious policies like the one here today. The Premier likes to quote those—but doesn't want to go directly to ordinary people, doesn't want to talk about what ordinary people have to say and their expertise. He invites ordinary people to go to other fora. He tells them, "It's okay. You can't speak to the Legislature—we don't want to have committee hearings—but use other fora that are available to you. Write a letter to the editor." Well, we all know ordinary people, when they write a letter to the editor, are very, very lucky to ever see that letter published. We all know that you could write hundreds and hundreds of letters and probably never see one of your letters published, especially in the big dailies in Toronto. But, increasingly so, in smaller town Ontario, where there are so many people wanting to write about this, the letters cannot all be published. So you can write a letter, but nothing happens to it. Nobody ever sees it except the editorial branch, who scan it over and say,

"It's not worth it," and put it in the little round bin. So there's what ordinary people can do and what the Premier suggests they can do.

He suggests they call in to radio talk shows, as if some radio talk show host is going to make a decision. I know some of them are pretty good at stirring the pot. I have a colleague here who likes to stir the pot from time to time, even likes to stir the pot with me in the middle of it, which he did on the weekend.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yeah. But that is not a person who makes a decision. That's a person who stirs the pot. Sure, you can pick up the phone, phone a radio talk show host and rant and rave, but nothing comes of it, except perhaps that you might influence some other people who like to listen to that kind of program. That's all that happens to it. The Premier suggests this is a good thing.

The Premier suggests other things, like going to Liberal-sponsored meetings: Invite all your Liberal friends into a meeting and bore them for an hour and a half on how good the HST is, because it takes an hour and a half to get down to why it's good, and even then I don't think it can be done. But it's not a simple exercise. It's not a simple exercise for them. It's pretty simple for me to tell somebody, when you're going to buy your next litre of gas, that instead of costing you 95 cents, it's going to cost \$1.03. Everybody understands that in one second. They know what HST is all about. But no: Over there, they say you have to look at the whole package. You have to look at 100 amendments and how all these little things fit together. I would think that anybody who didn't have insomnia at the end of that Liberal meeting would be an insomniac for life, because there would be no hope and no cure for them. They should be long asleep.

He also suggests that attending these hand-picked Liberal meetings is the way to get your message out, but I reject that because it is not just the hand-picked Liberal meetings and it's not just people coming to see their own MPP that is important here. It is the process of what goes on in this Legislature, and it is indeed the process of what goes on in committee and the final vote: that everyone is participating in it, that all the best views are known, that ordinary people have spoken, we have listened, and we have taken the right course of action.

I have listened in vain, in absolute vain, in shock and some dismay over these past few weeks for a rationale coming out of the government as to why ordinary people cannot be heard. I have listened and listened about why ordinary people cannot be heard, and I have not heard a single reason. All that is said and is ever spoken about is to quote from whichever deemed expert is in vogue that day: whatever Jack Mintz said, whatever came out on the weekend from a "respected economist" who wasn't respected by the government at all before the report was written, whatever chamber of commerce has added its name to saying this is going to help a particular business or two. Nothing is heard at all about small business people. Nothing is heard at all from consumers or the

retired. Nothing is heard at all of the people who send us here. Nothing. Nothing is quoted.

When members of the opposition stand up, when the Conservatives and the New Democrats stand up and read ordinary letters and ordinary people's views into the record, they are dismissed. They are dismissed as cavalierly and with such ease as one would be shocked at. If one follows the political process, one can only be shocked at how those opinions are dismissed right out of hand as being irrelevant.

**1410**

This is a large province. Anyone who has had the opportunity to travel from one end of this province to the other will know how large it is.

I had the opportunity, albeit not successfully, to run for leader of my party. I travelled by car some 20,000 kilometres. I burnt out a transmission; it cost me a lot of money; but I met some wonderful people. I met them from Cornwall in the east down to Amherstburg, south of Windsor. Some Ontarians are surprised that there's anything south of Windsor, but there is, Mr. Speaker, as you know. I've met them in far northern Ontario. I've met them throughout the length and breadth of that middle portion.

They're wonderful people. They all have different tales to tell. They all have something important to say. They all need to be heard. What is relevant to me, as a member from the Toronto area, and what is relevant to my constituents is not exactly on point to what is relevant to a farmer in Leamington, a steelworker in Hamilton, a farmer in New Liskeard, a forester or logger in northern Ontario or a miner in Sudbury or Timmins. They have different views; they have different needs. We need to hear all of them, every single one of them. We need to have input that reflects truly what they have to say to us.

It is not good enough, and will never be good enough, for this Legislature to say, "It's too cumbersome. It takes too long. Don't want to hear. I have an expert already." That is not what we are here for.

If you want a government to be run by experts, let the experts run it. Plato suggested the same thing 3,000 years ago: Just let the experts run it; don't let ordinary people do it at all. That has been rejected for all of that period of time, right through parliamentary democracy, and surely must be rejected today. It ought not to be what the Premier says when he answers the questions: that somehow a plutocracy of some economist or other who is now in vogue is the answer to all of it.

Things are going to go up. People know they're going to go up. People are afraid, depending on their circumstances. If you are contemplating buying a house in the Toronto area, you can probably contemplate paying more than \$400,000 for it. Therefore, you can contemplate having to pay HST on that balance above \$400,000.

If you are a condo owner, you can contemplate your condo fees going up \$27 to \$32 a month. Every economist, every condominium corporation, every condominium manager is telling us that that's what is going to happen.

If you are a renter, all the rental agencies and the FRPO, who are the apartment owners, the tenants' associations, have come to the conclusion that rents will average going up about \$300 a year, or about \$25 a month for the average renter in Ontario as a result of the HST, because of those things that have to be paid for, the additional costs, whether those costs be gasoline, whether they be electricity, whether they be the guy who comes to plant the flowers in the spring or the auditor who audits the building. All of that will, in the end, be reflected in the rent.

Ordinary people who drive and are forced to drive to work—as most Ontarians are, because the distances are vast—are going to see the gasoline go up that they buy for their car each day.

Even if you're lucky enough to live in a city like Toronto or London—and I know they're having a transit strike, so don't jump all over that—or Hamilton, or places that have transportation—Ottawa—then you know that those costs of getting on that transit system are going to go up. We have seen in the last few days what is happening here in Toronto, with the cost of the tokens going up.

You know, and ordinary people know, what is going to be happening as a result of the HST. We need to hear them, from the full length and breadth, and how it's going to affect them, so that this government in its wisdom can listen and potentially make changes, if not from the opposition, then at least from the people requesting it.

There's one thing I want to close with: This debate is not over. If this government will not hear the people, the people will pass judgment. It won't be now, but it will be in 2011. They will pass judgment and they will remember that when the crunch came and they wanted to be heard, they were not listened to.

If I was a Liberal, if I was a person going door-to-door in the next election, I would be a little reluctant to say, "Give me your vote. Vote for me and I'll listen to you." If that's what you're going to say, I think you're going to have a few doors slammed in your face. "Vote for me and I'll listen to you"; I'm saying that you have to prove today that you're willing to listen, not just at election time but every day.

I have some great hope—and the Premier wouldn't answer this today—because not only does this House have to pass this bill, but the federal House has to pass it too. This is going to be a very, very tough sale in Ottawa. I just wonder whether the government opposite, if they won't listen to the people and they want to ram this through, has a contingency plan. If the Parliament in Ottawa falls as a result of this bill—because I'll tell you, at this particular stage there is only one party that could possibly come to the rescue of the Harper government—and if Mr. Ignatieff continues not to grow a spine and continues to do what he has always done and waffle on issues, then I guess the government could survive. But if he is listening to the people of this province, as surely he must be trying to, then there is not a chance here that this can pass.



I do know that Jack Layton, and I've talked to him about this, and the NDP are opposed to this bill not only here in Ontario but across the country. I do know that in the couple of by-elections that just went by a few weeks ago the NDP actively campaigned, particularly in British Columbia, where there was a by-election taking place, to do away with the HST. It was absolutely successful, and the riding—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Okay. But I also have to say that I expect the Bloc Québécois—and I'm no great supporter of them and their separatist causes—are going to have a real problem supporting this as well because Quebec signed on and didn't get 4.3 billion reasons to do so, and now they are looking for that money. They are looking and saying, "Hey, I think maybe Quebec got ripped off." And what is Mr. Harper going to do in Ottawa? What's he going to do? I don't think he's going to be able to play that game either.

I have to say, I listened to the Minister of Finance when he said that the Conservative government was like rats leaving the ship, because they're backing off on this already. Do they want to put their government at risk? Do they want to see their government fall? Do they want to see all the things that ensue from that and the loss of seats in Ontario and in BC? Do they want to see that? I don't know. I think they're having much colder feet than the members opposite. I think they're more than willing to listen to what the people of this country have to say on this issue and are having some very real second thoughts.

I would ask the members opposite, if you've listened to anything here today, let the people speak. Let them say what they need to say. Let them be heard, not just the people who are in this House but literally everyone across this province who wants to make a deputation. What is at risk? Three weeks? That's what's being contemplated here; 10 cities. I know it's going to be the finance committee that ends up going. I know that I'm going to have to do it, but I am more than willing to listen to those people. I know that my good colleague from Ajax–Pickering, the parliamentary assistant, is more than happy to go and travel the province and listen to this as well, and I do know that other people and other members of this House are interested in hearing what they have to say.

Please let the committee do its work, please let the people of Ontario have their say, and above all else, as legislators, please listen to the people of this province when they speak. The collective wisdom will help to set us in the right direction better than 50 or 100 paid consultants.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I am making an assumption from that that our friends on the government side aren't interested in speaking to this motion, which is rather interesting, because in my two years and change in this Legislature I don't think I've seen a motion as benign as this. This motion simply calls for something that's

routinely done at every level, at every ministry, on most bills that are of any kind of controversy at all. My colleague from Nepean–Carleton is simply saying that she would like to see public hearings taken on the road around the province so that people could express their views on what is obviously a very controversial move and a very controversial tax.

**1420**

Let's get something on the record and very clearly made on my part—I'm not going to do outrage today; I'm simply going to talk about the fact that we're discussing a tax. Taxes are an essential part of the system. They make our system work. The whole thing here is about what is being taxed and when we're going to tax and how we implement a tax, and those things have everything to do with good government. So are we looking at good government? In this case, absolutely we are not. Taxes are not the issue; the will of the people is.

I say to you, Speaker, that during the election of 2007, there was never a discussion of a tax increase. In fact, if we go back to the very beginning of the McGuinty mandate, prior to 2003, there was a clear-cut promise that there would be no raises in taxes, much less any discussion of a tax that affects every man, woman and child in every endeavour of trade that can touch people in a jurisdiction. There was no mandate on the part of this government to implement the HST, and the HST is possibly the most controversial policy the McGuinty government has ever tried to implement. The HST indeed will affect every single Ontarian, every single person who lives in this province, right down to that seven-year-old who will be denied—who knows?—a vacation because mom and dad have to work that much harder to get 8% in the bank that's going to cover a range of services that are not covered today.

It is neither democratic nor accountable on the part of this government to implement this policy without adequate public consultations, and for any member of this government, from the Premier right on down, to suggest that riding association meetings or addresses by the Minister of Revenue to whatever chamber of commerce or board of trade here, there and not everywhere, unfortunately, represent adequate public consultations, is downright insulting.

I want to talk about a couple of things that happened to me over the weekend by way of ad hoc meetings, just to give some idea of how far-ranging this is. I spent the weekend up in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, not by any stretch a riding where I am well-known, but people know enough to have approached me and to have said, "Our member isn't going to take any petition to the government. Our member is not going to represent us on this, so please do what you have to do." I was congratulated for being thrown out of this House last week as a tactic to suggest to the government that I'm protesting, that I am against this tax. I wasn't proud of that particular action, yet I was being congratulated for it.

I can tell you that on Friday, my wife came home from the hairdresser with petitions that were signed in

Eglinton–Lawrence, where that establishment is located. Same thing: “The member from Eglinton–Lawrence isn’t going to accept our petitions, isn’t going to read our petitions into the record.” I suggest that those members who I’ve mentioned, and every other member who sits in the backbench of the Liberal caucus, the Liberal government, have the same 1,500 or so communications sitting in their office e-mail queue that I have. Those communications don’t come to me because I’m a Progressive Conservative; they come to me because I’m a member of provincial Parliament and they come to every member here. Some of you should get the intestinal fortitude to stand up and say to your government, “I have to represent my constituents. I have to read these petitions into the record, and I have to protest.” I hope that’s going on inside your caucus, because that’s the expectation of a majority of people in Ontario, and you know it.

