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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 8 December 2009

Mardi 8 décembre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 8 December 2009

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 8 décembre 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**INTERPROVINCIAL POLICING
ACT, 2009**

LOI DE 2009

**SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS
INTERPROVINCIAUX**

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Bartolucci, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act / Projet de loi 203, Loi visant à permettre une meilleure coopération avec les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada en ce qui concerne les services policiers transfrontaliers et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services policiers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise this morning and speak for a while on Bill 203. As I think we've mentioned earlier, and a number of times, our caucus will be supporting this piece of legislation. We think that Bill 203 helps police officers across our province and our country perform their duties at a higher level, and would be somewhat of an additional tool they could use to perform their duties in communities. Obviously, we would want to support that.

I myself met with Chief Dan Parkinson of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and he has mentioned that his particular organization had absolutely no problem with it. I met as well with the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, who had some very small issues with the bill; however, that would be corrected in regulation. It's very seldom we can stand in this House and support each other on a piece of legislation, but this one seems to be something that we are content to have.

I want to put a couple of quotes on the record. To quote Chief Dan Parkinson, the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police: "The proposed legislation would assist Ontario police services to work closely

with our policing partners in Quebec to keep our communities safer. Law enforcement organizations in Ontario already work across jurisdictional lines to fight crime. We need to also work across provincial borders to be as effective as possible in preventing and addressing crimes."

As I said, that's by the Chief Dan Parkinson, president of OACP. He has told me that they do support the bill and look forward to its implementation and to any benefits to the policing community and to public safety in general.

My understanding is that the legislation is based on the Uniform Law Conference of Canada model for cross-border policing. The model serves as an example for Canadian jurisdictions to follow when drafting cross-border policing legislation. I also understand that Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have already enacted similar legislation; that should not be a problem. I think that as we move forward, our party would want to see any problems that might possibly arise from this, but I don't think it will be too detrimental at this time.

While I've got the floor—we were talking about the policing community and the province of Quebec—I had an interesting evening on Saturday night. We had a memorial service on December 6 at the Penetanguishene Centennial Museum, in memory of the 14 young university engineering students who lost their lives 20 years ago at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal; it was the 20th anniversary. At that particular memorial service, a number of community leaders—the mayors, the provincial member—myself—the police chief of Midland and a representative from the OPP—all spoke about what we can all do to bring an end to violence against women.

I think that tragedy in Montreal set the bar for all types of conversations and potential legislation. It is interesting that because it happened in Montreal, we have these agreements; they are cross-border. However, with violence against women in domestic disputes there's really no border and we all have to do better than that. It was interesting that the police chief of Midland spoke in favour, as did OPP Constable Robin Chiasson, who spoke on behalf of the OPP. As I mentioned earlier, Chief Mike Osborne, from the town of Midland, spoke as well. Both said that we had to do better, and we all made commitments to do a better job.

I thank La Maison Rosewood Shelter for hosting this event; it will be a yearly event in Midland–Penetanguishene. It's an area of policing and an area of community service that I think we have to do better in.

As we move forward with this legislation—I understand this Legislature is coming to a close in a few days—obviously, there are a lot of things that our party is very upset about. We are not happy at all that some of the legislation has been rammed through. However, this bill is one that we can support, although we won't be supporting most of the other pieces of legislation that the Liberal government has brought forward.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words today in third reading debate on Bill 203. I hope that in the end this turns out to be a very positive bill for the policing community and for public safety in Ontario. I look forward to comments from other members as we finish third reading debate.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: This is what you call “just-in-time debate.” There are a couple of things that New Democrats continue to have concerns with in terms of this bill. They were raised at committee by people who took the time out of their busy lives to come and comment on the bill, and they were raised by people who actually took the time to do some research on their own; people who looked at the legislation in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, people who looked at the situation in the Maritimes, who looked at the current course of events.

0910

On third reading, I want to raise again the issues that were raised by those individuals, because our concern should always be to ensure that we pass good legislation; and where we don't pass necessarily good legislation, that the public has an opportunity to say why they think there are some problems.

There are essentially two remaining problems with this bill. The first problem concerns an issue of accountability and reporting. All we need to do is read the front pages of any newspaper over the last six or seven months. The situation which happened at the Vancouver airport—there are many issues which flow from the unfortunate death of an individual at the Vancouver airport. One of the issues that flows from that is the issue of who police services report to, what the line of responsibility is, in terms of holding people to account, but also in terms of instructing police officers on given procedures in a given location or in a given region.

I believe there is still an area in this bill where it is not clear what the alignment of responsibility and accountability will be. So let me give a hypothetical example: Let's say that for whatever reasons, members of a police service in Manitoba come to Ontario. They come to Ontario, let's say, at the request of police services in Ontario. Let's just assume that they are asked to come and they are asked to participate in a project or in an ongoing investigation of some kind in the greater Toronto area.

I think anyone would recognize that providing police services in the greater Toronto area is a complicated issue, becoming more complicated all the time. Let's be clear: The city of Toronto is not one homogenous blob; the city of Toronto, for example—and I think the same

goes for the GTA—is a series of communities, sometimes defined by income, sometimes defined by ethnic origin, sometimes defined by language, sometimes defined by the kinds of economic or social activities that prevail in the given neighbourhood. So providing police services or working with police services in the GTA, or indeed the city of Toronto, would not be an uncomplicated thing.

I believe if you read the legislation, it is not clear who, in terms of local police services, should be held accountable and responsible in terms of detailing for those police services that come from outside the province exactly what their responsibilities will be and exactly how the reporting should happen. I know we received some assurances—I think they were vague assurances—from the civil service staff who were present that this would be looked after; it may. But it is not clear in the legislation how accountability, how responsibility between the local police service and the police service that comes from outside the province is going to happen.

Now, if I were a member of a police service coming from outside the province and it was not clear to me the lines of responsibility, the lines of accountability, who I was to report to etc. and what the expectations were on me, I might feel a bit uncomfortable about that. And I think someone coming into Ontario from outside the province, reading the legislation, would feel somewhat uncomfortable.

I think it's a reality of human experience that as long as things are going well, everybody is fine. As soon as something does not go well, everyone is looking for someone to blame or someone to hold responsible. I think the legislation should be clear in terms of lines of accountability, lines of responsibility, both for police services from coming outside the province and with respect to individual citizens in the province of Ontario.

Now, there's another issue that I think remains somewhat fuzzy when you read the legislation. I wish that in terms of police services everything always worked A-okay, but knowing what human frailties are and recognizing the historical condition of societies, things are not always A-okay. So the issue of police discipline is raised. I believe, if you read the legislation, there is still an uncertainty and vagueness about how an individual citizen who perhaps feels that they have a grievance with a police officer who comes to Ontario from another jurisdiction, how they pursue that issue of police accountability and discipline.

I don't think this is good for individual citizens; I don't think this is good for individual police officers. And if it's not good for individual citizens and it's not good for individual police officers because there's uncertainty or vagueness, I don't think it's good for policing as a whole.

New Democrats wish these issues had been addressed. We wish these issues had been addressed in a more thoughtful fashion so that not only citizens but police services would know exactly where the lines of responsibility, accountability and reportability rest.

Now, I think part of the reason that this has happened is, once again, this is a time allocation. The government is more interested in simply ramming through the legislation than it is interested in dotting the i's, crossing the t's and thoughtfully addressing the issues that have been raised. This is how we end up with legislation that, two or three years later, someone looks at and says, "Gee, you know, that should have been addressed at the time," or, "That should have been more thoughtfully addressed at the time."

Yes, this will facilitate some interprovincial policing services, it will lessen the complication of interprovincial policing services, and for that reason New Democrats can support the bill. But we want to be very clear: There are really important issues in this bill and in this sphere of policing that have not been addressed by the legislation, and if they have been addressed, they've been addressed in such an uncertain and vague way that we believe it will lead to complications and troubles down the road. For that reason—I will say it again—this government should have taken more time, they should have allowed more public discussion, they should have asked for more public discussion outside the environs of the greater Toronto area. We should have taken more time to look at the experience of legislation like this which has already been passed in provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan. We should have ensured that Quebec is in fact going to introduce and proceed with legislation.

I ask this of the parliamentary assistant: Has Quebec in fact introduced their legislation? What stage is their legislation at, and how does their legislation correspond with Ontario's legislation?

These are all things that should have been addressed.

0920

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

Mr. Dave Levac: Thank you for this opportunity to address the third reading of Bill 203.

First, let me start by thanking the members from Simcoe North and Kenora–Rainy River as respective critics that are dealing with this. I understand that the member from Kenora–Rainy River was kind of checked into duty as a result of our friend Peter Kormos's, the member from Welland, inability to deal with the bill. Having spoken to him previously, I want to thank all those members for their input, their desire to see that this legislation gets passed, their support and the questions that have been raised.

First, let me deal with the member for Simcoe North's concern about the police services board. Indeed, he is correct that there was an understanding—and staff have already started to deal with this—that the concerns that were raised by the police services board would be dealt with in regulation. We felt that a regulatory stream in this particular case with their requests could be dealt with a lot easier, and better, in a regulation format. We believe that the police services board's organization has agreed that this is the way to go and has accepted that responsibility that the government has made the commitment on.

On the member from Kenora–Rainy River's comments, just to make a couple of points: I don't know that I subscribe to his characterization of it being too vague. What I do agree with is that when he did bring a couple of points to the floor, we did recess to address some of the concerns that he raised; we in fact did deal with the one issue, First Nations, that he'd brought as a concern to the floor. We did change, by amendment, a couple of issues in the legislation to address that specifically, and I'll address that in a more formal way in a moment.

On the regulation format with regard to indemnity, liability, responsibility and discipline in the bill, there are also regulations that are going to be dealt with that specifically talk to him. I committed to him then and I can report back that staff have taken those concerns under advisement and will try to bring a little bit more certainty to—I don't know if it would satisfy him, to be honest with you. But it would bring more satisfaction to him, I believe, about the concerns regarding the discipline and who.

What I did discover, with questioning, is that it would still be the responsibility of the out-of-province service to deal with that, but there's going to be a built-in co-operative nature: The regulation would imply that the information that would be necessary for that disciplinary panel would be shared between provinces. I hope that that would deal somewhat with the concerns that he has laid out.

In terms of Quebec, my understanding is that as of a month or so ago, there was a framework for the legislation; and just recently, within the last couple of weeks, my understanding is that the legislation has been presented, and yes, it's very much a mirror of what Ontario's legislation was about. I can assure him that Quebec is pursuing this with as much vigour as we have in ensuring that we have the legislation in place to take care of the issues that we talk about in terms of special constables.

Let me make sure that the three foundations we're talking about are laid out. First, there's fresh pursuit. That is the area that does not get affected by this piece of legislation. Fresh pursuit is something that requires no legislation, because it's already in an agreement that if somebody is following somebody from Ontario to Quebec, under the possibility of a Criminal Code charge, that continues. That is not being affected by this piece of legislation. That's an important point.

The other two pillars are the ongoing investigation component of this particular special constable allocation, and that's the piece that is actually going to be very beneficial for us; and the second one is special events, such as the G8, the Olympics, royal visits, which we've talked about in this House before and at committee, where we need to have co-operation between provinces all the way through. We're hoping that applies to this piece of legislation, because under that circumstance—I'll explain a little bit later as to how that can have an impact and an effect on our capacity for special constables.

So I hope I've dealt with a couple of those issues that the two members have brought up.

I would also say that police services in Ontario and other provinces have asked for this type of legislation to allow police officers to retain their powers when they travel to another Canadian jurisdiction on police matters.

One of the things that's interesting is that there have been two or three people that I've spoken to about this issue off the cuff, and they were surprised that we don't have that authority already. They assumed that the fresh pursuit piece was the one that was allowed right across the board and that it applied to investigations and special events. They were not aware that we didn't have this kind of agreement in place. Although we have other provinces that have moved toward this over the last few years, Ontario does not have that yet, and that's why we're seeing this particular piece of legislation.

The other comment that came up a couple of times in the House—and I hope we've brought the temperature down on that one—was, "What about the RCMP?" Well, they already have that authority. It's a built-in federal service that has authority to be—we've got something like 1,500 RCMP officers in Ontario already working and acting on behalf of safety and security, so they have that authority already.

Without this legislation, when it's necessary for a police officer from another Canadian province or territory to work in Ontario, the police officer must be appointed temporarily as a special constable by a police services board or the OPP commissioner, with the approval of the ministry.

This special constable system was not designed to address provincial cross-border policing, and it's ineffective for those types of appointments that we're talking about, which are on the two pillars of special events and ongoing investigation. The system does not automatically allow for an out-of-province police officer to have the powers of an Ontario police officer and does not address the oversight, the discipline and the civil liability pieces that we're talking about and that were brought up by the member from the NDP. Conversely, Ontario police officers do not automatically retain their authority when they cross provincial boundaries.

Because of these important points, our police partners such as the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, and the Police Association of Ontario support the legislation for extra-provincial policing. They think that it's the best way to go.

I know I'm already being positively heckled by the members of the opposition who are telling me they don't need the details that are found inside of this because they really are onside and they want us to pursue this legislation vigorously, but we have to take our time to make sure that we get it right.

As far as that goes, I want to come back to the member from Kenora–Rainy River, who asked me about the public hearings and such. When we had that opportunity to present, three people signed up and two actually showed up to present. I don't know whether or not that's an indication of whether people were aware of the bill or

what the rights were. One deputation did bring up a concern for civil liberties, and inside of that, one of the things I didn't agree with was the assumption that it was giving extreme powers to the police. That is not the case with this legislation. I confidently say to that deputation that the concern was laid on the table and the questions were asked as to whether or not it was giving extra power to the police officers. It does not give any extra power to the police officer. I want to make that point clear. You have the same powers within the province that you are attending to—no special powers, no extra powers, no powers over and above what's already in existence in those provinces. Quite frankly, it was a smart thing to ask that question, because it made sure that we are not providing police officers with any extraordinary powers that would allow them to do anything less to a civilian.

The problem here is that we have to make sure we stay focused on exactly why we're introducing this bill: It's to make sure that the bad guys are not getting away with things that—because of the type of legislation we presently have, we're not empowering the police to do what they should be doing, and can be doing already, in each of the provinces that we're talking about. With an increased incidence of interprovincial crime, it's vital to coordinate our efforts, and that's precisely why we're doing what we're doing. I believe the streamlined opportunities we have here are a step forward in the puzzle that I said was in existence before; that this piece of that puzzle ensures we have an opportunity to go after the bad guys.

0930

If adopted into law, the bill would give the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services the authority to designate officials who would receive and decide on applications from police commanders from other provinces and territories to have their officers designated as extra-provincial police officers with full policing powers in Ontario. Under the terms of the proposed legislation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services would designate one or more persons in Ontario as officials with the power to appoint an extra-provincial police officer as a police officer in Ontario. An extra-provincial or out-of-province police service that wishes to obtain police officer status for one or more of its police officers would be required to make a written application to an appointing official in Ontario.

An appointing official may appoint an extra-provincial police officer as a police officer in Ontario for a period of no more than three years, subject to any conditions imposed by that appointment—therefore the accountability concern that has been raised. The appointing official would be required to make the decision within seven days after receiving the request. There's one option in there for a 72-hour turnaround in the special circumstance of an extremely time-sensitive investigation of a crime that could be committed.

Bill 203 would allow municipal police chiefs and territorial police chiefs—referring to the amendment that was made to include First Nations—and OPP detachment

commanders to extend police powers for short periods of time in urgent circumstances within the 72-hour turnaround that I referred to. Once approved, the appointment would be effective on the date indicated on the appointment form. Similar legislation in other Canadian provinces and territories would grant reciprocal authority to Ontario police officers working outside Ontario.

Let me move to the SIU. This will provide increased accountability. An out-of-province police officer would be subject to an investigation by the SIU and required to co-operate with such investigations under the agreement. The new legislation would allow the public to lodge complaints against an out-of-province police officer and for investigations of those complaints to take place in Ontario, hence the accountability. Disciplinary proceedings, if warranted, would remain the responsibility of the out-of-province police officer's home province. But as you can see, with that SIU investigation, the accumulated information would be shared with the other province, which kind of plugs the hole that was considered to be in the legislation.

Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have already adopted province-wide cross-border policing legislation that establishes a process for granting authority to out-of-province police officers. All provinces, including Ontario and Quebec, have used the Uniform Law Conference of Canada model as a legislative base, so they're quite in harmony with each other, and it provides us with an opportunity to be assured that this piece of legislation is not being used for anything other than to ensure that we're going after the bad guy.

This model was developed by a working group with representatives from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Justice Canada, the Solicitor General for Canada, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The working group consulted various police groups, such as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards and the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, to ensure that the draft legislation was responsive to police needs in each of the provinces.

Ontario has been in discussion with Quebec for some time concerning implementation, and signed an agreement at the previous first ministers' meetings. Ontario's proposed cross-border policing issues are generally in line with those of Quebec. This is very important, not only give the geographic proximity, but also for the frequent co-operation between Ontario and Quebec police forces. We're pleased that just last month, the Quebec government introduced and passed in principle legislation on cross-border policing that we were working on with Quebec.

I honestly believe that the legislation supports Ontario's commitment to public safety by allowing all extra-provincial police officers to apply for and obtain extra-provincial police status in a timely manner. This type of legislation avoids the unnecessary delays in operations or investigations and, secondly, enhances the enforcement ability of extra-provincial police officers conducting investigations and operations in Ontario, thereby doing

what I said at the very beginning, which is an important part of this discussion all the way through: This is not about us versus them; this is about going after the bad guys. So Quebec, Ontario and subsequently all the other provinces have found a common bond: for us to chase after those bad guys. They have the capacity and the ability to modernize themselves as criminals. We have to do the same thing here.

I'll end by saying that I want to thank the staff that have worked so hard in providing me with the opportunity to engage in the discussion. I want to thank the minister for his trust and his support. I want to thank the opposition members for being thoughtful in their deputations about the bill. I also think that criminals will get the message loud and clear that if you think you're going to use politics to take us apart on the issue, you're sadly mistaken, and we're coming after you bad guys.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 1, 2009, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please 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 0936 to 0941.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Hampton, Howard	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Carroll, Aileen	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Shurman, Peter
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
DiNovo, Cheri	Martiniuk, Gerry	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Fonseca, Peter	Moridi, Reza	

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those opposed?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Government order G175.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The bill is still in committee.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further business, then, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0945 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park a class from George Harvey high school, from the riding of York South–Weston. They will be in the gallery shortly.

Mr. Michael Prue: I have two guests I would like to introduce. The first is Shanthini Mylvaganam, who is the mother of page Saeyon, who is here today. She's from Beaches–East York, and we welcome her to the gallery to watch us and especially to watch her son. The second guest is Mr. Trent Reschny, who is also a guest from Beaches–East York, who is in the members' west gallery.

Hon. Jim Watson: I don't believe he's here yet, but I'd like to welcome Dave Arbuckle, who works for the region of Peel, and he has visited Ottawa before.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I would like to introduce my constituent Mark Douglas of Georgetown. Welcome, Mark.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't believe he's here yet, but I want to welcome him in case he does show up: George Smitherman.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke knows we do not make reference to attendance of members.

Leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I don't know if they've arrived yet, but I want to welcome Rick Pybus, chair of the OPSEU CAS sector; Tracy Rehel, president of Local 304, the York children's aid society; Aubrey Gonsalves, president of Toronto CAS; and Nancy Simone, from the Toronto CCAS.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Seated in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to welcome, from my constituency office, Anita Ratkovic-Baric, Craig Bradford, Kim Davis, her grandson Kristian Young, Veronika Sonier and her grandson Cole Sonier. Welcome to Queen's Park, all.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The auditor's 2009 annual report found that

Canada's worst government didn't learn a thing from the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. In fact, on the first page of his report, the auditor says that a culture has developed where Dalton McGuinty does not see getting maximum value for taxpayer dollars as any kind of priority.

After every scathing revelation of waste, Dalton McGuinty's eyes well up with crocodile tears and he promises that he will try to do better. Minister, why can't you understand the public doesn't want more promises? They want change that starts at the top.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: First of all, we do want to thank the Auditor General and his staff for the very good work they do, for the recommendations they bring forward on how we can, in fact, improve the delivery of the vital public services that Ontarians expect.

As he does every year, the auditor pointed out some areas where it appears that we have some work to do, and we are committed to doing that, to act on the auditor's recommendations. It's very important to follow up on those recommendations.

Interjection: As we have in the past.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have in the past, as my colleague says. It's important that we take into account his recommendations and the recommendations of other stakeholders as we move forward. And it is important to the respond to the auditor. I know my ministerial colleagues and I and the Premier look forward to responding to the auditor's recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister says that they have some work to do. I would say that is the understatement of the year. Minister, we've heard your phony promises time and time again. What the auditor has demonstrated is that a culture of entitlement has set in deep across the Dalton McGuinty government, and the Premier himself is to blame. It's not just me saying that; take the auditor's word, who urged the government to "spend the taxpayers' money like it is their own." But we're seeing the opposite from the McGuinty government. One example: For a monitor that would cost \$250 at Future Shop, the government paid some \$1,300 in taxpayers' funds. It begs the question: Were the computer vendors represented by Jason Grier or the Courtyard Group?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We do believe in looking at what the auditor recommends and we do believe we need to shine light on these areas; that we need to have a higher standard. That's why we have expanded the powers of the Auditor General. That's why we opened up hospitals, schools, colleges, universities and crown corporations to value-for-money audits. We even opened Hydro One and OPG to the auditor for his scrutiny. What we've done is set a higher standard for everyone for more transparency, more scrutiny, more responsibility and more accountability.