In my own riding of Thornhill, we went to the people. We put full-page ads in papers. We said, “Come to a public meeting. Express your interest, your concern about the harmonized sales tax.” When we did that, because it’s an open town hall meeting, we knew full well that we could wind up with a hall full of people of varied views. I absolutely expected—and the member from Nepean–Carleton came with me to my own riding. We absolutely expected to have to defend our party’s position and to have to listen to people putting forward their support for this measure. We got nary a one. We didn’t get one. We had a couple of hundred people in a hall, and I can tell you that to a man, to a woman, they were all against the imposition of this tax at this time. I expect that similar opposition would be found in ridings across this province that are not being well-represented in this House by those members—and you know who you are.

Where are those members of provincial Parliament who represent those ridings? Are you muzzled? I suggest that you are, and I challenge the Liberal MPPs to either state clearly and publicly that they support the HST, that they want to implement it, or that they join our fight against this misguided policy. At least support the notion and the motion that’s being discussed this afternoon, of taking this on the road, of going to Brant, for example, and holding public hearings and finding out whether the people of that member’s riding are with him or with us. Or maybe they’re just people of Ontario who say, “Not this tax at this time.” I suggest that’s the way it is. You either represent the people of your riding or you represent Dalton McGuinty, who was not elected with this mandate.

The McGuinty government has a track record of broken promises. They’re continuing the streak with the HST policy. The accountability in the government—and it’s fairly obvious—has been shown through the things we’ve looked at through the summer of scandal. OLG and the Windsor Energy Centre are examples.

This government promised to manage prudently, yet this month Ontario marked the first anniversary of becoming a have-not province. The Dalton McGuinty government promised that it would not raise taxes, yet

within months of taking office they hit taxpayers with the largest tax hike in history, the health tax, and now they are blatantly breaking that promise again.

I stand in this Legislature today to say that I, as a member of this Legislature, cannot represent my constituents adequately in expressing my concern strongly enough, and I would call again on members from the other side to do the same.

It is no longer enough for this government to just tax health; they are now trying to tax every single aspect of a family’s life, from the Internet to the phone to fuel to sports, right to the coffin that we’re buried in, without holding a single consultation.

This is not a coincidence. One day earlier this year, they woke up and realized that our warnings of a slowing economy, of too much spending, of not preparing Ontario for the tough times, had actually materialized. We were right; not happily so. While they were spending like it was 1999, to coin a phrase, Ontario was losing its manufacturing base and Ontarians were losing their jobs. And the sad part of this is that that’s not coming back very soon. It’s pretty well gone. I turn toward India and China and Brazil; that’s where those jobs have gone. When the Minister of Finance finally looked at the books, he discovered that his government had created the largest deficit our province had ever seen. A year ago, in this very Legislature, we were hearing about a five-point plan that would save us; we were hearing about this horrific \$5-billion deficit that we left them—and look at what we have to contend with now.

The only way to get out of the deficit that Dalton McGuinty could come up with was to shove it on to the shoulders of every single person in Ontario, from students to families with children, to seniors, to children who have not even been born yet. So the HST was born in Ontario, and it isn’t a very well-planned child. It’s the orphan child of Premier McGuinty; unplanned, unparented.

The series of exemptions already introduced by Dalton McGuinty are proof of two things: first, that the Dalton McGuinty government did not think the HST through, and second, that the Dalton McGuinty government bows to well-funded, persistent lobbies.

But the decision to not hold consultations on the HST across the province was thought through. It was a strategic decision. Dalton McGuinty wants to make sure that he is not in the uncomfortable position of having to explain his \$3-billion tax grab to Ontarians.

That is why I support this motion and call on all members of this House to do the same.

**1430**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of this House for a long period of time and have watched many bills pass through this Legislature. Rarely has an event taken place, if at all, with regard to a major piece of legislation dealing with a major, major increase in taxation and a shift in taxation—as we’re witnessing in this Legislature under Bill 218.

As a former government House leader for three years and having been involved with the procedural affairs committee, as it was then—it's now the Legislative Assembly committee—I have often said that government doesn't do themselves any favours by trying to be devious with regard to bringing forward a piece of legislation and hoping that the public will not come to their senses, that it will be over with before they wake up and therefore this is the best route that we should follow.

I want to bring up a few points that haven't been raised in the debate with regard to this particular need for public consultations. First of all, all of the debate has surrounded the HST, which of course is the most important part of the legislation in Bill 218. The government wants to do the public hearings—four hours, I believe—all in the city of Toronto and not allow anybody else from across Ontario. Eastern Ontario, the area which I represent, will have no say with regard to their views about this particular new increase in taxation.

I was looking through Bill 218, and actually there are over 21 different pieces of legislation affected by Bill 218. There's the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act; there's the Architects Act; there's the Commodity Futures Act; there's the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act; there's the Condominium Act; there's the Co-operative Corporations Act; there's the Corporations Tax Act; there's the Education Act; there's the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act; there's the Financial Administration Act—and it goes on and it goes on and it goes on. One has to wonder, if somebody doesn't want to speak about the HST but wants to speak about one of the other 20 pieces of legislation that are altered in this act, how on earth are they going to get an opportunity to bring to the Legislature their view with regard to any of those other pieces of legislation? This is not only a huge bill with regard to taxation, but it's a huge bill with regard to a bunch of other pieces of legislation. The call for public hearings is buttressed or strengthened by the fact that this is an omnibus bill affecting many people. The engineers are involved in here; the architects are involved in here etc. etc. As well, there are some other significant parts to this act.

This government is doing two things in this act, outside of the HST, that are important. One is giving the authorization to the crown to borrow \$15.1 billion more than they ever have in the past. I believe that this should evoke a debate, not only in this Legislature but outside this Legislature, in public hearings, about the debt that this government has piled up for the public during their term since 2003. When the McGuinty government came to power in 2003, the debt of this province was \$130 billion. When they leave in 2011, which I predict will probably happen, that debt is probably going to be increased by about \$100 billion. They're going to take the debt from \$130 billion to \$230 billion. What that does is put on our kids, our grandkids and future generations of the province of Ontario the job of carrying and paying off that debt as we go forward.

One hundred billion dollars worth of new debt means that instead of carrying our debt for somewhere around \$10 billion a year, it's probably going to cost us closer to \$17 billion or \$18 billion a year to carry as we go into the future. That means they have taken about \$8 billion a year out of the spending power of governments going forward. That means \$8 billion a year less for health care, \$8 billion a year less for education resources, \$8 billion a year less for services that the provincial government, the next government and governments thereafter will be hamstrung in terms of providing adequate services for the citizens of Ontario.

I believe that part of legislation should have a great deal of focus. I think we should have economists coming in and talking about the amount of debt we can sustain in our province going forward. But we'll need extensive public hearings not only to deal with the HST but with the debt issue.

As well, there's another important part of this legislation, and that deals with the fact that in November the government is effectively seeking supply for the first part of next year. They're giving themselves the first tranche of money they need to spend from April 1 on to be able to write cheques. Well, in days past, government usually did this about two weeks before the time span when they needed to have the money and authorization to write cheques to pay public servants and pay the bills they had.

So I am very much concerned at the fact that in this act we are now not only doing the HST and not only giving authorization to borrow more, but we're also setting ourselves up in the future, without having to come to Parliament when the time is really more appropriate, when we're closer to the time when that money is going to be spent.

I don't believe we have a quorum, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is there a quorum?

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Mr. Speaker, it's hard to count and speak at the same time. I just wanted to be sure that enough members of the government were here to heed these wise words. When you have a caucus of 72, I guess you should be able to have a dozen in here anyway.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Yes, I did.

So I wanted to make that point with regard to Bill 218. In summary, not only do we have the concern about the HST, but we have concerns about other parts of legislation in the omnibus bill that Bill 218 is.

As well, I wanted to briefly talk about some of the income tax changes in this piece of legislation. While the government is saying they are going to lower the rate of taxation on the first \$37,000 of income, they also have slipped something else into the act that they didn't really talk about before. In Ontario, there is a surtax of 20% on individuals who are now paying in excess of \$4,257 in

tax. What they've done is, in order to not give those people a break because of the other tax change, they've lowered that threshold to about \$4,000. What they're doing is, on the one hand they're giving and on the other hand they taketh away with regard to the individuals who are paying this degree of spending. I don't think many people recognize that.

**1440**

Lastly, I just want to make one comment with regard to the agreement with Canada with regard to this HST, and that is, it's clear in the agreement that Ontario only has to have Bill 218 passed by March 31 of 2010. We are returning here in mid-February for three or four weeks. The government can easily pass the legislation at that time. So the whole notion that we have to have this legislation passed by the end of this session, or by Christmastime, when we rise before our February session, is bogus. All we have to do is pass this legislation by March 31, 2010. That would leave not only the time between now and Christmas for public hearings, but we could have public hearings all through January and the first part of February as well, and let all the people of Ontario have the opportunity to speak their minds with regard to not only the HST but the other matters contained in Bill 218.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Last week the McGuinty Liberals introduced Bill 218 to push forward on implementing their HST. The McGuinty Liberals are planning on pushing this bill through before the House rises, with minimal debate and without the opportunity for province-wide public consultations. This is appalling. The HST is the largest tax grab in Ontario history, and this government is trying to eliminate our democratic process which gives the public the right to express their concerns and opinions. That in itself speaks volumes.

This is a government that likes to boast about transparency, yet here they are, trying to rush a bill through with as little input and information as possible from the people who elected them.

The hard-working people of this province will suffer the consequences once this tax is implemented, come July 1, 2010. It will be Ontarians who have to figure out how to pay the bills in these already difficult times.

Although the McGuinty Liberals say that Ontarians can voice their opinions, by that time—the next election—it will be too late. By the time the next election rolls around, we will be legally locked into paying the HST for five years.

Ontarians are very concerned about the impact of the HST because it will have very drastic effects on their daily household finances. Let me give you some examples. Come July 1, if the Premier has his way and rams this piece of legislation through, the average family of four can expect to pay approximately \$2,500 more a year.

The price increase on gas alone shows the financial burden of the HST on Ontarians. For example, if gas is priced at \$1, a Toyota Camry Solara would cost about

\$70 a week to fill up. That's just over \$3,600 a year. With an additional 8% due to HST, we're looking at an increase of almost \$300 just for one vehicle. I think we can say that most families have more than one vehicle, so it could be \$600 or even \$900 more a year.

What about home Internet? Say the average Ontario family pays \$60 a month. That's about \$720 a year. With HST, add another \$10 for related taxes and fees, and this brings the overall cost to \$840. That's almost \$70 more a year for home Internet.

Mutual funds: There's another service that will be affected. Let's say an average family of four has worked hard, saved hard over the years and made their sacrifices. Unlike the McGuinty Liberals, this family has been fiscally responsible. They were smart with their finances in the good years and planned for the bad years, unlike this government, who left the cupboards bare and dry and threw Ontario into the largest deficit in our history. This family has \$100,000 in savings invested in mutual funds. According to a September 30 *Globe and Mail* article, the HST will cost Ontarians \$325 annually of their hard-earned and well-saved money.

What about haircuts? Yes, that too will be hit with HST. Let's say the average family spends \$850 a year on haircuts. Add an additional 8%: That's \$68 more. The list goes on and on, and suddenly the average family is looking at about \$2,500 less in their pockets every year.

I will add to this that the McGuinty Liberals have tried to sell this \$3-billion tax grab by telling Ontarians they will qualify for a rebate. Okay. This family of four will be eligible for \$1,000 of a one-time rebate; singles can qualify for \$300. That would leave a family on the hook for well over \$1,000. Neither this little bribe nor any other trick will help the McGuinty Liberals sell this tax grab. Ontarians know full well that the rebate is a one-time deal and doesn't cover the increased costs.

Another trick that the McGuinty Liberals have brought forward in order to try to sell this is to exempt fast food under \$4 and newspaper subscriptions. They made that announcement two weeks ago. Well, I must say that I have some concern with this announcement since the McGuinty Liberals seem to be prioritizing exempting fast food and not things like gym memberships, golf fees or recreation fees for ice time, local arenas and soccer fields. This is of great concern because this government also has a mandate for health promotion, and if they are more focused on exempting fast food from the HST than healthy lifestyle costs, what message are we to get from this? This doesn't make any sense.

There will be no chance for Ontarians to express their concerns about this exemption or the proposed other exemptions because there are no province-wide public consultations.

I want to take a bit of time to talk about the effect this will have on municipalities. In estimates committee we questioned Minister Watson for almost 15 hours, and I asked the minister several questions on the HST. This is the minister who represents the interests of municipalities, yet he felt that he was not obligated to discuss the HST because, of course, it falls under the finance

ministry. My question was, why are municipalities only being rebated 78% on the HST when the federal government rebates 100% on their GST? I asked the minister how they came to this figure. He did not know, but he said that he was confident that it would “keep the sector whole.” Well, the sector doesn’t believe that. They are facing budget shortfalls and they will have to raise taxes, property taxes, in order to cover the HST.

We have a problem. The McGuinty Liberals are trying to push the bill through. Simply put, it is the wrong time for this tax, and no matter what the Premier and his HST minister say and what they try to spin, this isn’t going to work. The McGuinty Liberals have to move immediately to delay passing of the bill until they have engaged in a full, province-wide public consultation. That is how democracy works.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It’s rather interesting that the government decides not to dirty their hands in this debate—my God. “Why participate in the democratic process?” I’d ask myself if I were a government member. “It’s just the pesky opposition trying to raise a point in regard to this particular HST legislation.” Why deign to participate in this debate, or in any debate, with us, the loyal opposition in the third party? Why would the government want to do that? I think it’s complete arrogance that the government will not engage in debate about this particular opposition day motion. I think it speaks volumes about where this government is coming from.

1450

Listen, there is nothing more basic. If you take the time to read Montpetit or Beauchesne’s or Erskine May, one of the things that is really clear as you go through the precedents is that public hearings were really designed as an opportunity for the public to have its say when it came to how taxes would be imposed on the citizen. It says within there—and I’m not going to read it verbatim, but what it says in Montpetit and in Beauchesne’s is that the government is expected to give a certain latitude and importance to committee hearings when it comes to the issue of taxation. What could be more basic than a complete shift in taxation in the province of Ontario when it comes to consumption taxes? For years, Ontario has operated under the system of the Ontario provincial sales tax. We have levied our own provincial sales tax on consumables in this province—not services, but consumables—and we have seen fit to exempt certain products and certain individuals from having to pay that tax because we thought, by way of good government and taxation policy, that was necessary.

For example, where I come from, there’s something called the point-of-sale exemption, which says to First Nations that if you come in and buy some sort of goods from a store, you have a point-of-sale exemption by showing your status card and you don’t have to pay the PST. Why? Because that was one of the obligations under treaty when we signed Treaty 9 and others: that in

exchange for us, the Europeans, getting control of the land, the First Nations would not have to pay our tax. That was one of the bases by which First Nations allowed us, the settlers, to use the lands that are now called Ontario and the rest of Canada.

This government flies in the face of that, and I’m laughing because I find it extremely laughable that the government would say, “Well, you know, to heck with the history of Canada. To heck with the history of Ontario. To heck with the agreements that we made with First Nations. We will not deal with the point-of-sale exemption. We’ll give that responsibility to the federal government,” knowing full well that the GST doesn’t have a point-of-sale exemption.

When you take a look at other people who are going to have to pay this tax—go talk to your local realtors and find out how enamoured they are with this tax. If you go out to buy a house after this, you’re going to have to pay taxes for things that you never thought you would have to pay taxes for. Your lawyer’s bill: The lawyer now charges you a percentage, a very small percentage, to process your mortgage. That is going to be taxable now because the GST applies to those services, but the PST doesn’t. For a whole raft of other services when it comes to the transfer of the home, you’re going to have to pay PST where you never had to before. So the government is giving the federal government the taxation policies that used to rest here in the province of Ontario.

What is really galling is that they won’t even participate in the debate. The government’s going to say, “Oh, we’ll have lots of time for debate. As a matter of fact, right after opposition day, we’re going to get into a discussion in regards to the bill itself by entering into second reading. But, oh, we’re not going to dirty our hands and fingers by being involved in a pesky opposition day. After all, we are a government. We have the right and the ability to pass anything we want, and we don’t have to listen to that pesky opposition. My God, get them out of the way.”

There’s a thing called democracy. In a parliamentary system, it says that yes, the government at the end is going to get its bill, but the opposition has an opportunity to scrutinize, and more importantly, the public has an opportunity to scrutinize through us. That’s why we’re calling on the government to have some public hearings. But never mind agreeing to the public hearings; they won’t even agree to debate us. I think it’s galling. Their strategy is not to speak for 40 minutes so that they can kill 40 minutes during opposition day, so they can add 40 minutes to their debate on the actual bill. And to do what? So they can run six and a half hours to give us time allocation.

We know what their strategy is. It’s so simple. But my God, is it hard? Is it hard to do those types of things? Is the government House leader showing us great strategy? I’m sure that Monique Smith, my good friend, is going to the government caucus meetings and saying, “Oh, I’m so smart. I figured out how we can get all our bills by the end of the session,” and she laid out a strategy of making sure that we talk things out for six and a half hours. Then

she brings in her time allocation motion and basically shuts it down by time allocation. Well, she ain't too bright; it's in the standing orders. The standing orders in this place have been changed to the point that the opposition barely has an opportunity to hold the government to scrutiny.

What is really galling is what you're doing to the public of Ontario. You won't even participate in this debate, and then you won't allow public hearings to happen on a bill that you say you're so proud of. I say to you, if you're proud of the bill and you think it's such a winner out there, why are you afraid to go out to public hearings? Why don't you allow the bill to go to a few communities across Ontario and hear what the people have to say? There are going to be some, yes, who are going to be opposed, but you might even get some who are in favour, because I'm sure the Liberals can scare up some family relatives somewhere in a riding to come and—when I was in government, it was always good to get my dad out. My dad would always say good things about me, as would my cousins and my aunts and my uncles. You know, that theory has been done before; that practice has been done before. I'm sure you can find somebody. But the really galling part—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, maybe not your cousins.

But the point that the government is not prepared for the public to have its say about this bill, I think, speaks volumes. I say again, I listened to the Minister of Finance and I listened to the Minister of Revenue and others stand in this place and say, "Oh, this is the best thing since sliced bread; this is going to make the Ontario economy boom. This is wonderful. This is great. This is sliced cheese." They bring out these quotes from different people who say, "Oh, the best thing in the world that ever happened, the best thing in the universe to ever happen, has been done by this Liberal government when it comes to this particular measure."

Well, if you're so proud, let the public have its say. You know, there is a little thing called democracy in this country. We're sending our soldiers to Afghanistan, some 3,000-plus, and we're asking our soldiers from across this country to go into a country like Afghanistan so that the citizens of Afghanistan can have an ability to participate in a thing called democracy. Well, if we don't practise democracy on this side, what does it say to the people who are on the other side looking at Canadian soldiers and others who are supposedly there to defend democracy? I'm sure they're not tuned in to the legislative channel, but my point is, it is hypocritical for us to say as legislators that we believe in democracy when we are not prepared to basically follow those principles of democracy and allow the public to have its say.

So I say to the government across the way, it's a pretty sad day that, first, you will not participate in debate at an opposition day because you figure you can get an extra 40 minutes on your bill; then, secondly, you will not allow for people to go to committee—and I'm not talking about just here in Toronto, but allowing places such as

Windsor, London, Sudbury or Timmins or wherever it might be to have their say when it comes to being able to talk on this particular initiative.

So we say to the government, we see what you are up to, and you might think you're clever, but I don't think it's very smart. I think in the end the public is infinitely more wise than we give them credit for sometimes in this place. I think the public gets it. They understand. At the end of the day, the government is utilizing its majority to railroad through this House a bill that a lot of Ontarians are not happy with. In fact, the polling numbers indicate that a majority of Ontarians are not in favour of this particular proposition. So I say to the government across the way, if you think it's all that great, then you should have the courage to send it into committee.

I say to you, we know what you are up to. Again, on this opposition day, you are deciding not to speak. You're doing so because you believe in the end that if you don't speak for the 40 minutes you have today, you'll get more time on your bill. My response to you is simply this—I have a response, Mr. Speaker, and my response is, I move adjournment of this debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bisson 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 1458 to 1528.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bisson has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 41; the nays are 18.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 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 17, 2009, on the 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.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I was just looking through the standing orders and am looking for clarification of standing order 43(c), I believe, with respect to opposition day and the fact that on a Monday it is limited to two hours and, as 43(c) reads, the Speaker will put the question without further debate and a recorded vote is requested. Can you clarify why we're not having a vote on that motion?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It's very simple: The debate was adjourned.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The debate was adjourned. There's nothing more to decide.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further explanation: The debate was not completed, as you are quoting in the standing orders, so it was adjourned. We didn't reach the point of the debate being completed, it is the way I would explain it.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 19—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 19, 2009, I am now required to put the question: On October 20, Mr. McMeekin moved 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.

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 ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1532 to 1537.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Members take their seats, please.

Mr. McMeekin has moved second reading of Bill 187. All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Hardeman, Ernie

Hillier, Randy  
Jones, Sylvia  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Runciman, Robert W.  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 43; the nays are 16.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 19, 2009, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 21(c), I've provided you with written notice of a point of privilege I wish to raise in the House this afternoon outlining how Bill 218, which will apply sales taxes to a range of goods and services—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat, please. The member filed notice of this point of privilege at 3:12; the first opportunity at which she may raise it is 4:15.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, then, Mr. Speaker: On, December 2, 2008, the member from Oxford submitted the following order paper question: "Would the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please provide the amount of the average payment per farm under the Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture program and provide the dollar figures for the top 10% of cheques issued and the bottom 10% of cheques issued."

Standing order 99(d) reads as follows: "The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sessional days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time consuming or that he or she declines to answer, in which case a notation shall be made on the Orders and Notices paper following"—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat. According to the records of the table, Mr. Hardeman does not have an outstanding question on the order paper.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe I do have a valid point of order. On April 8, 2008, more than 18 months ago, the current leader of the official opposition, the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, as he was then, submitted the following order paper question with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: "Provide a list of all successful applicants to the advanced manufacturing investment strategy program for all fiscal years this program has existed and

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bisson, Gilles  
Brown, Michael A.  
Chan, Michael  
Colle, Mike  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter

Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Paul  
Mitchell, Carol

Moridi, Reza  
Oraziotti, David  
Phillips, Gerry  
Prue, Michael  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Zimmer, David

include: the name of the business; its location; a brief description of the project; the value of the loan; terms of loan repayment including the interest rate, annual repayments and the length of repayment; and how many jobs the project will create or save.” As you know—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, please take your seat. According to the records we have, Mr. Hudak does not have an outstanding question on the order paper.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On April 17, 2008—that’s more than 18 months ago—the current leader of the official opposition, the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, as he was then, submitted the following order paper question: “Would the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal provide a list of all advertising and other promotional materials of the LCBO”—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat. Apparently, according to the records, the member, Mr. Hudak, has questions on an interim basis, and therefore you don’t have a point of order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On September 28, 2009, the member for Simcoe–Grey submitted the following order paper question: “Would the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care provide the number of physicians in short supply in the following municipalities: New Tecumseth, Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa, Clearview, Springwater, Wasaga Beach, Collingwood and The Town of The Blue Mountains.”

Standing order 99(d) reads as follows: “The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sessional days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time consuming or that he or she declines to answer, in which case a notation shall be made on the Orders and Notices paper following the question indicating that the minister has made an interim answer, the approximate date that the information will be available, or that the minister has declined to answer, as the case may be.” Today is the 24th sessional day, and the standing order is quite clear that the response must be provided within 24 sessional days. I know that they have changed ministers several times—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat, please. You do have a valid point of order. I am going to encourage the government and the ministers to answer as quickly as possible.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In response to the point of order that was raised by my colleague and that I’m sure will be raised by my next colleague, we will undertake to provide answers to the questions that have been tabled in a timely manner. You will note that most of them have been responded to. I believe there are only four or five that are outstanding at this point.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: According to standing order 99(d), on June 2, 2009, the member for Simcoe North submitted the following order paper question:

“Would the Attorney General advise as to the amount received in the victim justice fund each year from 2004

to 2008 and provide the list of grant recipients from the victim justice fund for each of the said years, including”—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat, please. According to the records, the only question outstanding was the one that I ruled on just previously. There are no other questions outstanding on the order paper.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise today on a point of order with regard to a committee and this House’s ability to call witnesses.

Recently, during a public accounts review of the auditor’s special report on the electronic health records initiative, there were some questions raised about the committee’s authority to call witnesses and exactly who could be called to appear. On October 28, a government member of the committee raised concerns on which individual the committee had the right to call forward. The member for Guelph advanced that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, take your seat, please. This is a committee matter; it’s an internal matter with the committee. If the committee wishes to report to the House, the matter will be dealt with then.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On September 28, 2009, the member from Simcoe–Grey submitted the following order paper question:

“Would the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure explain if the government has a strategy to move all of Ontario’s apartment and condominium units to individual”—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Thornhill, take your seat, please. I just advised the House that there is only one question on the order paper that’s outstanding. I think we should move on.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: We have been having a lot of discussion about the point of order, being that the question that’s on the order paper is to be answered. There is a long process in the standing orders that deals with if they provide an interim answer and then provide a final answer. The one that was referred to earlier was in fact a question to the Minister of Agriculture and Food relating to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Oxford, take your seat, please. I’ve ruled on that. I have advised or suggested that the government answer those questions, even if they were replies that it’s going to take longer, and that they do that as expeditiously at possible.