I stress again that we take the auditor's recommendations seriously. We have an obligation to respond to those recommendations, and we will respond. Many of them, we have already taken steps on.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: In his report on the eHealth \$1-billion boondoggle, the auditor found consultants who were then allowed to hire other consultants, sometimes from their own firm. In his annual report, the auditor found that the procurement consultants at Ontario Buys similarly went and hired their own consultants. It's no doubt very ironic that consultants who were supposed to help improve procurement rules were they themselves breaking those very same rules.

I ask the Acting Premier: You know who got rich off these deals because it was your government that made them. Will you table the full list of consultants at Ontario Buys who got rich at taxpayer expense?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The one point that I would note is that, in fact, those contracts were let by our broader public sector partners in most cases.

Let's review what Auditor Generals have said in the past, because the member talked about accountability and following the recommendations of the auditor. Here's what he said in his 2003 report: "It was apparent to us this year that there were far too many areas where prior-year concerns—often going back four, five, six or even 10 years—had not been satisfactorily addressed ... there is no excuse for a lack of effective action." In 2002, the Conservatives had only implemented 15% of the recommendations.

What did the Auditor General say yesterday? That this government had implemented more than 90% of his recommendations from 2007. We take him seriously. We take this Legislature seriously. We take committees—

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

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The auditor's latest report reveals a new billion-dollar boondoggle happening under your watch, in your ministry. With eHealth and now this, two thirds of your HST tax grab is being committed to McGuinty Liberal scandals. Minister, the auditor found that you're doing a poor job of assessing who should be getting welfare, and the result: You've made over \$1 billion in overpayments to welfare and the Ontario disability support program. I ask the minister: Will the people who scammed the welfare system also receive your \$1,000 HST bribe cheques?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw his last comment, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

1040

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I think that it's a good question, but I would like to remind the Leader of the Opposition that the overpayments started with the two parties who were in government before us. I would like to remind the leader of the third party that the \$1.1 billion

was there in 2003, when we came into power. Any overpayment is not acceptable, and this government is determined to make sure that the overpayments cease. We have created—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the member from Nepean to withdraw her comment, please.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Under this government, we have created the overpayment recovery unit and we will recover the money that is due to the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: This is another billion-dollar boondoggle on top of the eHealth scandal: a billion dollars of welfare abuse, fraud and overpayments detailed in the auditor's report. Let me give you one example, Minister. You received five complaints from five different people about one family that was driving new SUVs while receiving social benefits. The auditor is quoted as saying, "We had a number of audits that made our heads shake." Well, join the club. The auditor went on to say that this recipient is repaying that overpayment with \$60-a-month reductions in current income support. I ask the minister, why don't you just make them sell the SUVs?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: An excellent question by the leader of the opposite party. My notes indicated to me, about the family driving new SUVs, that the first complaint was in 1996. Who was in power in 1996? And why didn't the Tory government investigate the complaint? Second complaint: 1999. Who was in power at the time? What's the answer? Complaints against this were ignored. Investigated again in 2001: no complaint, no investigation. So we did it. We finished the investigation and we have established a repayment plan.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: So the minister's response is to simply sit on her hands. She won't ask them to sell the SUVs; she'll simply do a slap on the wrist.

In fact, another example was someone who received \$78,000 in overpayments. His current benefits were reduced by \$10 a month to pay it back. The auditor said that at that rate it would take 650 years to recover what you should not have paid out in the first place. Dalton McGuinty refuses to make any of his friends pay back Ontario taxpayers for the eHealth scandal. Does this minister have any intention of recovering the \$1.2 billion wasted under her watch?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to say that, yes, we will recover all of the \$1.3 billion in overpayments. Unfortunately, there is overpayment that dated to when this government was in power and they did nothing. We put together the overpayment recovery unit and we have a plan for everyone to repay overpayments, because this government does not accept that people receive taxpayers' money when they do not qualify for it. So we will continue to recover. But to say that we will be able

to recover from those who have left the country or those who are not in this world anymore, no, but—

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

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. The McGuinty Liberals have spent the last few weeks doing their very, very best to ram the harmonized sales tax through this Legislature. They stifled debate, they refused province-wide hearings and last evening they walked out of a committee meeting, forcing the proceedings to stop. How can the McGuinty Liberals be so arrogant that they're not willing to listen to concerned Ontario families, or even have a reasonable debate on the harmonized sales tax?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: For the past nine months, we have engaged in a number of debates across the province—more than 40 hours of debate here in the Legislature. My caucus colleagues and I have done more than 160 public sessions. There has been, in our view, ample and prolonged debate. This debate will no doubt continue for a long time to come. We understand that. We respect that.

We look forward to having the vote again in this House. We look forward to having the vote on this important bill, which will lower taxes for Ontarians, which will help the most vulnerable in our society and which will help build a better and more prosperous future with more jobs, higher incomes and more capital investment.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government is in full damage control mode. Backbench Liberal MPPs are scrambling to defend their unfair tax on gas and home heating. Instead, they should be listening to Ontarians—Ontarians like John Newbigging of Hamilton, like Laura Feeny of Courtice and like Amanda-Lyn Smith of Orleans.

The McGuinty Liberals are walking out of committee hearings, limiting debate and doing everything they can to ram through the HST. How can they be anything but arrogant?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We, in fact, have been debating this now for nine months. We've had more than 40 hours of debate here in the Legislature. We, in fact, watched the opposition walk out of question periods, refusing to use their time to question the government on that. We saw a very sorry spectacle last week where members of the opposition refused to listen to the Speaker.

We support this bill. People in Ontario know that. It is the right plan for Ontario. The nine months of debate we've had on it, the more than 160 public sessions, and the public committee hearings we've had, have given us the opportunity to hear from people. We've made a number of changes to the legislation since its introduction. We are committed to building jobs and a more prosperous future for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, not listening? Refusing to listen? Walking out on meetings? It's like the pot calling the kettle black around here. What kind of a response is that?

You know, it's not just Joseph Morin of Peterborough, and Anita Linneki from Elgin county who will not have a chance to be heard. The McGuinty Liberals are so desperate to ram this bill through that they've even prevented their own message from getting out.

On Thursday, the Liberals used their majority to prevent the opposition from questioning their economic mercenary, Jack Mintz. They even shut him down. What does that say about the arrogance of this McGuinty Liberal government?

Interjection: We wanted Hugh Mackenzie to come. They said no.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Yes. In fact, Mr. Mintz was the Conservatives' expert witness last year. He supports the government's policy.

There has been a lot of debate. We look forward to the opportunity to pass this bill, to pass one of the largest tax cuts in Ontario history and to create some 600,000 jobs for those people in Ontario who are looking for work to build better incomes and a better future for our children and their children. The times call for difficult choices. This government is prepared to lead; this government is prepared to build a better future for all Ontarians.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Again, to the acting Premier: the McGuinty Liberals might ram the HST legislation through, but the fight is far from over—at least for New Democrats, it's far from over. Yesterday, I was in Ottawa with Jack Layton and Carole James, urging Liberal and Conservative MPs who are opposed to this tax to stand up for their constituents and vote no to the HST. The tax still needs to pass several parliamentary hurdles, as everyone in this chamber knows, including a vote on the \$4.3-billion bribe to Ontario.

What will the McGuinty government—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

Including the vote on the \$4.3 billion dollars of sweetening-of-the-pot money that the federal government is giving to the Acting Premier.

My question is this: What will the McGuinty government do if Parliament actually refuses to pass on that sweetener?

1050

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have put together, working with the federal government, a package of tax reforms for all Ontarians that will lower taxes for 93% of us and will create some 600,000 jobs. My understanding is that the HST legislation passed the federal House last week. There are some votes to follow from that. But this government remains committed to lowering taxes for

Ontario's most vulnerable, to doing what organizations like the Daily Bread Food Bank and individuals like Hugh Mackenzie said, which was to proceed with this. It will create jobs; it will lower taxes for the most vulnerable. As the Ottawa Citizen said in its editorial today in response to the leader's press conference yesterday, this is a substantive public policy. We choose that over stunts every time. It's the right thing. It's about a brighter future—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Too bad for the people of Ontario that this government doesn't choose to listen to what they have to say, never mind stunts or anything else. The New Democrats, however, are standing up for the people of Ontario and for their families by taking this fight to Ottawa. Despite the best efforts of the McGuinty Liberals to close off debate and ram the HST through this House, it is far from a done deal. The Liberal benches in Ottawa were startlingly empty for the first HST vote. Conservative MPs vocally critical of the HST were missing too. Will the McGuinty government reconsider this unfair tax if Parliament says no to the \$4.3-billion sweetener?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: A week or so ago, the member said that the first vote would be lost, and it wasn't. I think it passed 130 to 29.

I don't think the member opposite has much credibility on this particular issue. I would suggest that she and her party not vote against doubling the senior property tax credit. I would suggest that she and her party not vote against making Ontario's tax rate for the lowest incomes the lowest in Canada. I would suggest that she follow the advice of people like Hugh Mackenzie and others who understand and see through the rhetoric and see through the stunts, that we need difficult choices to create jobs to provide a better future for our children and their children. Let's work together. This is difficult. We've had nine months of public debate. It's time to get on with it. It's time to lower taxes and give more Ontarians hope for a better and brighter future.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Harper Conservatives are taking pages out of the McGuinty HST playbook. They refused public hearings and shut down debate. But MPs will have to vote on the \$4.3-billion sweetener to Ontario. They may very well reject that vote; they very well may, the way things are turning out these days.

My question is a simple one: Why won't this Acting Premier even talk about the possibility of the sweetener not flowing to this government?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There was one recorded vote in the House of Commons: It was 132 to 29.

What I want to talk about is how to create 600,000 jobs. What I want to talk about is doubling the property tax credit for seniors. What I want to talk about is lowering consumer prices overall. What I want to talk about is making a brighter future for all Ontarians.

There's no doubt that this is a complicated tax package. We welcome the support of federal Conservatives in this. We welcome the support of the federal government with \$4.3 billion that will allow Ontarians to transition into this new tax system. After nine months of debate, 40 hours in this House, public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration, it's time to vote. I welcome the opportunity to vote and stand up for a brighter and better future for all Ontarians.

AGENCY SPENDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This fall we learned about the extravagant expenses of Liberal friend Steve Mahoney, chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Mahoney isn't the only former MPP who's a Liberal who's billing taxpayers for outrageous expenses. Records obtained through the freedom of information reveal that Frank Miclash was given an additional allowance of \$2,300 a month to rent an apartment in Toronto when he was appointed acting chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal in May 2008. Why did you approve this expense, Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This is an excellent question. The reason why we've approved that is that the interim chair was coming to Toronto on an interim basis. Instead of living in hotels at \$250 a night, it was cheaper for him to have an apartment here in town. That's the reason why we have approved those expenses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I stay in a hotel in Toronto; it's \$150 for me, so I don't know where you're sleeping. The shelter allowance for a single mother on disability support is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. The member from Cambridge is not being helpful.

Please continue.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The shelter allowance for a single mother on disability support is \$714 a month. You gave your Liberal friend Frank Miclash over three times that for an apartment he expenses and uses as little as four times a month. The auditor's annual report found that ODSP, which Miclash reviews, wasted \$663 million. When the auditor said that the program failed to ensure that only eligible persons received funds, was he talking about your Liberal friend, Frank Miclash?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very surprised to have a question like this from a member whose party cut social assistance by 22%. Again, I'm going to repeat to them that when we came into power in 2003, the overpayment was \$1.1 billion under their watch, and they did nothing. Our government has a plan with those who have an overpayment to repay according to their capacity to pay. We have also established the overpayment recovery unit, and with that we have people who are dedicated to the

recovery. They may think it's funny, but we are serious about collecting these overpayments.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Because the McGuinty Liberals limited public debates and hearings into the unfair HST, people like Trent Reschny didn't get a chance to be heard. Trent is a full-time musician. He wanted to tell the committee about the impact that the HST—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): When we bring guests, and I am referring specifically to the gentleman in the chamber, please remain seated. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Prue: He wanted to tell the committee about the impact that the HST will have on his small business. He's in the Legislature, as we've just heard. How could the McGuinty government be so arrogant that they're unwilling to even listen to small business people and small business owners like Trent?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We welcome the gentleman to the House, and we appreciate the challenges of a small business in Ontario, particularly in this economy. That's why we're cutting the small business tax rate by 18%. You're voting against that. That's why we are cutting personal taxes for modest-income Ontarians and doubling the sales tax credit. I doubt very much that my colleague took time to do that. I'm also given to understand that there were opposition time slots yesterday that weren't used because they didn't have people lined up.

So we are moving forward after more than 40 hours of debate. We welcome the public's participation in a variety of forums. I have met with the musicians' union myself. I've met with a variety of other stakeholders.

It's time to vote on this, it's time to create 600,000 jobs and it's time to work for a better and brighter future for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: I trust that Trent and everyone else in the province just heard a non-answer. Trent is here with a specific question for the Minister of Finance. He's a hard-working musician whose income is just high enough to require him to charge GST, soon to be HST, but many of his gigs are weddings, where he's unable to claim input tax credits. With no savings to pass on to clients, he will have to charge the full 13% HST.

How can Trent operate a competitive business when he has to charge the HST and those below the line do not? While other similarly qualified musicians just below the income threshold do not charge it, he will be put at a great tax disadvantage, and you know it.

1100

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I obviously can't comment on specific tax cases. What I can say is, the tax package has been designed to accommodate people of modest incomes. We are cutting the first tax bracket for people of modest incomes. We are lowering the business tax rate for small businesses by some 17%. This tax package will result in some 93% of Ontarians paying less in overall

taxes. This is the most important package of tax reforms we can bring forward to create jobs to build a better future for people like Trent and others.

As difficult as the package is, I disagree with the NDP. I disagree with their approach. We're going to pass this bill. We are going to build a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. My riding of Peterborough has a strong tradition of manufacturing innovation. Researchers at Trent University are involved in studies of global significance, helping to solve complex problems around the world. Recently, General Electric, one of the most innovative companies in the world, announced they are making a \$100-million investment in their Peterborough facility. This investment will create 33 new high-skill jobs and retain an additional 75 jobs, putting a higher focus on research and development for their large motors division.

GE Canada president and CEO Elyse Allan said, "It really was a recognition of how competitive Ontario has become on a global stage and our ability as a global company to invest here in Ontario, to grow here in Ontario and to have the ability to export around the world new technology and exciting products."

This is an example of what our—

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for Peterborough for the question. There are two things that I would add. I believe that GE Canada, one of the largest, one of the most successful and one of the most innovative companies in the world, has made a wise decision by making a \$100-million investment in our province, and we are proud of that. Both GE Canada and this government are concerned about the jobs of the future for our children and our grandchildren. That future is brighter today in Peterborough because of that investment. I want to thank GE for recognizing the fact that by substantially improving the competitive position of Ontario businesses, they can make further investments in our province. They have a wonderful history, but we need a future based on new jobs. So we want to thank GE for making that investment.

I want remind the good people of Peterborough that there are two parties in this House that will stand in their place and say that we should not make changes to ensure that we have a brighter future for our children. That vote will be recorded, and we're looking forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Investments such as those by General Electric are welcome news to the people of Peterborough who are looking for work. People rely on their jobs to provide for their families. The most important thing government can do is encourage investment for job creation.

Recently, University of Calgary economist Jack Mintz stated that an estimated 591,000 additional new jobs will be created. He also says it will increase overall annual worker incomes by up to 8.8%, or \$29.4 billion. The TD Bank estimates the HST will reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario by roughly \$5.3 billion, and that the majority of these savings will be passed on to customers within the first year.

My constituents in Peterborough want the straight goods. Tell us what the HST will mean for families in Peterborough looking for work.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Our package is designed to ensure that families have the dignity of a job, so that a mom and dad can put their kids to bed at night and say that they have a brighter future because they went to work today.

I remember in this place when the members of the official opposition were for cutting taxes and were for creating jobs. They're voting against that. I remember when the third party believed that we should have a more progressive tax system, but—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment, please. I just remind the honourable members of standing order 22, which speaks to the fact that you can speak in English or French, and you speak through the chair. Some members are very good at doing that. Others, I would much prefer that you be looking at me and not turning back and responding to the member. Please continue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

I remember when the third party was for a progressive tax system that would see an increase of tax grants to those people of the least means. That's exactly what our package is doing; that's exactly what they're going to vote against. It is so important in the 21st century that we give to our people the hope and the dignity of a job, and that's exactly what inspires our tax package.

I'm so proud that GE Canada, one of the leading companies in the world, has decided to make this investment in the member's riding. It is so important for the future of Peterborough and for Ontario.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Finance. A few minutes ago I introduced Mark Douglas of Georgetown, Mark the painter. In a letter to Mr. Douglas, which was dated February 21, 2008, the finance minister said he wouldn't agree to harmonizing taxes with the GST if it increased taxes, "particularly with respect to basic essentials such as home heating." I have the letter in my hands. Why did the minister say he was opposed to HST on home heating when evidently he was not?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite knows full well that we have a package of tax changes. I was delighted when the federal Conservative government offered \$4.3 billion, which allows us to implement a range of tax cuts. This will, overall, lower taxes for 93%

of Ontarians. The support of Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Harper and the Conservative government has been very important, and your Conservative colleague from your riding. It has been very important to doing this.

This tax package is the right package of tax changes. It will lower taxes for 93% of Ontarians. I know the member doesn't want to acknowledge that this is supported by the federal Conservatives. It is, and they know that this is the right package of tax changes that will lower taxes for people like your constituents overall.

We're moving forward. It's about jobs. It's about a brighter future for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Evidently the minister thinks this is about the HST, but really it's a matter of whether you can trust the minister's words. He said in clear, unqualified terms that he wouldn't allow an HST to tax home heating, but his HST applies to home heating. The Premier said he believed in public hearings, but he does not. He also said that untendered contracts would stop, but they have not. Why do the McGuinty Liberals keep saying things that they do not mean?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: And here is what the member for Wellington-Halton Hills said on March 11 of this year: "They must follow the advice they sought from Roger Martin." And do you know what his advice was? To harmonize the HST.

Do you know what Mr. Klees said? He said, "No one can argue with wanting a more simplified tax process. I think we all support that."

And what did your leader say? Here's what your leader 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 collect two separate groups of sales taxes." That was in April of this year.

I would say to your constituent that this party has a clear, consistent position; that is, to implement this tax reform package to create jobs for all Ontarians and to make a better future for everyone. That party and its leader have been all over the map. They used to support it and now they don't. They're—

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

1110

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Yesterday the Auditor General issued a damning report on the state of Ontario's social housing: 137,000 Ontario families are languishing on waiting lists, in some cases for up to 21 years. The government has withheld \$330 million of federal housing funds. The government lacks up-to-date information on the condition of existing social housing units.

My question is: Does the minister agree with the Auditor General's report, that the government must do much better in delivering social housing?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the honourable member. I also thank the Auditor General for his observations and the work—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I withdraw.

Hon. Jim Watson: I had an opportunity to meet with the Auditor General. We had a very good discussion on the work that our ministry has been doing in implementing the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program.

I'm very pleased to report to the House that in 2003, when the McGuinty government had the honour of forming government in this great province, \$8 million was being spent on capital for affordable housing; in 2009-10, \$664.8 million is being spent on affordable housing programs.

Every single time we bring forward a new initiative, whether it's the affordable housing program, rent supplements or the rent bank, who votes against it? The NDP. So I would tell the honourable member that when money comes forward in next year's budget for the second half of the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program, I would hope she would vote for—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: One hundred and thirty-seven thousand families are waiting up to 21 years. The auditor said it all. He also reports that rents for the government's affordable housing program are not affordable for the majority of people waiting for housing. Housing advocates, including the Daily Bread Food Bank, have been calling for a \$100-a-month housing benefit to help address this lack of affordability.

Given the catastrophe, will the minister commit today, right now, to implementing this housing benefit?

Hon. Jim Watson: We're very proud of the fact that we have the most amount of money in a two-year period of any government in Ontario's history: \$1.2 billion that is going to be spent this year and next year.

When we brought forward the \$1.2 billion, what did the honourable member call it? She called it "crumbs." When we brought forward \$100 million in social housing and repair, what did she call it? She called it "meagre." Where I come from, \$100 million and \$1.2 billion is not crumbs, it's not meagre; it's an historical investment in helping some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

We're in the process of putting together a long-term affordable housing strategy. We had 13 public consultations—not one appearance by the honourable member, who's the critic for the NDP. She didn't show up once to explain what her position was. When we put forward \$36 million to help the people of Toronto in housing repairs, her party was promising \$30 million, and she still called it crumbs—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well.

Minister, I do a lot of work in my riding of Ottawa Centre on affordable housing, and as you know, there's a continual need for more access to affordable housing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East turning your back to me, I can still hear you.

Please continue.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: There's a continual need for more access to affordable housing across Ontario. Not only do we need to build more, but much of our current social housing is in need of repair. As a representative of a riding with the largest urban aboriginal population, it is evident in my city that some of those most in need are members of our aboriginal communities. They are some of the most vulnerable members of our society, and they need our help. There is a clear need for action in Ottawa Centre and across this province.

Minister, what is the government doing to ensure that members of our aboriginal communities have access to more and better affordable housing in Ottawa?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the honourable member. I had the pleasure of being in his riding just a week ago, when we announced two very exciting local aboriginal housing projects that are part of a \$60-million investment we are making for aboriginal housing throughout Ontario. I'm pleased to report that 40 aboriginal households in Ottawa—40 aboriginal families in Ottawa—will benefit from this new affordable housing.

Across Ontario, we have recently announced that an investment of \$20.4 million will mean 144 more new homes to be created for aboriginal households. To quote Don McBain, executive director of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services, "This" housing "announcement provides great opportunity for ... experienced urban aboriginal housing providers to reduce" waiting times "while stimulating the economy ... through new construction and building rehabilitation."

We're proud of the partnership that we've made with the aboriginal housing community. They're making the decisions, they're implementing the program, and they will be building the homes for these families.

Interjections.