## 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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2009 on the motion for second reading of 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The order has already been called. Further debate.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to enter into the lead-off debate on second reading for Bill 218. When last we had this matter before us, the Minister of Finance indicated that he would be sharing his time with me as his parliamentary assistant. It's certainly my intention to use the time allocated for the purposes of debate in respect of Bill 218.

I want to take a few minutes to follow up on some of the comments that the minister outlined himself, some additional legislative changes that come with Bill 218, the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009, which will benefit Ontarians broadly.

1550

I also want to obviously take the opportunity, in addition to the assistance I've had in the preparation of some notes through very able staff, to provide some commentary in addition to those notes. I'm sure that members will be pleased to know that our allocated time will be used this afternoon—I'm going to just ask the page if I could get some water, because I'll probably need some along the way.

I want to start first, because I think that one of the things that has been missing, in part, during the discussion around matters related to Bill 218, and particularly the HST, and that has been missing in some of the dialogue of late, are some of the actual experiences where an HST, a value-added tax, has been put in place in other jurisdictions within Canada. I think it's important, as much as possible for the public who pay attention to what is happening here in the Legislature, or who pick it up either directly or through Hansard, to have an opportunity to see what experiences have occurred elsewhere, in addition to the debate that happens here on both sides of the issue, and to hear from businesses and people about some of the things that have actually occurred.

I want to draw attention to an article in the National Post on November 19, just last week. The heading is "Ontario, BC to Benefit by \$7B with HST. 'One less Irritant.'" It's by Paul Vieira. The point I want to make from the article—I'm going to quote from it if I could, in particular because it does deal with the owner of a company in Newfoundland, a province that has had a single value-added tax, an HST, since 1997.

Let me read from the article. It starts:

"Newfoundlander Lorne Janes can't figure out what all the fuss is about in Ontario and British Columbia over the introduction of a harmonized sales tax.

"The owner of St. John's based Continental Marble of Canada Ltd. said the introduction of the HST in his province in 1997 alleviated plenty of headaches dealing with 'convoluted' tax rules—such as figuring out whether or not masking tape was tax-exempt and filling out myriad forms to get cash back."

I'm going to skip a little bit as I go through this; I'm not going to read the entire article, but I do want to reference parts of it and draw on the experience of a business owner in Newfoundland when an HST was applied in that province in 1997.

If I could go on in the article:

"The harmonized tax also meant Mr. Janes no longer had to pay tax on inputs ranging from machinery that cut pieces of marble and granite to buffing cloths that gave finished countertops a nice shine.

"The money saved helped Mr. Janes lower the price on his products to help him compete with low-cost Asian imports."

I'll stop quoting at that point, because I want to go back to the content of that. This is speaking about the tax input. It's talking about things as significant as machinery, which each of us often won't identify with, and the capital cost of that. But I think that each of us can probably more readily identify with buffing cloths that might be used by any worker on the floor in preparing granite for sale. Each of those resulted in a cost saving to Mr. James and his business and resulted, as he says, in the capacity to lower prices on his product and helped him compete with low-cost Asian imports.

If I could quote from the article again:

"He was also able to expand Continental Marble's foreign reach, as sales for exports are HST-exempt. Previously, they weren't, and his firm was forced to file documents with Ottawa to get the money back—something he often didn't bother with because of the time involved.

"It is one less irritant that I don't have to deal with," Mr. Janes says. "Instead I can focus more on being competitive and maintaining jobs."

Again, to diverge from the content of this article, you see that he's speaking to the matter of export. It's an important element of the debate that we haven't been having. We've certainly been having a conversation, a debate, over a period of time in this place, in part about the impact on consumers. We really haven't talked yet about the impact on our capacity to compete externally: on the ability to export products and on the efficiency this will provide in businesses wanting to do business abroad.

If we are to be an export jurisdiction in Ontario, and to continue to be in an effective way, this is a big part of what is going to help us do that. How long ago were we speaking about the importance of the automotive industry in this province? We'll continue and have that debate on an ongoing basis, I'm sure. But we in this place know that the vast majority of the products we produce here in Ontario are exported abroad, primarily to the US. Mr. Janes, in his experience in Newfoundland, clearly found that his capacity to export his product was enhanced with the introduction of an HST, as was his ability to create jobs and lower his prices on products. That's very much what we're trying to talk about. It's very much the message that we are trying to get out to people. In the longer term, the prospects of the HST are really about

creating a competitive economy here in Ontario, the creation of new jobs and building business.

If I can go back to the article itself and resume with a quote: “It is estimated that companies in Ontario and BC stand to save nearly \$7 billion a year in the cost of doing business once the HST is introduced in July 2010, economists at Toronto-Dominion Bank say. That money, business leaders and economists argue, will be poured back into the economy, through lower prices for consumers and the resulting job creation as firms reinvest in their capital stock.”

Again, it’s a point that we’ve been making and it’s good to see it being made in other places, throughout the jurisdictions, as well: that economists throughout this country who are recognized by all of us, on all sides of the House, have been speaking to the importance of taking these kinds of moves in order to have a more competitive tax environment and to make tax changes in this country in a variety of ways—including, in this instance, the introduction of the value-added tax in the form of the HST.

I want to speak to the article just briefly again in the time available, and I’m going to go on to part of it. “Jayson Myers, president of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters says.... ‘It is very clear coming out of this recession that it can’t be business as usual. For us to recover and restore the jobs lost, we have to put in place a strategy for economic growth. The HST is not an attractive political move, but it is an important part of the economic puzzle.’” That really wraps up the article.

I want to speak to that last little bit again, if I can. These are the exporters and manufacturers here in this country speaking to the importance of moves of this nature. He’s speaking to the need to be able to continue recovering and restoring the jobs that were lost and to put new jobs in place. We have to have a strategy to do that.

“The HST,” he says, “is not an attractive political move.” I don’t think there are too many people in this room who think that doing an HST is an easy sell. I know on our side we don’t, and certainly the Premier has been clear that this is not an easy choice to make in the context of an easy political agenda. But our job is to, as much as we can, educate people during the period of time between now and its implementation—subject to this legislation getting passed and being formally put in place, but being a little presumptive, if that does occur. There’s certainly time available for all of us to continue this process of educating the people of Ontario about the objectives, the long-term benefits and, frankly, some of the downsides and issues being raised in this Legislature about the direct costs that may occur to individuals or families; some of the opportunities to offset those and some of the things that, frankly, won’t be offset as a result of the legislation, but are necessary for long-term economic prosperity, growth and opportunities in the province.

I, for one, have been saying for many months now, in my own way when the issue is raised, that this really is about what’s going to happen in the future in this province. I have said that, like Mr. Myers said—not his

words, mine, but they are very similar—when we come out of this economic quagmire, as we move out of this deep recession that now appears, at the very least, to have some light at the end of the tunnel—depending on what day you’re looking at the media and what reports you’re reading, but certainly looking a lot different than it even did eight or 10 months ago—when we come out of this, we can’t afford to be standing still. We can’t afford to be treading water. We can’t afford to be in a non-competitive environment. It’s necessary for us to take the actions that are being taken so that we are in a competitive position, in Ontario, to compete with jurisdictions within this country, with our neighbours to the south and internationally. This is a fundamental part of what we need to do to provide for future economic growth, for jobs and ultimately for our children, our grandchildren and those who are out of work today, but looking longer-term, for this economy and this province.

**1600**

It’s no surprise that Jack Mintz, in his work in the report that was just released, projects that some 600,000 jobs, give or take a few thousand, will be created over a period of 10 years. This is a significant number of job opportunities here in the province over time. We don’t expect them all to happen today. The numbers—they were 590,000. We don’t expect them all to happen today, but over time these are significant net job increases that are going to occur in this province, quite frankly, as a result of, in large measure, the introduction of these tax reforms.

As I go through the time that we have available to us this afternoon, I want to talk not only about the HST and the implications from a job creation standpoint, but I hope I have the opportunity in the time available to talk a little bit as well about some of the implications for families and individuals of income tax changes that are occurring on a permanent basis, if not to speak specifically to some opportunities that will be there for those of probably lower, more moderate incomes and those on fixed incomes—at a lower level, aspects of increases in their tax credits, whether it’s as a result of sales tax issues or property tax issues, and ways in which we are putting measures in place that will provide additional protections for those who are more vulnerable in our community.

I think it’s fair to say that it has been a hallmark of this government, this party, over the past six years in office that we have paid attention to the needs of those who are vulnerable. Not all of the needs can be met, and I’ll be the first to speak to that, as have others in this place. We’re not going to meet all of those needs. Governments can’t do that. But to a large measure we’ve paid attention to those needs, and in doing this particular tax reform package as a package, we’ve also paid attention during that time frame to the needs of those who are most vulnerable, those who are vulnerable within our communities, those who don’t necessarily have some of the means that folks like the members here might have, or others who have secure jobs in this economy.

I said when I started that I was pleased to rise and speak to this matter. I think earlier today, one or more of

the members, whether it was during question period or the debate that just preceded this on the motion—I was looking for members who would stand up and say that they support the introduction of a harmonized sales tax and a tax reform package, and I'd be one of those. I've been saying for some many months now that I think this is the right thing for us to do at this time as a plan for the economic future of this province. That's the important aspect.

Yes, it's not an easy thing to do. I walked into a restaurant over the weekend and saw a couple of constituents I've known for years and years. They were great supporters in my capacity in municipal government and they have supported me provincially. They are seniors. I walked over and we had a chat, and the fellow whispered in my ear, "I really don't like the HST very much." I said, "I can appreciate that. I can understand that at this point in time, with the information you've been given"—we didn't have a long conversation, but, "I can understand, with the time you've been given, that you don't have all the information, and there will be some impacts when you do certain things. But you probably haven't yet had a chance to look and see whether or not the income tax reductions that are going to be put in place will impact you. I suspect they will." I don't know whether or not the seniors' tax benefits will impact them directly, but they might very well. But I said to him what I just said here: "I understand your concern, but this really is about the future of this province and coming out of recession and growing this economy and providing for our children and our grandchildren." I got a nod of acknowledgement in that sense and a positive smile, and we continued our conversation.

He made his point that they've got concerns about how it might impact them as individuals within the context of their fiscal environment, but he also understood at least in part, in the short time we had, why I, as one member, feel it's a necessary and important part of the tax reform package for the future of this province. Quite frankly, I think it will stand me in good stead with them. I think that as they have time to look at this and consider it, look at the direct impacts on them, look at the offsets that are going to occur in both the short and long terms, and give consideration to the future economy of this province, they will understand the need, and, to a large extent, they will come to accept the decisions that are being made—maybe begrudgingly. As the newspaper article I referred to said, this is not an easy sell, but I think they will come to that conclusion along the way, because they are reasonable people. They are reasonable in the context of understanding their own needs, and they are also reasonable in the context of understanding that governments need to act, that we are in and have been in a very serious economic situation.

I think the Premier put it well one day when we were speaking collectively—not just one on one—in talking about: The people of Ontario expect their governments to do something. They certainly don't expect them to stand still in the middle of an economic calamity. They don't

expect the government just to just tread water. They may not always like the choices, but we have to make—as best we can—reasoned choices with all the information available to us, and, making those choices, to move forward on them and explain to the best of our ability what those are about.

We know that in the business context—and I've mentioned some of it in this article, in a generic sense of somebody who has actually experienced it—but in a more technical sense, we know that this package that has been put together will impact business in a positive sense. That will drive the opportunity to sell products and services, retain people, hire people and grow businesses. That is the sequence of events one expects and one of the sequence of events that will occur over time.

It is anticipated that the HST in itself would result in the removal of about \$4.5 billion a year in embedded taxes—taxes built into the system, freeing those dollars up for other uses, immediately within the context of the business environment. Each time a product is moved along a stream, if it's a manufactured product, it is moved from one point of production to another to sale. It would take that out and provide those monies for other functions early on.

Currently, those embedded taxes are passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices at the cash register, where the item is taxed yet again with the PST. This strategy will see the removal of those embedded taxations and the inclusion of the taxation as it currently is at the point of sale. I think the biggest impact that we are likely to see—and the ones often being drawn to our attention—are on some service functions. Some service functions that might not currently attract a PST will attract that portion onto the HST, and that creates its own challenges along the way.

Studies have been done examining the experiences of the three Atlantic provinces, not just Newfoundland. The one article and the one particular company I was referring to in that article—but if you think of that in the context of all the provinces and the work that was done after they harmonized their taxes and say that it was one example of this bigger picture within those provinces—the experience of the three Atlantic provinces that harmonized their RSTs with the GSTs in 1997 found that cost savings were rapidly passed through to consumers. It didn't take years; it took a relatively short period of time for those cost savings to work their way into the system, because businesses wanted to be competitive, they wanted to sell their products and services, so they had to take those costs out if they were going to compete with other providers of services and products.