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

If there are issues—I have talked before, and I heard the member for Hamilton East earlier, about "What about someone else?" I would just say that if members are out of their seats and they're causing some disruption with other members—I just want to ensure that the House flows smoothly. It may be best that the member for Don Valley East be in his seat.

Please continue, member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad to see that some progress is being made, but I'm keenly aware that our community members are eager to see

results come to bear in Ottawa and across Ontario, as I heard extensively during my public consultation on affordable housing held in my riding on August 19. Minister, my constituents expect action, and I hope that we can see this work begin as soon as possible.

I've observed that since becoming Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, you have often advocated the need for a national strategy for affordable housing. Public consultations on developing a long-term strategy for Ontario, which were led by your ministry, have now concluded, but the need for affordable housing is not Ontario's alone. What progress has been made in urging the federal government to begin developing their own strategy, and when can we expect there to be action towards an coordinated affordable housing approach across Canada?

Hon. Jim Watson: Last week I was in Gatineau, Quebec, with provincial and territorial housing ministers as well as the federal minister, the Honourable Diane Finley. We met in our first formal FPT meeting in close to four and a half years, and I raised, along with others, the need for a national housing strategy.

You know, when all three levels of government are working together in co-operation, great things can happen. Just yesterday, I was in the Banff-Ledbury community in Ottawa South to announce that 117 families in that community have seen major improvements, thanks to the funding from the social housing repair fund. One woman said it best: "It's beautiful. I have a new home. The heat is fixed. New windows. New screen doors. I feel like a dream come true."

I was joined by Jo-Anne Poirier, the president of Ottawa Community Housing; Councillor Maria McRae; and MP David McGuinty. We're proud of the work that we're doing in Banff-Ledbury and throughout the province of Ontario. We know that more work has to be done; that is why we've committed to \$1.2 billion—

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

SCHOOL BOARDS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Education. The Auditor General was very critical of the spending practices of the literacy and numeracy secretariat, and also the use of certain school boards as banker boards to distribute \$288 million to other boards and third parties. Minister, why did you approve these banker board arrangements, and why was this money allowed to flow without any memorandum of understanding between the secretariat and the banker boards as to accountability and reporting requirements?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to acknowledge the recommendations of the Auditor General and to say that there is always more that can be done, but to also note that he notes that substantial progress has been made over the last five years. The number of children achieving level 3 on Education Quality and Accountability Office testing has increased, on average, from 56% in 2003-04

to 65% in 2007-08. He used those numbers because he didn't have the 2008-09 numbers. So at the core of his investigation, he found that there has been progress made and there has been value for money in the investments that we have made in the sector.

We are absolutely committed to attending to the Auditor General's recommendations. I think it's important to note that there's always more we can do in terms of accountability and the processes that are put in place to make sure that our school boards follow the best accountability practices possible.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Education: I am very disappointed that the minister did not respond to the question that I asked regarding the use of banker boards and the lack of accountability, because not only do we see this transfer from banker boards to other school boards and third parties occurring without any transparency, without any accountability, and what someone suggested to me was akin to money laundering, but we have a secretariat who is paying these banker boards excessive administration fees.

I ask the minister again: What steps will you take to stop these inappropriate spending practices and make sure that all of the money is directed to the boards with the students most in need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite is very aware, having been a Minister of Education herself, of the variation of sizes of boards and capacities across the province, and she's very aware that sometimes larger boards perform services for smaller boards in order to assure that there's a critical mass of capacity at a particular board. I think the member opposite understands that very well.

I've already said that we're paying very close attention to what the Auditor General has said. We will absolutely work to put those accountability measures in place. But at the core of the Auditor General's investigation was a question of whether children were improving in terms of their ability to perform tasks and in terms of their academic ability. What the Auditor General found was that there was improvement. So the dollars are being invested very wisely, but absolutely, we take the point that there's more that can be done to make sure there's—

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

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The Auditor General reports that the McGuinty government is squandering billions and billions of dollars. At the same time, they're starving Ontario's child welfare and protection system. Agencies are on life support, knowing that their budgets simply are not enough to provide for a growing number of children who are coming into their care.

My question is a very serious one: What will happen to the highest-risk and most vulnerable children in this province while the minister fumbles around for a solution to this funding crisis?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have an opportunity once again to remind the leader of the third party of the steps that this government is taking to find a pathway to sustainability for children's aid societies. It's our commitment to the kids of this province that drives us to find the right people, to bring them to the table, to find those solutions, to make sure that we can have better outcomes for kids. I am so pleased to have a chance to talk about the calibre and quality of people who have come to the table, who are serving on the commission to find a pathway to sustainability for child welfare.

I look forward, and I would encourage the leader of the third party to look at the calibre of the individuals who have stepped forward to help us in this initiative. We're absolutely committed to making sure that our children's aid societies are there for children, both in the short term and the long term. We will find a pathway to do that and we're absolutely committed to taking the necessary steps to protect Ontario's kids.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This isn't about congratulating appointees to a commission, who I'm sure are all wonderful people. This is about the needs of the most vulnerable children in this province and the capacity of this government to deliver the services they need through agencies like children's aid societies. Forty-nine children's aid societies, some of whom are with us today, have told the minister that they are in a \$67-million deficit position—\$67 million. The McGuinty government made a reckless \$23-million budget cut to CASs and First Nations agencies last June. Now the ministry is advancing them next month's funding allocations to pay for last month's bills. Those advances are going to run out at the end of February and children will suffer as a result.

The McGuinty government must resolve the funding crisis that they've created. When will the minister fund the provincial child welfare and protection system up to the level that it needs to be funded to protect our children?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Let's remember the facts here and let's recall that this government has increased investment year over year to the child welfare sector. What we have done this year is we have said we cannot be on a pathway where each and every year child welfare agencies live beyond their means, that we must look at the specific issues that are challenging in their budgets. That is exactly what the commission will be doing.

I am absolutely committed to look at processes within my ministry, the paperwork and the requirements that are expected of child welfare agencies, and determine whether or not that paperwork needs to be filed in exactly the same way. We must innovate. We must find new pathways to deliver this critically important service.

That's why I attended the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' meetings last week, took questions from the floor, spoke to individuals and the leadership,

and committed to them once again to work in partnership and to find this critical—

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

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Eric Hoskins: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, as you know, my riding of St. Paul's is home to many young families who send their children to publicly funded schools. I've heard from constituents in my riding who are concerned about the potential closure of some of our community schools. The parents of St. Paul's and I have seen several newspaper articles and reports over the past few months related to declining enrolment and school closures across Ontario, difficult situations for any community to face. It has been suggested that declining enrolment and school closures are due in part to a dated funding model. Minister, can you tell the House what changes this government has made to the funding formula and of the investments made to education?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to thank the member for St. Paul's for his question and for his concern about this issue, because it is one. Declining enrolment and school closures are of concern to people in St. Paul's and across the province.

We're facing a problem that the previous government didn't actually face. There are 106,000 fewer students in our schools today than in 2003, and in the face of that, we've actually completed or are completing the building of 400 new schools since we came into office in 2003, because we've targeted those schools where the growth is and we've replaced schools that were out of date. We have made the funding formula less dependent on per-pupil enrolment. We've moved at least a third of that funding out of the per-pupil package into block funding, so that it recognizes the needs of boards despite the fewer students in the schools. That's a significant change. On top of that, we have invested more than \$5 billion in—

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

Mr. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Minister, for your answer. As I mentioned, constituents in my riding are concerned about possible school closures in St. Paul's. There are four schools in St. Paul's that are currently subject to an accommodation review committee, or ARC, process. My constituents rightly have a strong attachment to these schools and are anxious about the impact of potential closures on their children's education and on the broader community. They are worried that their views will not be heard in this decision-making process.

As parents and community members, these individuals have the right to have their voices heard and can bring important perspectives on the situation. We must ensure that communities are involved in this important process. How can the Ontario government ensure that the Toronto District School Board's decisions are made with the full involvement of an informed local community in a legitimate and transparent process?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's a very good question. One of the things we have done since we've been in office is we have brought in guidelines to require that school boards include community members, parents, members of the school community in that very important discussion about what the delivery of programs should be, because at the core of this discussion is what is the best program delivery for students. It's not really a question of bricks and mortar alone; it's about how we get the best program for kids. So the area review committee guidelines require that there be a discussion at the local level.

We've listened to communities since we put those guidelines in place. They've been refined in terms of the timelines, and the Toronto District School Board has had some input into that. So it's very important to us that we have a local process that is valid and that allows all of those voices to be heard. At the end of the day, those decisions have to be made by the board, with input from the local school community

1130

ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Acting Premier: Twelve days ago, I asked about the blockade of the Niagara-to-Caledonia power project, which ends at the Caledonia transformer station. Your Attorney General danced around the issue, didn't answer, and I doubt took any answer.

Last Friday night, December 4, I'm told that a truck drove directly at the Caledonia transformer station and rammed the security vehicle. I'm sure this was all caught on tape. My question: Has anything been done after I raised this issue 12 days ago and has anything been done to pick up the attacker?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Brad Duguid: There are a lot of issues, long term and short term, that have to do with the Douglas Creek lands. Our government is committed to working with all our partners, whether it be Hydro or whether it be the Ontario Realty Corp., who manage the properties, to ensure that, number one, the most important priority is public safety. Number two, our utmost important priority as a government is working with all of the parties together, Six Nations leaders and the local community, to build relationships so that we can move forward and try to build economic development opportunities in this region.

That's our priority. We'll continue to stick to that priority, and we'll certainly not be sidetracked by attempts to rabble-rouse in that area or attempts to do other things—

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: We're suffering—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. If the Minister of Finance and the member from Renfrew—

Nipissing–Pembroke want to have a discussion, which it appears is where they're going, I would much prefer that that discussion not take place within the chamber.

Please continue.

Mr. Toby Barrett: We're suffering three and a half years of provocation and intimidation in Caledonia, and it's clear that this McGuinty government condones and encourages this criminal behaviour.

Three and a half years ago at the same location, the Caledonia transformer station was torched. The security vehicle was set on fire after that. As you know, the road to the south and the land to the west and the north is an OPP no-go zone.

Acting Premier, or whichever minister wishes to answer: Has anything been done in the last three and a half years to protect vulnerable security personnel from these attacks? Secondly, is anything being done to prevent another million-dollar torching of the Caledonia transformer station?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Rather than trying to reopen these old wounds, I invite the member opposite to start working with us and taking the example of members like Dave Levac, a neighbour of his, or taking the example of some local members who are doing what they can to try to heal the wounds of the past.

My question to the member is this: When was the last time he talked to his federal counterpart, Diane Finley? When was the last time he recognized that this entire issue comes as a result of a 200-year-old land claim?

The progress that needs to be made is not being made at the bargaining table at this time. We need to continue to put pressure on the federal government. He should be putting pressure on his federal member, whom I do not see showing leadership in this area, and trying to ensure that the federal government is doing everything they can at the bargaining table. Currently, we don't believe they—

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

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Acting Premier. You will know that the city of Timmins and region yesterday were dealt quite a blow. Xstrata decided that they want to rationalize their Canadian metallurgical operations into the province of Quebec from Ontario. This means that after the concentrator, nothing will operate in regard to either the smelter or the refinery and all of those plants in between. This means 670 direct jobs at Xstrata and it means 1,000 jobs-plus when it comes to suppliers and others.