A recent study by the TD Bank estimates that 80% of the costs savings would be passed through to consumers by the end of the first year, the point being, we're not going to have to wait forever to see those monies flowing back through the system in real savings, real reduced costs on that end to the consumers. The TD has estimated that 95% of those cost savings would be passed through by the third year.

So there's a bit of transition. In fact, it's one of the reasons—and I don't know whether we had these specific numbers available to us at that time; I somehow don't think so; we had the experience that was going on in those three provinces—for the negotiations with the federal government on transitional funding, because it will take a period of time. I can suggest from these comments in this TD report that it will take a period of up to three years for 95% to flow through and a period of the first year for about 80% to flow through. So during that time, we negotiated with the federal government for transitional payments, to a large extent to be provided to families and individuals during a time when they're paying some additional RST on services that they wouldn't have paid it on, or PST they wouldn't have paid it on. We'll be providing, through the negotiations, a payment to those individuals and families that would offset some, if not all, of those costs, depending upon the amount of money that one might be expending. Obviously, the more money you have available to you, the larger your expenditures are, the more money you're going to be paying out. But for the average family, I would suggest, this will go a very long way to offset any negative impact that might occur.

#### 1610

The TD study makes this notation: "In order for businesses to generate an increase in demand for their products they will have to pass those savings on to consumers." That seems pretty obvious in our discussion here. Again, I think it's valuable to put it on the record in the form of those who are in the business of analyzing the economy, put it on the record to speak to the fact that for businesses to generate an increase in demand for products, you'll have to pass the savings on. They're not going to be able to keep those savings that they get from the tax inputs and put them in their pocket and keep it on the positive side of the ledger sheet as just an additional piece of the profit margin. The only way they're going to remain competitive, the only way they're going to get demand for their products to increase, is if they pass those savings on to the consumer. And the sooner they do that, quite frankly, the better it will be for their businesses.

I think that's obviously good news for Ontario businesses, but I would suggest equally that it's good news for Ontario consumers because over time it will become clearer and clearer to Ontarians what they're paying tax for and what they're paying for on the product. If you include the embedded tax in the product, you're not really getting a true price; you're getting a price with a tax in, and a tax in, and a tax in, and another tax at the end. At least with the HST, over time you'll begin to see the real cost of that product—a better comparator than you might have today—as well as a single sales tax at the end of the day, not two as we currently have.

I mentioned the transitional funding as the cost savings are built into the system. The provisions that have been put in place will provide for \$1,000 for families during that first year, and my recollection is that

it's going to be in three payments, staggered over that period of time, and obviously in the year in which it's being implemented as the appropriate year in which to do that. If my recollection is off—and I just don't have all of the detailed notes in front of me. I think my recollection is pretty accurate. Families under \$160,000 would be eligible for that rebate, and individuals would be eligible for a rebate up to \$300. I believe the ceiling is \$80,000, but again, I would stand to be corrected if that number is not quite accurate. The point is, it's a fairly sizable payment to Ontarians to offset the implications of the HST in the early going, to both families and individuals across a fairly broad spectrum of income.

That is transitional funding. It's not permanent, annual funding. It's paid out one time in instalments over the course of that first year. It's to ensure, to a very large extent, as the system gets itself geared up and as cost savings begin to flow through the system, that Ontario families are kept whole.

There are some other interesting aspects to it that have less to do with individual consumers and more to do with some of the organizations that we work with on an ongoing basis—not just as government, but as communities. Charities, as an example, would be able to claim rebates of 82% on HST inputs; municipalities, universities and colleges would be able to claim rebates of 78%; hospitals, to claim rebates of 87%; and school boards would be able to claim rebates of 93%.

The point of those rebates on those very specific types of broader public service organizations and charities is to keep them whole. In the context of charities, obviously you want them to be able to retain as many of the dollars as possible to be able to use them in the function for which they're raising them. For municipalities, as our partners, and colleges and universities, you want to ensure that the tax dollars that they're collecting, from the municipal side, and the dollars that we're putting into the colleges and universities, are used for the purposes for which they're intended. Similarly, for hospitals and school boards, you want to ensure that they're not paying an additional tax burden of any sort, that they're rebated to keep them whole.

These aren't 100% rebates. The analyses were done as to what the balance was to find for all practical purposes. There needs to be a whole situation, and these are certainly broadly agreed-upon numbers that will allow that to occur.

Those of us who are paying for our hospital systems, or paying our school board taxes, in part as we pay them through our municipal taxes, will not be doubling up, in essence, on our payments because we will ensure that those broader public sector bodies are whole in this process.

Most of these PSBs, or public service bodies, would be able to use what they call a special quick method of accounting, which would further simplify their tax reporting requirements. And by reducing the amount of paperwork they're going to have to do, that the bodies are required to do, they can put more time and energy into the work they have to do.

I'm not going to go into the special quick method of accounting, but it's a strategy that would be put in place to ensure that they can turn around their numbers in quick order, with relative ease, in that sense.

That's part of the administrative part of this and one of the reasons why, at least in part, it takes as long as it does to be able to implement something of this nature. There are lots of administrative aspects to it that one will have to consider and work through with our federal partners in particular on this, let alone our municipal partners and businesses as they get themselves ramped up for the implementation of an HST, subject to this debate and one at the federal level, in July of next year.

One of the early-on issues, when we did the spring budget at the end of March—so we haven't had any lack of time from the end of March, spring, summer, fall of this year, to have discussion about this matter with constituents, stakeholder groups, business and community organizations of one sort or another. I think there has been a broad opportunity for us, as members and as constituencies, and through the media and elsewhere, to continue the dialogue around this particular matter.

I mentioned the importance of the homebuilding industry to the provincial economy, and there's no question, as we look at the various reports that we each would have seen over the years, about how important the building industry is.

We only need to look around, in a good economy, to see the homes being built, the renovations being done, the intensity of urbanization that occurs in the centre of Toronto, as an example. We only need to look to the almost daily, if not weekly, reports about the housing building, the housing sales, as indicators of the economic climate we find ourselves in.

I think it's all pretty readily agreed universally now that one of the big issues that drove us into this economic wasteland that we found ourselves in was the situation in the US, where their housing market collapsed around them. So if we use that scale and look at our own, we can see how important the industry is generally.

After the HST and the budget were introduced, one of the things we knew was that there would have to be effective consultation along the way with various stakeholders throughout that process.

One of the issues we needed to have a look at was housing. In doing that we announced, I think it was on June 18, that new homes purchased for primary residence, across all price ranges, would qualify for a rebate of up to \$24,000.

The effective impact of that is that if you buy a new home for under \$400,000, there is no PST implication. It doesn't completely mirror, as I understand it, the federal situation with the GST, because I believe they cap out at \$350,000, not \$400,000. Ours is a \$400,000 cap. So for the most part, new home purchasers, modest move-up purchasers, broadly across the province—there may be pockets where that won't occur—would not see the impact of the HST on a new home purchase.

We think that was a responsible, negotiated position both from the standpoint of the importance of the housing

industry in this province and certainly of consumers in the purchasing of homes, whether it's their first home or it's a move-up home within that kind of range.

We recognized, obviously, very early on in the process that we would not include the provision for an HST on resale homes. They remain exempt, as they have been, for that type of taxation, both GST-wise and otherwise. But for new homes there was a specific provision made that I think has been well received broadly throughout the province of Ontario.

I'm going to move on to some other things. I'm going to talk a little bit about the implications that are there for vehicle transfers, but there may be other opportunities to do that as we go forward.

#### 1620

I want to talk a little bit about the budget proposal in this legislation for an additional \$40 million to enhance the apprenticeship training tax credit, which supports businesses that hire and train apprentices. We've had a lot of discussion about the work of apprentices. We've had a lot of discussion about the work of our colleges, in particular, in developing apprentices, and how important it is to business, and obviously to the trainee, to have apprenticeship tax credits in place to encourage business to take on apprentices and give them the training they need to replace workers who in many cases will probably move out of the workforce in not too many years, and how we can go about that and enhance that situation so that we are producing a well-trained and highly educated workforce for what is going to be an increasingly innovative economy.

For those who have been standing up and saying they don't expect the economy to look different in five years than it looks today, I think we're all in some agreement that it will be different. We're not sure how it's going to look—probably none of us in this room know quite how it's going to look—but we know it's not going to be the same as it is today. So we have to prepare ourselves for that, and one of the ways to do that is through things like an apprenticeship tax credit.

The proposed enhancements would see a 35% refundable tax credit made available to employers on the salaries and wages paid to eligible apprentices in qualifying trades. That's a significant amount of tax credit—35%. It's a significant amount to the employer to take on primarily young people in apprenticeship functions. For small employers, though, the credit would be 45%, recognizing there is a cap on that. The annual cap to this point has been some \$5,000. That's going to be doubled to \$10,000. Ten thousand dollars will go a long way to support a young person or someone moving into a new career—a second career—as an apprentice in the work environment they're training in.

There are a number of initiatives being taken as part of this bill and that came as part of the budget which are now coming into the legislative framework of this. Ontario's entertainment and creative cluster is considered to be a cornerstone of Ontario's new, innovative economy. We've certainly paid some considerable attention,

over the past four or five years, to the importance of that industry here in Ontario. It boosts economic growth, and attracts business, skilled workers and, in particular, investors to Ontario.

We're undertaking to look at book-publishing tax credits. Further, we are looking at computer animation and special-effects tax credits—we're covering a range—the film and television tax credit, the film production services tax credit and the interactive digital media tax credit. I'm not going to speak to the details of those. What I wanted to reference was the headings, the highlights. It's a range of innovative, cultural industries in this province, for which, as they invest here, as they hire workers here, as they use products and services here, there's a tax credit available. It's not as though we're making a grant to them in any way. We're having them invest and providing some credit back to build and enhance the opportunity we have for an innovative economy in the province of Ontario—maybe part of what is now being referred to as more a creative economy, and this is a big part of what one might consider to be a creative economy.

In addition to those entertainment and creative clusters that we're focused on providing assistance and support to and encouraging growth in, we know that tourism has a much broader appeal across the province. We know that certain industries obviously do get clustered or that they're fairly specific to their functionality. Tourism touches virtually every community, if not every community, in this province. It certainly touches every riding in this province. There's probably not a member in this place who hasn't risen at some point or other to speak about the importance of tourism and specific aspects of it within their riding.

As part of our tax package, we're going to commit to providing some \$40 million for destination marketing for Ontario tourism regions. These have yet to be formally established. Part of our tourism strategy study identified the need to do that. Work is ongoing to identify those and nail them down. But the idea of providing some \$40 million for destination marketing will provide those tourism regions with the tools and the resources they need to be able to market their region as a destination place for the functions that best service them.

We only need to look around this province at any given time of the year, and in our own minds, broadly, we can probably identify tourist areas and tourist functionalities that we can grow and do better at than we're doing as a province. We all know Niagara Falls; it's obviously known throughout the world. It's probably number one. If you ask someone from anywhere else in Canada what they know about, if it's not Niagara Falls, it's probably the Rocky Mountains—it seems like a starting point, anyway. But how many of those outside of the province, outside of the country and outside of North America might know about some of the opportunities that exist here in the winter, might know about the snowmobiling we have and the types of packages in communities that gear themselves to that kind of activity? How

many would readily recognize—probably quite a number—the Shaw and the Stratford Festivals? Obviously, a broad group do, but there would be lots who probably wouldn't. We need more resources to be able to market those as destinations, to get people into this province to take advantage of the wonderful tourism opportunities that exist here.

I know there are places in this province that one of these days I'd love to be able to visit. Every now and again, someone will say to me, "Have you ever been to" such and such. "Have you been to this tourist event? Have you been to this part of the province?" I find that I haven't been nearly as much as I would like.

I recently went with my wife to Ontario's west coast. It's only in the past couple of years that I've really seen that as a marketing tool. I don't often get down that way, along Lake Huron; I tend to travel east from where I am, north and east. It's one of those things where you get in your car, you're going somewhere out of town, and you tend to turn in one direction because you're familiar with the highway. Maybe it's the interchange: It's easier to make a left than a right turn onto the 401. I'm not sure. Maybe it's the lights that are there. But I had a wonderful opportunity to be on Ontario's west coast visiting Goderich and had a wonderful evening at a bed and breakfast. It was a wonderful night at a bed and breakfast owned by a former Ajax resident, if I might say so, who's an absolutely fabulous cook, a gourmet cook. We had a wonderful time.

The point I'm making is that "Ontario's west coast" was something that wasn't in my mind two years ago, and now I think about it. Every now and then it pops up: Ontario's west coast. It's a tool. I'm hopeful and optimistic that the \$40 million we're talking about as part of this overall tax reform package for destination marketing for tourism will enhance and support exactly those types of strategies that will build the economies here in the province of Ontario.