Your government has an ability to put a stop to this. You can do what the government of Newfoundland did and say that natural resources that come from the province of Ontario will be transformed and will be added value in the province of Ontario. You have that authority under section 91 of the Mining Act. Will you stand up for

the people of Ontario and Timmins and prevent this from going off to the province of Quebec?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: There's no question that this is very devastating news for the several hundred employees, as the member mentioned, who will be laid off. Certainly our hearts go out to them; I think I speak on behalf of all the members of the Legislature when I say that.

Certainly we are encouraged about the fact that Xstrata remains committed to the long-term success of the Timmins area and will continue to produce and develop from the Kidd Creek mine. But I also recognize that that does very little to ease the anxiety and the extraordinary concerns being faced by these families.

I can tell you that, indeed, that the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has reached out immediately. We'll be working with them. We will do whatever we can. I had the opportunity to speak to Timmins mayor Tom Laughren yesterday afternoon, and I know that he is determined to continue to work to see a positive future for the area. I certainly plan to be in the Timmins area myself soon. I'm looking forward to working with them as well.

It's a terrible blow to the community, and we're going to do whatever we can to bring future prosperity into the community.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On November 10, I was at a Parkdale housing consultation; on November 26 at—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not a point of order. I thank the honourable member.

REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table an annual greenhouse gas progress report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Halton has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question yesterday, given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, concerning the expansion of the Milton hospital. This matter will be debated on Wednesday at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Parkdale–High Park has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question, given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, concerning public consultations. This matter will be debated on Wednesday at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

ANIMAL HEALTH ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA SANTÉ ANIMALE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 204, An Act to protect animal health and to amend and repeal other Acts / Projet de loi 204, Loi protégeant la santé animale et modifiant et abrogeant d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Dombrowsky has moved third reading of Bill 204. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Hampton, Howard	Oraziotti, David
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Yakubuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 63; the nays are 21.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion 170 on time allocation of Bill 168, An Act to amend the Occupational

Health and Safety Act with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace and other matters.

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

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 170. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Mathews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Savoline, Joyce
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Paul	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	
Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 59; the nays are 28.

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

Motion agreed to.

BARRIE-INNISFIL BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA MODIFICATION DES LIMITES TERRITORIALES ENTRE BARRIE ET INNISFIL

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 196, An Act respecting the adjustment of the boundary between the City of Barrie and the Town of Innisfil / Projet de loi 196, Loi concernant la modification des limites territoriales entre la cité de Barrie et la ville d'Innisfil.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 196. All those in favour will please rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	MacLeod, Lisa	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 59; the nays are 27.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass, and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Consumer Services, Ted McMeekin, on his birthday today. Happy birthday, Ted.

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

The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce today Arden Ryshpan from Canadian Actors' Equity; Lynn McQueen, also from Canadian Actors' Equity; Dan Broome from the American Federation of Musicians. And from ACTRA: Chris Faulkner; Don Lamoreux; Norm MacAskill; Janesse Leung; Heather Allin, president; Joanna Bennett; Yannick Bisson; Wendy Crewson; Ferne Downey, national president of ACTRA; Dom

Fiore; David Gale; Chris Gauthier; Lyn Mason Green; Art Hindle; Tabby Johnson; Wayne Robson; Austin Shatz; Theresa Tova; Karl Pruner, past president; and Norm MacAskill.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to take this opportunity to welcome three guests of mine in the Speaker's gallery: Wendy Farmer, Scott Anderson and Don Kilpatrick. Welcome to Queen's Park. I was hoping my mother would be here.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO MEDAL FOR POLICE BRAVERY

Mr. Frank Klees: The Ontario Medal for Police Bravery is awarded annually to courageous police officers to honour acts of outstanding heroism in the line of duty.

On November 27 of this year, I had the privilege to attend the Lieutenant Governor's presentation of medals for police bravery. Among the recipients were six York regional constables: Sean Boyes, Gregory Douglas Whyte, Sean Doran, Gilbert Farquhar, Wade McGhee and James Ward.

These officers distinguished themselves on Halloween night of 2008 in Richmond Hill when they came on the scene of a tragic two-car collision where one car had burst into flames with three people trapped inside. The officers reacted immediately to try to save the occupants by reaching through the flames for the passengers, of whom only the driver survived. All six police officers were transferred to hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation and burns. Without their heroic actions there would not have been any survivors.

I know that all members of the Legislature will join with me in paying special tribute to these six courageous York region police officers who so heroically put their own lives at risk to protect the members of their community. I want to pay tribute today to all police officers who daily place themselves in harm's way on our behalf.

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2010

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Dundas is a great community to be named Kraft Hockeyville 2010.

The J.L. Grightmire arena has seen many hockey greats since its opening in 1950. No other arena in the surrounding area features minor hockey, junior hockey, senior triple A hockey and women's hockey.

The triple-A Real McCoys are a powerhouse of hockey. They've won the Robertson Cup as Ontario champions four times in their 10-year history and they've competed for the Allan Cup three times.

Then there's the Dundas Blues. They've celebrated their 50-year anniversary developing great partners who continue to give back to their community.

Many players who got their start in the Grightmire arena have gone on to college or junior careers or even to the NHL, like Krys Barch who plays for the Dallas Stars.

The Hamilton Bulldogs and the Bulldogs Foundation will support Dundas in its bid to be named Hockeyville 2010 by holding a community practice at Grightmire arena at 11 a.m. this Saturday, December 12. I encourage all members to come out and see why Dundas is the best choice for Kraft Hockeyville 2010.

EGG FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to thank the Egg Farmers of Ontario for coming to Queen's Park this morning to provide members with a great omelette breakfast and to let us know what's going on in their industry. This is the 12th annual egg farmers' breakfast at Queen's Park, and as always, it was a great turnout.

I want to congratulate them on the great things that they are doing in their industry, including their commitment to research and innovation on production, animal health and advances like omega 3 eggs. I'm proud that some of the research that led to omega 3 eggs took place right here in Ontario in the laboratories in Guelph. I know that the Egg Farmers of Ontario are proud of their contribution to that research.

Recently in this Legislature, we have been debating animal health and traceability. Egg farmers are a great example of an industry that has taken steps to ensure food safety and quality among its members, with almost all egg farmers Ontario being certified under HACCP, or hazard analysis critical control points.

Egg Farmers of Ontario are working hard to let the people of Ontario know that eggs are rich in protein and a natural choice for an active lifestyle. But eggs are not only an important part of our diets; they are also an important part of our agriculture and provincial economy.

On behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I want to reiterate our commitment to supply management, or orderly marketing, and thank the Egg Farmers of Ontario for coming to Queen's Park and serving eggs to us today.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As members know in this assembly, devastating news for the city of Timmins and region: Xstrata has decided to, as they say, rationalize their metallurgical division. That is a big buzzword for saying that they're going to take all the metallurgical services after the concentrator, and they're going to process that outside of the province of Ontario. Nothing can be more preposterous than allowing a mining company to say that they're going to do the processing of ore outside of this province.

We've seen this happen before in the history of Canada. We all know the story of Newfoundland, when Voisey's Bay was first discovered. The company said,

“We’re going to mine, and we’re going to take concentrate from this area and we’re going to ship it outside of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador,” in order to allow the company to make a little bit of extra money because they wouldn’t have to build a metallurgical plant in that part of the province. Danny Williams, the government of the day, said, “No way. If you want to build this mine, you’re going to process the minerals here.” The Newfoundland government stood up to the company, and at the end of the day, those jobs are still there.

We’re calling on this government to do that in the case of Xstrata. We’ve seen it happen first in Sudbury with some of the productions being shipped out of the province there. Now we’re seeing an entire metallurgical division in the province of Ontario shut down to be transported out of the province when it comes to production.

This cannot be allowed to happen, and this provincial government has got to step up to the plate, do what they did in Newfoundland and say, by way of law, “You’re not allowed to process minerals outside of this province.” These are Ontario minerals. They’re also Ontario jobs.

DIANA SWAIN

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a tremendous pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to congratulate Oakville resident Diana Swain on her recent Gemini Award for best news anchor in the country.

Diana, as many of us would know, is the wonderful host of the Toronto edition of CBC News at Six, and she’s no stranger to success. She is a five-time Gemini nominee and has been continually recognized for the quality of her reporting, her writing and her hosting on CBC news programs.

Her Gemini for best news anchor is her second. She previously won the category in 2000, joining other notables on the list, such winners as Peter Mansbridge and Lloyd Robertson. Her work has been included in winning submissions for the Michener Award, Canada’s award for commendable public service in journalism.

Her broadcasting and reporting career, which spans two decades at the CBC, has taken her across the country and around the world. Her work as co-host of Disclosure, an investigative news program, takes her to places like North America, Europe and central America. In 2008, she joined CBC’s Olympic team and hosted the morning broadcast. She has provided her talents to events that celebrate our country’s writers and athletes, and she recently hosted the Oakville Sport Recognition Awards.

We have a number of outstanding news anchors in the country, but for 2009, the Gemini Awards think it’s Diana Swain, and that’s well deserved.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Over the past few years, my riding of Leeds–Grenville has lost a significant number of manufacturing operations and the jobs that went with them. The McGuinty government has aggravated

the job situation with the closure of Rideau Regional, the recent closure of two Highway 401 service centres and its planned closure of transitional beds at the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital.

1510

With the job losses we’ve suffered, there’s been an increased focus on growing tourism as one way to help our local and regional economy flourish. That makes sense, as my riding has two international bridges, the bulk of the Thousand Islands, a good chunk of the Rideau system, much of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere and more. Its growth potential as a tourism magnet is significant.

However, the McGuinty government’s decision to bring in the HST, the largest sales tax hike in the province’s history, is a tax grab with the potential to do serious damage to an already struggling tourism sector and dash the hopes and dreams of many.

The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario says that with this new tax increasing costs by as much as 44%, it’s clear that the McGuinty government either overlooked or didn’t consider the impacts on tourism—that’s a direct quote.

Either way, this government has been negligent, and the minister responsible has been missing in action. It’s not too late to look at a transition that eases negative impacts, and I urge the government to do just that.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. David Oraziotti: I rise in the House to comment on the staged competition for crown wood supply in Ontario through the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. This competitive process will help create green jobs and new investment in the forestry industry in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie and throughout northern Ontario. This is part of our government’s continuing commitment to support families that have been affected by the economic downturn.

This competitive process is open to anyone, including existing forest companies and new forest companies, interested in using crown wood supply and investing in Ontario. Proposals are currently being accepted for the use of approximately 11 million cubic metres of wood that will come from 41 management units across Ontario. Part of the wood supply in this competitive process will come from harvest residues which will support Ontario’s emerging bio-economy sector.

The steps we’re taking today are in addition to the \$1 billion commitment to the forestry sector to date to update equipment and improve energy efficiencies, the largest investment made by any provincial government, which included \$17 million in investment in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie to reopen St. Marys Paper.