There are a number of Financial Administration Act changes that are going to occur as part of this. I think one of the members opposite spoke to how this particular bill has a number of aspects to it, and it does. There are matters related to the financial acts. There is certainly work that we will have to do with the federal government as we move to the HST. As an example, there will be a number of employees who we will have to manage, as we did with the corporate tax consolidation—I forget the acronym we used for that. A couple of years back, there was concern about employees who might be dislocated. As it turned out, those employees were either accommodated within the federal system or within the provincial system in other ways.

There is obviously considerable work going on right now to ensure there will be no dislocation from the employment base of those in the Ontario public service who provide this service in the context of collecting and managing the PST function. There are quite a number of those very skilled people. We want to ensure that we continue to use those skills available to us, or that the

federal government will have the opportunity to acquire that skill set for the functionality they will be taking on. Obviously, there will still be work to do, ideally in a more efficient and effective fashion than we are currently able to provide.

This is a comprehensive tax reform package. I spoke briefly early on about the business implications, about the transitional funding that will occur. I have spent little, if any, time talking about the reduction in the personal income tax which about 93% of Ontarians will be able to take advantage of. I haven't spoken to the some 90,000 lower-income Ontarians who will no longer find themselves in a position of having to pay provincial income tax. I haven't spoken specifically to the quantum of savings that are going to be seen by small business—I believe the number is about \$4.5 billion over three years—that will find its way back into the economy. I haven't spoken of the larger quantum of some \$10.6 billion that will be going out to the people of Ontario directly: not to businesses, but paid out to the people of Ontario through transitional funding, income tax reductions, permanent rebate structures and mirroring the GST rebate for lower-income individuals.

**1630**

I know that young individuals just starting out in the workforce in many cases find themselves, because of their tax brackets, eligible for a GST rebate during the year. When those cheques came in—I believe they are on a quarterly basis—when my kids were starting out in the workforce, they appreciated having that cheque. It gave them a little something extra just at that point in the year that they might need it. This harmonization will create a very similar environment because of eligibility for rebates: an equivalency to a PST payment. I know that as those come in, they will be well-used, whether it's by young people starting out or those in the workforce with families who find themselves in a position where this additional support is helping.

When those additional fiscal supports go not only to the family as a family but to each individual in a family, it provides a way for us to ensure that we're best meeting the needs of smaller families and larger families. If you have four or five kids—and there are still lots of families who have those—it's nice to know that if you're eligible for those rebates, they're going to be paid for each of the children in the family as well as the parents, not just a lump sum payment. So we're trying to be, obviously, sensitive to the need and where the need is greatest.

The targeted tax measures that we're setting in place are intended to support key sectors in the economy. It's deliberate. They're intended to spur innovation in the economy and to increase the skills of those who are looking to fill those new positions. There was a strong consensus among experts, including the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association and others that these measures will increase investment, productivity and real per capita incomes in the long run.

I have tried to provide as much evidence as I can from all the research that has been done that we'll see short-

term change, a flow-through of the opportunity for those savings, and see longer-term changes in the saving of jobs. I hope that when the vote is called, all members of this House will feel so inclined to support this important—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** This bill on the HST going through without public hearings is a travesty of the democratic process. This is indeed the largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, and to have this bill go through the House and through the process without public hearings is something that's unfathomable in my political experience. In our day, when we were in government, we had some very unpopular pieces of legislation, but we took them on tour. We took Bill 40 on tour. There were disruptions at almost every location we went to, but we did it because it was the—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Because it was a bad bill.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member in the third party says, "Because it was a bad bill." They didn't agree with it—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Still don't agree.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** —and still don't; however, we disagree on that, from different ends of the spectrum. But that bill went to all corners of this province. They were very difficult times. In fact, we split the bill in two and did twice as many hearings as others might do.

This situation is repeating itself because in 2007, during the last provincial election, Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes, and here he is, bringing in the largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history. Remember, in 2003, standing beside the elm tree on television saying, "I'm not going to increase your taxes"? Then, of course, he brought in the largest overall tax increase in Ontario's history. So this is repeating itself. It's a sad day when the people of Ontario can't believe what their Premier tells them and then their opinions are totally ignored.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's always a pleasure to comment on a speech by the member from Pickering-Scarborough East. He prefaced his remarks by saying he was standing up in support of the bill and he wanted to be counted. At first I thought, "Wow, is this ever novel that a government backbencher is standing up in support of a bill that he knows is going to do him much political damage." Then I had to stop and think that he is, after all, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, and if he had stood up and said anything other than what he said, I am sure that heads would have rolled, and his would have been the first. So I took it with a grain of salt.

But then he went on to talk about his constituents, and the only constituents he talked about, an older couple who had supported him for years, aren't too happy with the bill. I would suggest that if he had had more time, he would have told us that literally all of his constituents who have approached him are not supportive of the bill.

He did speak at some length, and he tried to defend the bill as best as he possibly could within the time allotted to him, about many of the measures. As time permits me, I just want to talk about how I believe some of his hopes for the pass-throughs are a little naive.

He is stating that the pass-throughs happened in the Maritimes. Thereby, as the costs went down for business, they lowered their prices for ordinary consumers. But I would remind him that in the Maritimes what happened wasn't just a combination of the GST with the PST; the Maritimes all dropped their portion by two or three per cent. So the pass-throughs were much easier and the governments were able to have a much easier time putting that through. It was more revenue-neutral, quite frankly, than what is being proposed today.

The second thing: He's not talking about the pass-throughs for the First Nations. If anybody is getting a raw deal on this, it's the First Nations, because they're literally paying all of the money; none of it's coming back to them in any form whatsoever when the purchase is off reserve.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to compliment you, first of all, before I make very short comments on the member from Pickering-Scarborough East. Not only is he the present member, but he's the former mayor of Pickering and he comes here with a lot of experience. He knows very closely the difficulties and problems associated with governing, especially for the needy, the working class and seniors, so I have to comment on the presentation from the member for Pickering-Scarborough East.

When we go through a particular economic situation it affects everyone, perhaps some more than others. But when we debate certain laws and proposals in this House, we have to make sure we present the whole story, not half of the story. For me, for the people I represent, I think it's important that we let them know the other half of the story, how they are being affected by the HST.

They are interested to know that 92% of them will be receiving a tax cut. I think that's very important for them: 90,000 no longer will be paying provincial taxes. Doubling the current sales tax credit I think is important for them, and it's so important because a lot of them live on fixed incomes.

It is important that we let our seniors know what they are getting. As of January 1 next year, not only will their personal tax go down but they will be receiving an increase in the amount they normally get in tax credits every year. It will go from \$250 to \$500. Next January, with the refundable sales tax credit, they will be getting as much as \$260. So I think it's important that they know the other half of the story.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to comment on Bill 218 as well. I did consultation in my riding over the last couple of weeks and had the opportunity again just this

weekend. I can tell you from the comments in my riding, the people I spoke to, the average man and woman, the hockey parent, the soccer mom and dad, the real people—they don't write any white papers or brown papers, from Jack Mintz or from people like that—are saying they're against this tax. We're going to keep on this tax about having all-party consultations across this province. That's what people want, and that's what they're telling me.

**1640**

I was at a breakfast buffet on Sunday and a lady sent me a handwritten note on a napkin. I'm going to bring it to the House tomorrow, and I'm going to show it to some of the people on the other side.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I don't care. They can do what they want.

Anyway, that's what people say. They don't have to hire a high-priced consultant to tell them why they should be in favour of this tax. The ordinary people see through this. There's the old saying, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." They see through this. The Liberal members know that, on the other side. They've got their heads down. They know that.

We need these all-party hearings and we need to take them across the province. We need to have public consultation on this. It's one of the biggest tax grabs—it's a revenue rip-off, as someone said—in Ontario history. They're using time allocation to try to cripple debate, and they're ignoring legitimate points of order. It's an abuse of process.

The PC caucus is disappointed but not surprised by the tactics of this government. That's why we will continue to call for public consultations and we'll use every legitimate tool at our disposal to disrupt passage of this terrible tax.

It's clear that the McGuinty government is prepared to abuse its parliamentary majority to have its way.

This is not over. It's not over by a long shot. This caucus and the members on this side of the House won't consider this law until the day people have to start paying it: Happy Canada Day, July 1, 2010.

Ladies and gentlemen watching this debate, get ahold of your Liberal members, get ahold of all the members. Write us—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Pickering-Scarborough East, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** First, I'll just acknowledge and thank the members from Halton and Beaches-East York, York West and Sarnia-Lambton for their comments after that time frame.

I hear the members from Halton and Sarnia-Lambton, and their refrain remains the same. Let me just suggest to you, yet again, that we've had this dialogue going now since, at the very least, March of this year. It's not fresh, it's not new. It's not as though we introduced legislation last week that introduced this subject to the people of



Ontario. There has been a tremendous amount of opportunity for us all to seek and hear inputs.

To the member from Beaches–East York: I certainly heard your comments with respect to the experience on the east coast and the First Nations, as well. We've made a notation accordingly, particularly as it relates to the First Nations, as it impacts us here in Ontario. We'll certainly raise that matter with the minister as well—from Hansard and elsewhere.

To the member from York West: Thank you for your comments about ensuring, as best we can, that we try to get the entire story out—not just one part of the story—about the implications of the HST, the objectives that are there, and about creating a strong economy in the future here in the province of Ontario.

I'm just going to take the last 30 or 40 seconds, if I can, to talk very briefly about where this process is. It was a memorandum of understanding that was signed in the spring. It resulted in what's called CITCA, the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement. It was negotiated and signed on November 9 of this year and has gotten us to where we are at today. What are the important elements of this? CITCA requires the federal government to make its best efforts to introduce required legislation by March 31 of next year. So there's a certain imperative on us to have this debate and move along, as our initiative, so that they can undertake the debate—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to debate and to respond to the parliamentary assistant, to begin with. As he correctly pointed out, the government has till March 31 to pass legislation. So that's plenty of time to hold public hearings on Bill 218. I'm sure that there are a lot of people all around the province who would like to have their views known on this bill. That's plenty of time to hold the public hearings on such a substantial bill.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to lead off debate on Bill 218. On behalf of the PC caucus, I will also speak to the reasoned amendment which I filed notice of last week.

Let's start off with, what is Bill 218? It is a substantial bill. The McGuinty government calls this bill the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009. Like many things that this government puts forward, the name is more about optics than anything else. The proper title of the bill is: An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts. When they say "various" they are not kidding: There are 22 affected acts, to be precise. They're referred to in the bill in various schedules.

Schedule A amends the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996. It's bringing in some new taxes, particularly on beer and some of the small wineries and beer producers. It's a new tax that's supposed to be replacing fees that were in place, but I'm sure the people in that business would like the opportunity to have their say about how it does affect their

particular business. I know we have some small breweries in Parry Sound–Muskoka. Lakes of Muskoka Cottage Brewery produces some excellent beers, one that was picked and is being served in the Legislature this year. There's a new brewery that just started up in South River. There's Cranberry Winery in Bala. Those businesses, I'm sure, would like to look at this proposal and make sure it doesn't adversely affect their business.

Schedule B deals with the Architects Act. It clarifies rules under which firms can incorporate.

Schedule C deals with the Commodity Futures Act. I understand that's a minor technical amendment.

Schedule D deals with the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act.

Schedule E deals with the Condominium Act, 1998. It allows securities with banks and credit unions.

Schedule F deals with the Co-Operative Corporations Act.

Schedule G deals with the Corporations Tax Act—tax credits for Ontario film and television.

Schedule H deals with the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994, to permit deposits in trust.

Schedule I amends the Education Act with various provisions around budgets, reserve funds and grants. That's part of the bill that I certainly think needs further looking into and time to reflect on.

Schedule J deals with the Financial Administration Act.

Schedule K deals with the interim appropriation for 2010-11. It's the supply part of this bill.

Schedule L deals with the Management Board of Cabinet Act. It amends the number of board members.

Schedule M amends the Ministry of Revenue Act and provides for pension issues relating to reassigned retail sales tax staff.

Schedule N deals with the Ontario Capital Growth Corporation Act, 2008.

Schedule O deals with the Ontario Loan Act, 2009, and provides authority for borrowing on the deficit, adding another, I think, \$15.1 billion onto the debt that was not previously announced back in the March budget.

Schedule P amends the Proceedings Against the Crown Act.

Schedule Q amends the Professional Engineers Act and clarifies the rules under which firms incorporate.

Schedule R amends the Retail Sales Tax Act. It ratifies the CITCA and provides for implementation of the HST. It's certainly one of the key parts of this bill.

Schedule S amends the Securities Act.