Innovative job creation in my community is not only about a boost to the local economy, it’s about an investment in our youth and our future prosperity. I’m pleased with our government’s commitment to encouraging our youth and talented workers to explore opportunities in

Sault Ste. Marie and our commitment to work to revitalize the forest sector in Ontario.

We recognize the challenges of the forest sector, which is why we are determined to create new opportunities.

BERNIE STEWART

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you for the opportunity to share with my constituents and the House the memory of an individual who was an indelible part of our community of Ottawa Centre.

Bernie Stewart, by all accounts, was a remarkable individual and a mainstay of Westboro life. Bernie was best known to me as the long-time chair of the Westboro business improvement association, and I was always happy to engage with him to improve the vitality of our community and his businesses.

It was a community about which he felt very passionate and was dedicated to helping, and that contribution will certainly be missed. But I've heard that Bernie was passionate about many things.

Bernie was passionate about books. He was most known for being the 20-year proprietor of Solo Books on Richmond Road. When he made the difficult choice to close the doors on Solo Books, he arranged for the thousands of volumes remaining to be flown to our troops in Afghanistan out of respect for the work they do.

As a veteran of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Bernie was also passionate about aircraft and their workings, and as a master electrician in the forces he kept those skills, eventually running Westboro Computer Repair out of his home, where he loved working with all things electronic.

Most of all, Bernie was clearly passionate about life, family and community. I want to extend my condolences to his family and friends for the suddenness of his departure, but also offer my respect for such a warm and active individual in our community.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Our government has made a clear commitment to renew and strengthen Ontario's infrastructure. Roads and bridges, colleges and universities, community facilities such as pools, arenas, libraries and community centres are being constructed throughout Ontario.

Our \$32.5-billion infrastructure investment will create and support 146,000 jobs in 2009-10. That will rise to 168,000 jobs in 2010-11. These investments will make significant long-term improvements to transportation, health care and education infrastructure.

Now, we're increasing the transparency of these investments through the launch of our new website, which tracks the progress of recently announced infrastructure stimulus projects in communities throughout Ontario. This website will highlight our contribution in stimulus funding for infrastructure projects and will track construction projects. It will also provide regular updates on

new investments. For instance, if a constituent of mine in Pickering-Scarborough East wanted to know what infrastructure projects are occurring in our community, they could enter their postal code into this website and see how various projects in our community are developing.

This new website portal is a great opportunity for Ontarians to see how our government is building a strong modern infrastructure. I encourage everyone to visit the website at ontario.ca/infrastructure, and once they're there, to bookmark it for future reference and find out what's happening in their community.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 210, An Act to protect foreign nationals employed as live-in caregivers and in other prescribed employment and to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 /
Projet de loi 210, Loi visant à protéger les étrangers employés comme aides familiaux et dans d'autres emplois prescrits et modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1516 to 1521.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour of the report will please stand and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Hampton, Howard	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Jaczek, Helena	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Johnson, Rick	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shaffiq
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Marchese, Rosario	Sorbara, Greg
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Tabuns, Peter
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Bailey, Robert	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 51; the nays are 14.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2009, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 175, An Act to enhance labour mobility between Ontario and other Canadian provinces and territories / *Projet de loi 175, Loi visant à accroître la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre entre l'Ontario et les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1525 to 1530.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Broten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, Dave	Sorbara, Greg
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
Bailey, Robert	Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Bisson, Gilles	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 47; the nays are 23.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday November 30, 2009, the bill is ordered for third reading.

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Last evening in committee—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm rising on a point of order. Pursuant to a decision made by Speaker Stockwell in 1997, who indicated to this chamber that each member had a right to know what they were voting on, I made a simple request that the resolutions put forward by the Progressive Conservative caucus, the official opposition, be televised or put on a computer screen so that they could be part of a PowerPoint presentation and so we could see each one of them. Unfortunately, the government didn't allow that and we were not able to look at any of the resolutions by the official opposition until 10 minutes to 5 last evening. As you know, 5 p.m. is when the time allocation motion by the government kicked in, and we were unable to debate one single resolution put forward by the official opposition.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we're talking about the very voluminous amendments that were put forward by the opposition, which I understand were delivered to the Legislature on Friday, with great fanfare and photo ops, but were not actually filed until noon, thus providing the staff in the clerks' office a very short, limited amount of time to print them even though they had them on Friday. It's unfortunate that the opposition did not try to accommodate the staff here in providing that information and are now demanding something they could have had, had they just been a little more accommodating.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. First, as the honourable member knows, the point of order that she raises concerns an issue that took place at committee. As well, as the honourable member knows, I saw her in the hall last night, and I did take the opportunity this morning to apprise myself of the situation, and I am satisfied that all was in order. If you'd like to discuss the matter further, I'd be happy to meet privately with you, or would again encourage you to raise the matter at the committee.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the December 8,

2009, report of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): An order of the House dated December 1, 2009, amended by the House on December 2, 2009, provides for allocation of time for proceedings on Bill 218, An Act to implement 2009 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts.

The order provides that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs shall report Bill 218 to the House no later than Tuesday, December 8, 2009. The House not having received this report during reports by committees today, the bill is therefore deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1537 to 1542.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please take their seats.

Just to be clear, the order provided that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs shall report Bill 218 to the House no later than Tuesday, December 8, 2009. We now have a motion for the adoption of the deemed report of the finance committee on Bill 218.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sorbara, Greg
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John

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

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Mr. Bentley moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 231, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act / Projet de loi 231, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1546 to 1551.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Jaczek, Helena	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Johnson, Rick	Qaadri, Shafiq
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Bailey, Robert	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Bisson, Gilles	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 48; the nays are 23.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Christopher Bentley: During ministerial statements, please.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT
(EXEMPTIONS FOR ARTISTS), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS
(EXEMPTIONS D'IMPÔT
ACCORDÉES AUX ARTISTES)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 232, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 with respect to income tax exemptions for artists / Projet de loi 232, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts à l'égard des exemptions d'impôt sur le revenu accordées aux artistes.

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 income averaging for artists over a specified number of years and providing for income tax exemptions for artists receiving income from specific grants or royalties. The bill also gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council the power to set deductibles and limits, and set out the rules of eligibility and methods of claiming the tax exemptions.

My thanks to the AFM, Equity and ACTRA.

TRADES QUALIFICATION
AND APPRENTICESHIP
AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
LA QUALIFICATION PROFESSIONNELLE
ET L'APPRENTISSAGE
DES GENS DE MÉTIER

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 233, An Act to amend the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act / Projet de loi 233, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la qualification professionnelle et l'apprentissage des gens de métier.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: This bill would amend the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act to specify that no more than one person may be an apprentice to each journeyman of an employer in a trade and to remove the power to make regulations respecting the ratio of apprentices to journeymen who may be employed by an employer in a trade.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT
(HERITAGE PROPERTY
TAX CREDIT), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS
(CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT
POUR BIEN PATRIMONIAL)

Mr. Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 234, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit for heritage properties / Projet de loi 234, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts afin de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour bien patrimonial.

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. Ted Arnott: The bill amends the Taxation Act, 2007, to provide a non-refundable tax credit in respect of qualifying expenditures that are directly attributable to a qualifying activity relating to an eligible heritage property, as defined in section 365.2 of the Municipal Act, 2001, that is owned by the taxpayer or, if the taxpayer is an individual, the taxpayer's qualifying relation. The tax credit will apply to qualifying expenditures that are incurred after the prescribed date. Various components of the tax credit will be prescribed by regulations made under the Taxation Act, 2007.

ENERGY CONSUMER
PROTECTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE

Mr. Phillips moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 235, An Act to enact the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009 and to amend other Acts / Projet de loi 235, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et modifiant d'autres lois.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1559 to 1604.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Hardeman, Ernie	Naqvi, Yasir
Albanese, Laura	Hoskins, Eric	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Bailey, Robert	Jeffrey, Linda	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Balkissoon, Bas	Johnson, Rick	Pendergast, Leeanne
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Kular, Kuldip	Prue, Michael
Bentley, Christopher	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramal, Khalil
Bisson, Gilles	Leal, Jeff	Ramsay, David
Brotten, Laurel C.	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Savoline, Joyce
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Shurman, Peter
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Smith, Monique
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Sorbara, Greg
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol	Yakabuski, John
Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia	Zimmer, David

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES****CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I rise to introduce the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009. This act has a simple, yet vital, objective, and that's to empower consumers, to protect their interests and, above all, to ensure fairness and transparency in Ontario's energy marketplace.

There are few obligations that government must take more seriously than the protection of consumers against unfair, misleading or simply confusing retailing practices. At a time like this, that responsibility is felt all the more acutely as families struggle to make every dollar stretch in the face of a challenging global economy.

The proposed legislation builds on the government's record of action with respect to consumer protection and transparent disclosure in a number of other sectors. Today, we take similar action with respect to Ontario's energy market while also setting out fair and reasonable operating conditions for affected businesses.

The legislation contains three main elements. First, it introduces tough new measures to crack down on unacceptable practices by some electricity retailers and gas marketers in order to protect consumers. Second, it strengthens protection for residents of multi-unit rental residential buildings where suite metering is being considered. Third, it bolsters the opportunity to protect electricity and gas consumers with respect to security deposits and disconnects.

1610

Let me focus for a moment further on the first of these priorities. Many of us have experienced the offer of a contract from electricity retailers or gas marketers. Some of these companies employ salespeople who go door to door offering multi-year fixed-rate contracts. Unfortunately, and too frequently, promises are made about cheaper long-term energy prices, and salespeople pressure consumers and customers for a quick deal on their doorstep.

The sale of fixed-rate energy contracts has been a business in Ontario since 1997 for natural gas and on the electricity side since 2002. The companies offer something that a number of consumers do choose, but we have all heard stories from our constituents, friends, or family members who felt pressured, confused or misled. Each week, the Ontario Energy Board, or the OEB, logs between 100 and 150 consumer complaints about the practices of energy retailers. It is time to bring abusive practices to a stop, for the good of both consumers and the reputation of the industry.

In this respect, I want to recognize the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, David Ramsay, who was among the first of us to urge action on this issue with his private member's bill. The legislation introduced today captures the spirit of his proposals and takes decisive action in a variety of ways. It would require far greater disclosure on the part of electricity retailers and gas marketers, in-

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 0.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I'll make my comments under ministers' statements.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to take this opportunity to welcome some guests of mine from my riding in the Speaker's gallery: Dean Paddon, Brian Bolt, Bob Ketchum and Barry Fry. Gentlemen, welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Let me transgress, seeing that the Speaker led the way. I'd like to introduce Larry O'Connor, a former member of the assembly who's here with us right now.

MOTIONS**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS**

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent—maybe I'll say that again for the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; he sometimes has a slight hearing problem—to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 58, 59, 60, 62 and 63 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

cluding providing plain language disclosure about key contract terms. It would also require an explicit and standardized format for showing consumers the difference they would pay on their monthly bill when contracting with an electricity retailer or gas marketer when compared to staying with their utility. It would also set out clear rules to allow contracts to be cancelled under specified conditions and set maximums on cancellation fees.