Schedule T is the Succession Duty Legislation Repeal Act, 2009.

Schedule U amends the Taxation Act, 2007.

Schedule V amends the Teachers' Pension Act—changes to contributions to the fund.

Schedule W amends the Toronto Futures Exchange Act.

I've just gone through the various acts that are amended. Obviously, there are many people across the province affected particularly by the part that implements

the HST, and I'm sure those people would like to have their voices heard, as is the case with most bills when they pass through the Legislature. In this case, it looks like the government wants to get it through quickly and doesn't want to listen to the people in the province of Ontario.

Of course, the most important thing this bill does is provide for the implementation of the HST and ratify the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement, the CITCA, between Ontario and Canada, which was signed on November 9, 2009. I'll come back to parts of the bill that deal with the harmonized sales tax, or, as the PC caucus calls it, the DST, or Dalton sales tax.

#### 1650

I have put forward a reasoned amendment to the bill. Bill 218 is also a supply bill, a money bill that allows the government to pay its bills. That is done through schedule K of Bill 218. Supply bills are not out of the ordinary, and for that reason I would like to move this reasoned amendment:

I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 218, An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts, be amended by deleting all the words after "That" and substituting therefor the words "That this bill be not now read a second time but be referred back to the government with instructions to incorporate therein:

"(1) that schedule K in Bill 218 be deleted; and

"(2) that the said schedule K be introduced as a separate public bill."

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Miller has moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 218, An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts, be amended by deleting all the words after "That" and substituting therefor the words "That this bill be not now read a second time but be referred back to the government with instructions to incorporate therein:

"(1) that schedule K in Bill 218 be deleted; and

"(2) that the said schedule K be introduced as a separate public bill."

Mr. Miller.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that there is business that the government must be able to conduct and essential programming that needs to be delivered, and a supply bill provides the necessary authority to achieve that. That's why the amendment would remove schedule K and make it a separate bill. That at least is transparent and straightforward, unlike the rest of Bill 218.

The problem with this bill is that it does something critical—historic, even. That is, it provides for the harmonized sales tax, ratifying the CITCA that the McGuinty government signed in secrecy, without any fanfare, on November 9, 2009, binding us—that being the province of Ontario—to the harmonized sales tax. As my colleague from Nepean—Carleton pointed out to the House on Monday, Bill 218 is more than just a \$3-billion tax grab. As part of the HST, the McGuinty government

has relinquished 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. The bill is without question the most significant taxation legislation in the history of this province. Worse, it does this at the expense of its citizens.

I had the occasion to have lunch with former Premier and finance minister Ernie Eves recently. I asked him for his perspective on the harmonized sales tax. He said that when he was Minister of Finance, the Chrétien government of the day did come and speak with him. Paul Martin tried to sell him on the idea of the harmonized sales tax. They made proposals. The PC government of the day evaluated those proposals and then they decided against it.

He posed the question, "Do you think, if this wasn't going to generate more revenue for the McGuinty government, they would actually be going ahead with it?" The answer, of course, is no. "Do you think that these cost savings that businesses will get with the value-added part of the tax are going to be passed on to the consumer?" The answer is no. We have a government that's facing a \$24.7-billion deficit, so they're looking at ways that they can raise additional revenues.

There is significant public reaction to the HST, as any member in this House—I'm sure the Liberal members as well—would see, which is why there should be public hearings on this bill, as most bills have when they pass through this Legislature. One thing is for sure: The public is angry, at least the ones who are contacting me about this tax.

Unfortunately, though, the great majority of people who don't necessarily follow the day-to-day goings-on around this Legislature or aren't too politically involved will come to realize, on July 1, 2010, that they're paying 8% more on gasoline, hydro, meals and so many other things, when they pull up to the gas station and all of a sudden the price of gas has gone up 8% a litre, or they fill up their home heating oil tank and find out that the price has gone up 8% a litre, or they pay their hydro bill and find out it has gone up by 8%.

But there are groups that do follow the things going on around this Legislature, and they're trying to make their voices heard. We're trying to help them by getting the government to hold public hearings across the province. Groups like CARP, which represents thousands of retired Ontarians, are upset and fearful of the burden this tax will put on them. CARP Action Online asked readers to weigh in on the decision by the provincial governments of both BC and Ontario to implement a harmonized sales tax in 2010. A strong majority—75%—oppose the HST. Respondents don't believe that the tax credits will be sufficient to offset the tax increase created by the HST, and 85.4% of them don't believe that businesses will pass through their savings to consumers, and that's exactly what Mr. Eves was suggesting as well.

The Ontario Home Builders' Association is quick to point out the negative impact of the HST. The residential

renovation sector accounts for \$20.3 billion of investment activity in Ontario, accounting for 4% of the provincial economy and 195,000 jobs. The HST will negatively impact the contractor-renovation sector, which accounts for 70% of all renovation investment. It will increase the tax burden on homeowners and rental housing investors by \$757 million annually and triple the sales tax rate on contractors' renovations in Ontario.

The harmonized sales tax will reduce the volume of renovation activity by contractors because of higher costs for homeowners, which will result in lower economic activity and employment. The harmonized tax will also shift more renovation and repair jobs from contractor assignments to do-it-yourself projects, potentially resulting in long-term negative consequences for the quality of the housing stock.

**Interjection:** Underground economy.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Good point. My colleague behind me is talking about the underground economy. He must have seen my speech, because that's the next line.

Most importantly, the harmonized sales tax is likely to shift more activity into the underground economy as consumers try to get the same value for their hard-earned dollars. The Ontario Home Builders' Association has calculated that the losses could be significant: up to \$298 million in lost GST revenue annually; up to \$1.6 billion in income tax revenue lost each year; and up to \$167 million lost from other revenues such as CPP, WSIB, the employer health tax and employment insurance premiums.

OHBA president James Bazely says that Ontario renovators expect an explosion in the amount of renovation work being done underground as consumers look for ways to save the 8% HST. I'd like to quote him: "Unfortunately, the underground economy is already thriving due to the GST, and the new HST is like throwing gasoline on a fire...."

"Unless governments approve a plan to discourage cash transactions, honest and legitimate renovators won't be able to compete with black market renovators—and that spells disaster for our industry with major job losses and ultimately dwindling revenue for governments...."

As an aside, this government has already further encouraged the underground economy in the building sector as Bill 119, which requires mandatory WSIB for all contractors, comes into place a couple of years from now. That's going to be an additional \$11,000 cost for each of these small contractors, as was pointed out by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. When it comes into effect, that will further add to this underground economy.

1700

Mutual funds: That's something that affects just about everyone who doesn't have a pension plan, including MPPs sitting in the Legislature here and so many Canadians who are saving for retirement. For Canadians trying to plan for retirement, a new harmonized sales tax will cut into savings. Investors now pay 5% GST on management fees and most operating expenses of mutual

funds and segregated funds. A harmonized tax means these fees will be further taxed by 8%.

The impact will be significant for Ontario, where the bulk of Canada's \$650-billion mutual fund industry is based—it's actually \$608 billion. The mutual fund industry has warned that the HST will drive up the cost of an investment product used by many middle-class Canadians. In fact, I met with the industry a while back, and they were estimating that the additional cost annually to investors will be \$300 million to \$500 million in the province. That is quite significant. Funds are being taxed effectively at four to five times the rate of other savings vehicles, such as guaranteed investment certificates, term deposits and stocks.

The Investment Funds Institute of Canada, IFIC, says that the higher tax rate on management expense ratios, MERs, means that an Ontarian putting \$5,000 a year for 35 years into mutual funds will lose about \$42,000, or about eight years of savings, due to the compounding of small HST amounts each year. Under the current regime with just the GST, the investor's return goes down by about \$17,000 over the same period.

Barbara Amsden, IFIC director of research and strategy, explains: "What used to be the caviar of the financial services products is now kind of macaroni and cheese."

Let me read to you from someone who helps ordinary Ontarians manage their savings:

"I have been running a financial advisory business in your riding for over 20 years, serving more than 300 households in our community. My business not only contributes directly to the economy, but also helps local residents plan for and achieve their financial goals.

"I'm very concerned about the HST because it is essentially a new tax on savings. The combined 13% tax will directly impact the savings of all Canadians who own investment funds. It will cost Ontario residents hundreds of millions of dollars every year in extra taxes that otherwise could be put into their retirement savings.

"Consider a small investor who has \$20,000 in mutual funds and who contributes \$4,000 each year. Over a 20-year period, the HST would mean an additional \$4,000 in tax. This investor would lose an entire year's worth of savings. Because the HST is being applied to the cost of managing the mutual fund, investors would have to pay it each and every year. What's ironic is that the more people save, the more tax they will pay!"

This letter continues: "I find it difficult to understand why this tax is being introduced when there is growing recognition that most Canadians will retire with inadequate incomes. With government looking to deal with this very serious issue, it makes no sense to be raising taxes for people who have taken the initiative to provide for their future. As a financial advisor, I know how hard it is for the average family to save, and they should not be penalized for it.

"I realize that the harmonized tax is meant to make Ontario businesses more competitive, especially our

manufacturers. However, it will have a significant impact on savers in our province.”

But savings are not the only form of investment vehicle that will be negatively impacted by your harmonized sales tax. It affects real estate as well. OREA, The Ontario Real Estate Association, estimates that the new tax will add \$1,499 in new taxes to an average resale home costing \$302,354. Homebuyers and sellers will pay 8% more on legal fees, appraisals, real estate commissions, home inspection fees and moving costs. OREA also says that the HST will add an estimated \$262 million in new taxes annually to residential resale real estate transactions. For homeowners, the HST will also add hundreds of dollars in additional tax on utility bills such as gas, electricity, home heating fuel, home renovation labour, the cost of lawn upkeep or landscaping and the cost of snow removal—all some pretty basic things.

Pauline Auger, president of the Ontario Real Estate Association, says, “The government of Ontario can try to sell the HST any number of ways, but starting July 1, 2010, the taxes on buying, selling and owning a home in our province will go up. Ontario’s housing market is vital to the health of our provincial economy. An HST on home ownership will reduce housing affordability and increase the tax burden for Ontario families.” She added, “In the last decade, Ontario’s homeowners have faced a barrage of government-imposed costs. From municipal land transfer taxes to skyrocketing property taxes and now the HST, homeowners are once again being forced to foot the bill for this government’s legislative agenda.”

Some quick facts about the HST: The harmonized sales tax adds 8% provincial sales tax, or PST, to a list of goods and services that were previously exempt, including utilities, home renovation labour, landscaping, snow removal and many others. OREA estimates that HST on these services will add \$480 in annual tax to the homeowner, based on a family that budgets \$500 per month for such costs. That’s \$480 per year for the average family. Ontario’s real estate industry is essential to the provincial economy. In 2008, real estate in Ontario accounted for \$56.6 billion in sales, \$6.01 billion in ancillary economic spending and \$1.35 billion in land transfer tax revenue to the provincial government. In addition, independent research indicates that the resale housing market creates 80,000 direct and indirect jobs.

They have provided a little chart to demonstrate the additional taxes on your average resale home in Ontario. That average home sells for \$302,354. So after the HST comes into effect, you’ll pay an extra \$80 more tax on legal costs. Beyond what you used to pay, you’ll pay an extra \$1,209 on the real estate commission. You’ll pay an extra \$32 HST on home inspection, you’ll pay an extra \$80 tax on moving costs, you’ll pay an extra \$24 tax on the home appraisal and you’ll pay an extra \$24 tax on the home energy audit, totalling an additional tax of \$1,449.

Clearly, the dream of home ownership under this government just keeps getting harder and further out of reach. The real trick may be hanging on to your home in what should be your golden years. Recently I’ve heard

from the magazine association, because of course last week the government made a special exemption for those people who enjoy a morning newspaper and a coffee, but not all print media are equal in the eyes of the McGuinty government. Let me share with you a letter to Mr. McGuinty from Magazines Ontario dated November 13, 2009. It’s quite current. This is the letter:

“Premier, we were absolutely shocked to read that newspapers are to be exempted from the HST and not magazines.

**1710**

“When we met with key Finance officials we were told that a similar approach for magazines would not be acceptable to the CRA. This is a step in the other direction. It makes our titles less competitive and more expensive. Add to this the fact that Ontario magazine publishers pay foreign magazine publishers’ blue box costs while they generate the most waste. We are paying for the waste of our competitors. This is on top of the fact that the government of Ontario allows its LCBO to abuse its monopoly position to compete and undercut for very tight ad dollars with the private sector and produce a magazine the taxpayer is ultimately subsidizing.

“The \$2-billion Ontario magazine industry is the largest of the cultural media in Ontario and competes in a global market right here in Canada. Most magazines in this province are published by smaller enterprises who, along with the larger multi-title companies, have been struggling with a massive downturn of over 30% in the advertising market. Ontario is home to 75% of the entire Canadian magazine industry and the thousands of permanent jobs and freelance opportunities for our creative workers in all parts of the province. And because Ontario magazines are an exclusively Canadian-content medium, the information, the advertising and the local and regional stories for and about Canadians drive interest in economic activity right here, not across the border. The HST decision further damages the competitive position of Ontario’s magazines with its newspaper colleagues, but also the impact massive foreign media has on the industry. We have no doubt that this will be the tipping point, along with the other challenges, that finishes enterprises of value to our citizens and our businesses.

“In all our dealings with your officials on the HST matter, as well as on the other public policy impediments to competitiveness, we have made two points:

“(1) We only seek fair and equitable treatment.” Sounds fairly reasonable to me.

“(2) We recognize the long-term need to increase Ontario’s competitiveness.

“We know you can appreciate why we are dismayed with your government’s response on the HST and other issues.”

That letter is signed by Mark Jamison, CEO of Magazines Ontario/Canada.

Just so there is no confusion, Mark Jamison was quoted in the media this week after the newspaper exemption announcement and he said, “We’re just gobsmed.... I’m quite certain that we will lose magazines.

This will be the last straw. This came as a total shock because we made the same economic and cultural arguments ... as newspapers." As the Premier likes to do, he is once again picking winners and losers instead of letting the marketplace decide which businesses should succeed.

Reaction is coming in from every front, reaction the government clearly underestimated. I quite literally lost count of the number of petitions that have come through my office alone. They number in the thousands. Every day, citizen reaction comes in to me via letters and e-mails. I would like to give you a small sample of what Ontarians are saying about your harmonized sales tax. I received this e-mail on the weekend:

"Dear Mr. Miller,

"As an average Ontario taxpayer, I find it extremely worrisome that Premier McGuinty is pushing forward with the proposed HST tax. My family does not earn that much living and working in Muskoka and now I have the end of my own job looming for December 31, due to the retirement of the owner of the business. We are not only facing a decrease in income but also an increase in taxation for things that were not taxed before. Basic things like heat, hydro, utilities, as well as food, gas and the necessities are now going to cost the Ontario taxpayers 8% more than before. I currently work in a real estate office and know how hard this tax is also going to hit the homebuyer, 8% more cost on the purchase of their home, their real estate commission, legal fees etc. I feel this is, once again, a tax grab income for the government with little thought to how the average person on the street will manage their daily lives with less money to feed, house and clothe their families. The proposed \$1,000 gift back to the taxpayer is a simple drop in the bucket and does not nearly cover what the ultimate costs will be to the working Ontario family as well as the retired persons who will be paying with their blood and sweat for years to come.

"My vote is no to the tax unless there are limits placed on where and how it is applied.

"As my representative, I would appreciate you expressing this dissatisfaction when it comes down to the vote. Thank you."

That was signed by a Huntsville resident who is clearly distraught at the thought of more taxes being brought in by this government. I can assure him that I will be following his instructions.

Here's another from a Gravenhurst resident. I should mention that he wrote to the Premier as well:

"Mr. Miller,

"I'll be very short. The implementation of the HST is wrong and there is absolutely no factual fiscal evidence that it will do what it's supposed to! As the MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka I ask that you stop this tax grab by exercising any/all means available to you.

"Please don't respond with an automated reply—as the Premier's office has done. Thanks very much."

And I should say to that constituent of Parry Sound-Muskoka, it is obvious the opposition is doing everything and using all the tools, limited though they are, that we

have to make the public aware of this tax and to delay the government passing it so quickly, so people can become aware of it. That's why we're asking for public hearings on Bill 218.

I'm absolutely certain that there are people in northern and rural communities who won't be able to keep the lights on or who simply won't be able to continue living in their homes. You'll force them out of house and home—quite a legacy.

Let me read to you an e-mail that was sent to me by a couple living in Larder Lake—that's in the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane—and directed to their MPP. Here it goes:

"This is a note to let you know our feelings on the harmonization of the PST and GST.

"We feel that as seniors living in your riding we will have to shell out considerably more money than those in southern Ontario.

"For instance heating costs, hydro rates, Internet fees, telephone rates and transportation will rise considerably in northern Ontario.

"As you must be aware we are just beginning to enjoy retirement. The new HST increases on items never taxed before will cause hardship for those on fixed incomes.

"Knowing northern Ontario problems, I would have hoped the northern members in the Liberal Party would have had more influence with the Premier and would have lobbied for the northern residents to defeat this ill-planned tax grab; this does not seem to be the case!!!"—with three exclamation points.

"The rumoured refund we hear about will not compensate for the additional taxes over future years.

"We want you to know how dissatisfied we are with this proposal and your party for bringing it forward"—that would be the Liberal government.

That was from Larder Lake, which is near Kirkland Lake, for those who aren't aware.

**1720**

Another northern resident writes to the Premier:

"Sir, I can contend without fear of exaggeration that I already pay an exorbitant amount for propane and gasoline." Just to clarify, this was written in April. "I live in rural northern Ontario, so our furnace is still running and will continue to do so, well into May, and my wife and I have to commute 90 kilometres a day to go to work or buy groceries or to basically be a part of the land of the living. These two bills alone, sir, quite frankly kill us, and I simply cannot imagine having to pay 8% more just because two taxes became conjoined. I'm certain you will agree that with the current state of flux our economy is in, a seemingly unfair expectation for 8% more out of your taxpayers' pockets is grossly unfair. Also, when the economic ship again rights itself, I have no doubt that the cost of oil will start to rise back to the depressing echelons it reached last year. To imagine another 8% on \$1.65 per litre for gasoline, sir, is almost too much to bear."

The concerns I'm hearing about are not limited to just individual residents or families. Every day, small businesses voice their concerns too.

I received this letter from a small business owner:

“Just wanted to inform you of my opinion re the ill-advised HST.

“When the federal GST became law, my livelihood (firewood production and distribution) was put in jeopardy. Many of my competitors, then as now, were not required to register for or charge the tax because their annual gross sales were under \$30,000.

“Of late, folks are pretty tolerant and will readily pay 5% GST. It has been a struggle.

“Asking people to pay 13% in HST for firewood will not result in anything less than driving that part of the economy underground. Keep in mind that there are still, and always will be, suppliers who legally charge no tax whatsoever.

“My operation might be a drop in the bucket in the grand scheme of things. But to me, it’s my livelihood.

“It’s a detrimental law. Put a stop to it if you can.”

That’s a business in Muskoka. I think I know the business, but I won’t name them.

A Parry Sound–Muskoka building supplier writes:

“Norm, I am writing to tell you we both totally do not agree with the new tax that is being implemented. As our ‘voice,’ please do your best to not allow this bill to continue. Contractors will find it very hard to collect. Many services will now cost more, and the little guy just can’t afford it. I do not think this is a very good time to increase taxes. Our economic situation does not need to have this happen. We need to boost the economy, not hurt it.”

Another business owner writes to me:

“I am a landscape designer. I am concerned about the effect of the new HST tax on our business.

“We are already feeling the effects of the recession and expect that the HST will further dampen the economy in Muskoka.

“We expect the underground economy will grow at the expense of legitimate businesses like ours.” We’ve heard that many times.

“Would you please forward this to your colleagues in the government?”

Another astute business owner wrote:

“In his election platform, Mr. McGuinty said he would not increase taxes. So he is not increasing the rate of tax; he is taxing a good percentage of essential products and commodities which are currently exempt. For some people, this will be a source of anger and an inconvenience. To the vast majority, it will push them further and so far down the ladder of quality of life that they will feel hopeless.

“As a small business owner, it is an outright fabrication that this will reduce paperwork, time or effort to collect and process this tax.

“I am therefore requesting that you, as my elected representative in the Ontario provincial Parliament, do everything in your power to represent your constituents and put a stop to this legislation taking effect.”

I can say that my colleagues and I are doing everything we can.

I’d now like to speak briefly about restrictions on input tax credits, because while I’m talking about business, I should mention that Ontario announced temporary restricted input tax credits for large businesses—that is, businesses with sales of \$10 million or more—and financial institutions, including de minimus financial institutions, relating to energy, telecommunications services, certain road vehicles, and foods, beverages and entertainment under their harmonized sales tax plan.

Input tax credits are one of the supposed advantages to business of a harmonized sales tax, but some businesses will be denied. As I mentioned previously in the House, on page 134 of the budget—that’s the budget from last year—you will find temporary ITC restrictions for business. It amounts to billions of dollars in input tax credits that would be denied to business. In year three it’s \$1.3 billion. One of the sales pitches to business is that they’ll pay the tax but they’ll get it back. However, as I just mentioned, for eight years, for many businesses, that advantage is going to be denied, and it’s over \$1 billion a year. Eight years is a long time for a business to survive. I think you will see many businesses not survive as a result of those denied input tax credits—over \$1 billion a year for up to eight years, eight long years.

The opposition has been very forcefully and at every opportunity asking for consultation on HST aspects of the bill. I could read the quite literally hundreds of letters I’ve received on this government’s plan to harmonize the sales tax. I think it’s safe to say I haven’t had as much correspondence, e-mails etc. on any other single bill that has been put forward in the eight years I’ve been here.

Generally speaking, the McGuinty government has done a terrible job of communicating to Ontarians and to Ontario businesses. There’s a growing public pushback, and I think last week we saw a recognition of that by this government with the exemptions for meals under \$4 and for newspapers. I just want to say that I’ve had more petitions and mail in the last few days since your photo op at Tim Hortons than I’ve had in the last few months. It has been the only honest effort you’ve made to inform Ontarians about the tax, and in fact it may have backfired.

We also heard the previous speaker talking about another aspect of this legislation that would bring tax credits for people who are becoming apprentices, and that’s a positive move. However, as we pointed out on many other occasions, this government could quite easily create much more opportunity for apprentices to actually get placements to become electricians or plumbers or welders by just simply changing the apprenticeship ratios. Ontario is one of the few places that require, in the case of an electrician—and most people don’t realize this—three journeymen, three active, working electricians, for one apprentice. On many, many occasions we have said this makes absolutely no sense whatsoever and they could create much more opportunity for apprentices by simply going to a one-to-one apprenticeship ratio, as most provinces in the country have.

Getting back to the HST, I also want to talk for a moment about tourism, because, of course, the current tax rate for tourist accommodation in the province of

Ontario is 5%. With the HST coming into effect, that's going to bump up to 8%, so you have an extra 3% tax right there that visitors to the area are going to have to pay. But then, as part of this bill, there's also another section that will allow up to 3% more tax in addition to the other 3%, so 6% more tax to be used for destination marketing.

There's another negative aspect of what's happening here, and that is that visitors to Ontario used to be able to go and buy goods and also get the retail sales tax back on accommodations if they applied for a rebate. I used to be in the tourism business. We would fill out the forms for visitors, and that would be another added reason to come and visit the province of Ontario. Through the passage of this bill, Ontario residents will no longer be able to get their rebates back. So not only will visitors to the province be facing up to 6% additional tax—3% that's called PST and another 3% in destination marketing tax—but they won't be able to get the tax back on accommodations or on goods they buy in the province. So this is increased taxes—more negative news for residents.

I was talking again about the HST and its effect on the average person. I was just recently in Kearney attending a seniors' event there, a corn roast, and I went out, as we politicians tend to do, to chat with some of the folks that were cooking the corn. As I walked out there, they said to me, "What are you going to do about our hydro rates?" That was about the way it was framed. I said, "Well, the one thing I can tell you is that, under this government, your hydro rates are going up, because not only do we have things like the green energy bill"—which we've shown is going to greatly increase hydro costs—"but one thing's for sure: You know you're going to be paying 8% more come next July." Unfortunately, that is the reality, and I don't see anything but hydro rates going up. And that's going to not only affect those seniors, but it's going to affect businesses.

As we have said many, many times, at every opportunity we have had on this side of the House—in question period, many of our questions have been geared

toward why the Premier won't agree to public hearings on this bill. It's a very substantial bill. Obviously, based on the number of e-mails that I have just read into the record, there's tremendous interest in it. People want to be heard. I've never had so many different and thoughtful e-mails on a bill.

For that reason, we're trying to give the people an opportunity to go to a public meeting in London or Nipissing or North Bay—where else might they want to go?—or eastern Ontario or up north in Thunder Bay, to give people a chance to really know all the details of this bill and the stakeholders that are affected. So far, the government has absolutely not agreed to that. For that reason, to make our point, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Miller of Parry Sound–Muskoka has moved adjournment of the House. 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 1733 to 1803.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Miller of Parry Sound–Muskoka has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are five; the nays are 34.

**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, November 24.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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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

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Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
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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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	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
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L’hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l’Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L’hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L’hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L’hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L’hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L’hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L’hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l’Assemblée
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Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l’opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal  
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Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette  
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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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