It would oblige retailers to seek independent third party verification from the consumer before the contract would be considered final. Finally, it would allow the government to establish new regulatory and training standards for salespeople. And importantly, it creates legal liabilities for directors and officers of electricity retailing and gas marketing companies.

The second set of measures supports the government's goal of encouraging conservation by enabling the government to ensure that all new multi-residential units are suite-metered. It would also establish a framework to enable consumers in existing multi-residential apartment buildings to take direct control of their energy costs and empower them to conserve. Suite-metering technology will allow each tenant to pay directly for their own energy use. In the case of existing tenants, such a change in the tenancy agreement would require explicit written consent of the tenant.

The proposed legislation would enable establishing the framework for changes that would ensure fair rent reduction for these tenants. It would also enable the development of minimum energy-efficiency guidelines for suite-metered rental residential buildings.

Finally, the legislation would build on existing rules and practices to create new requirements aimed at ensuring fair treatment with respect to security deposits and disconnections in the electricity market and extends this more robust approach for application to natural gas and sub-metered customers as well.

This legislation is needed. It builds on the McGuinty government's record of action with respect to consumer protection and transparent disclosure. It's fair and it is progressive. It protects consumers and strengthens our energy market in Ontario, and I would urge all members to support the Energy Consumer Protection Act.

ELECTORAL REFORM RÉFORME ÉLECTORALE

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the McGuinty government to introduce legislation that would, if passed, improve the provincial election process to make it fairer, more flexible and more accessible to Ontario voters.

Our goal is to move forward with modernizing Ontario's existing legislation. The proposed amendments to both the Election Act and Election Finances Act would strengthen Ontario's democratic institutions. The amendments would improve the way elections work, while maintaining the integrity of the electoral process.

There are few things that we, either individually or collectively, value and cherish more than our democratic rights. And it is understood and accepted by all that the egalitarian traditions of our society, and certainly of our government, have been built upon and continue to depend upon fair, accessible and well-run elections. They are the foundation of our democracy.

Avant de vous décrire les modifications proposées, permettez-moi de vous donner quelques renseignements généraux et de vous décrire brièvement ce que nous avons accompli récemment. Dans le cadre de son ordre du jour de renouveau démocratique, le gouvernement McGuinty a présenté une loi en 2007 pour moderniser les élections provinciales, qui a été adoptée par l'Assemblée législative. À cette époque, le gouvernement suivait une stratégie mesurée qui renforçait aussi bien l'accès aux élections que l'intégrité des élections.

Before turning to the proposed amendments, let me provide some context and recount some recent accomplishments.

As part of our democratic renewal agenda, the McGuinty government introduced, and the House passed, legislation in 2007 to modernize provincial elections. At that time, the government took a measured approach that enhanced both access to elections as well as the integrity of elections. Amendments included increasing the number of advance poll days, and allowing the Chief Electoral Officer to test new voting methods in by-elections.

At the same time the government brought in these improvements, it contemplated further reform at some future time. That time is now.

In June 2008, the government moved in the House that a Select Committee on Elections be appointed to consider the effectiveness of Ontario's existing electoral legislation. Mr. Greg Sorbara, MPP for Vaughan, chaired the four-member committee. The other members were Norm Sterling, MPP for Carleton-Mississippi Mills; Howard Hampton, MPP for Kenora-Rainy River; and David Zimmer, MPP for Willowdale. I would like to thank, on behalf of all members, those members for their very important work.

The committee heard representations from key stakeholders. These included the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, Mr. Greg Essensa, who is charged with the responsibility for administering provincial elections. It also included a delegation representing Ontarians with disabilities. Written briefs were submitted by several interested parties. In addition, the committee invited returning officers to share observations about their experiences administering Ontario's election legislation. It was encouraging to receive a strong response from election officials in all parts of the province.

The committee's final report was delivered to the House in June 2009. The report presented the government with a timely and important opportunity to modernize and improve legislation concerning the preparation, administration and delivery of elections in Ontario.

Let me turn to the proposed amendments. Our plan is to introduce them in two stages.

Stage one would implement the bulk of the select committee's recommendations, and they are contained in the legislation we introduced today. These initiatives would significantly improve access to voting, particularly for persons with disabilities, while protecting the integrity of elections. It would professionalize service delivery by giving the Chief Electoral Officer more authority over appointments of election officials such as returning officers and election clerks. It would give the Chief Electoral Officer the flexibility to ensure that election processes keep pace with and are responsive to the needs of Ontarians. It would update election finance rules to reflect modern banking practices. These would all be in place for the 2011 provincial election.

Stage two would take effect following the 2011 provincial election. We would modernize election legislation by consolidating the Election Act and the Election Finances Act into a single piece of legislation that we intend to bring forward next year. Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer and the select committee recommend this kind of consolidation, advising that it will reduce inefficiencies as well as inconsistencies and confusion.

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Many of the proposed amendments align Ontario with the best practices in other Canadian jurisdictions. They'll enhance public confidence and enhance the voting experience for the people of Ontario. While some of them are quite technical, the importance of our legislation cannot be overstated.

I offer this quote, taken from the final report of the Legislature's Select Committee on Elections: "In a representative democracy, the significance of the legislation that establishes and maintains the electoral system cannot be overstated. All parties—political or otherwise—and all citizens have a fundamental interest in the quality and continuing relevance of the provisions in these statutes." I think all members of the House will agree.

In closing, let me once again say that the democratic traditions of our government have been built upon, and continue to depend upon, fair, accessible and well-run elections. They're the foundation of our democracy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Responses?

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This piece of legislation is interesting in that it could probably be made a very acceptable piece of legislation with a few technical amendments.

The thing that concerns me most about this bill is not what's in the bill but what is not in the bill. There is nothing in this bill about third party advertising. That's something that has gone on in this province for the last two for three elections and which operates outside of the Election Act. That makes elections very questionable in this province. It's obvious that third party advertising is—it's very obvious, it's very blatant and it's very purposeful in what it does to the elections and the election results in this province.

For the government to bring in a piece of legislation that ignores the largest change in the election process that we've had in this province over the last decade or so is very disappointing. Third party advertising distorts and flaunts the Election Act, something that has grave concerns to the democratic process in Ontario. That is the largest concern about this piece of legislation, in that nothing in this legislation is said about third party advertising.

One of the other things that is very concerning is that—I think it was point 14 in the explanatory notes, where the Chief Electoral Officer can authorize or commission reports and research. Given the history of this government on their contracting for reports and research, there is no direction given in the act as to how these commissioned reports or research should be conducted. It doesn't say anything about using best practices. It doesn't say anything about using the lowest bidder. It doesn't say anything about going to public tender. It doesn't say anything about cost controls. It doesn't say anything about any application of how these contracts for commissions and reports will be done. Given the recent history of this government, I would suggest that this should be of great concern to the citizens of Ontario.

I think that will do it for today. I look forward to the legislation. I look forward to a couple of amendments that would make this legislation much more acceptable.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to respond to the bill being presented by the Minister of Energy today. You know, when you listen to his first couple of paragraphs, who's going argue with that, about the need and the importance of empowering and protecting consumers? We're all in 100% agreement with that.

What I am concerned about, or one of the things that I'm concerned about, is that the former Minister of Energy promised a piece of legislation back in the summertime that would be brought in this fall, and here we are near the end of the session, when this will certainly not be debated in this House before Christmas, and the minister is introducing a bill to protect consumers.

He talked about David Ramsay, the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane, who introduced, earlier this year, Bill 131. If they would have piggybacked or worked with that, I think we could have already had some results with respect to consumer protection with regard to how they are treated by energy retailers.

We know there needs to be some protection and some changes. The exposé that we saw on CBC's Marketplace earlier this year was a wake-up call to anybody who does not think that there were shenanigans and things going on in that business that need to be addressed, and Mr. Ramsay's bill partially would have done that.

The other thing they are doing in this bill is bringing in other issues like the sub-metering issue and the security deposit issue. Ironically, we just had a bill that

we're supposed to be debating this week, possibly, from the member from Essex, dealing with that security deposit issue. So you have to wonder where the ministry is on all of these kinds of balls they've got juggling in the air here at the same time, whether it's private members' or government legislation.

There's no question at all that we want to see significant changes and improvements. The situation we have today is not acceptable. I look forward to a briefing from the minister's staff, possibly tomorrow or Thursday. Hopefully, when we get this bill in the Legislature, as soon as possible, we can all work together to ensure that at the end of the day, what we present to the consumers of this province and what we enact as legislation is going to truly protect them from nefarious practices and ensure that what is happening is transparent, is fair, and that it protects consumers.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to address the proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009.

To the Minister of Energy: There's no question that people in this province are being abused by energy marketers. Interestingly, my mother, who is 80, has had a number of times when energy marketers have come to her door trying to get her bill so they can get all of the account information off of it. She's fended them off, but a number of her friends, also in their 80s, have not been able to fend them off, and have been stuck with huge bills. So I think action against people who are doing this energy marketing with no particular scruples is required.

I'm not sure that what is in this bill is adequate for the problem that's at hand. In fact, I would go further. A private member's bill was introduced recently which would have prohibited door-to-door energy marketing, and, frankly, I can see the utility in that.

I look forward to going through the bill in greater detail, but I say to this House and to the minister that this area is one that I think we're all bedevilled with. We all have our constituency offices flooded with people who are calling and coming in because they're getting a raw deal.

When it comes to the whole question of sub-metering in multiple-unit buildings, again, I would look forward to reading in greater detail what's presented to us. I have to say that in many instances people live in buildings now that are not adequately insulated, don't have proper windows, and essentially are just boxes that heat flows out of, or that cold flows out of in the summer. In those situations where sub-metering is installed, I can only say it's a huge transfer of burden, responsibility and headache from a landlord to a tenant.

I understand from a quick glance through that there are some measures that may address that satisfactorily. I look forward to having the time to going through and making sure that, in fact, what's here will do what the people of this province deserve to have done.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, such an opportunity lost, quite frankly. We had an opportunity here in this Legislature to make some meaningful changes when it comes to how elections are run in this province, and I'm going to break it down to about three or four issues.

First of all is the question of enumeration. We know, as elected officials, that every time you go knocking at doors during provincial elections, the provincial electoral list is a mess. Why is that? It's because we gather the information of who's on the list from electronic records, and often those electronic records are wrong. How many times have all of us and our opponents who ran us against us run across the same problem where you go knocking on the door and the people who are enumerated on the list are not anywhere near the names of the people who are living in the house, and then, when you try to get them enumerated, it becomes a whole episode to be able to make that happen in a quick way, in a streamlined way? That really demoralizes the people from being able to go out there and to enumerate themselves, once they've been improperly enumerated.

The issue of where people vote: We had in our riding, and I'm sure Mr. Ramsay had the same problem, people who live in one town who had to go vote in a town 30, 40 or 50 miles away—when they lived in Smooth Rock Falls, go vote in Kap; if you lived in Kap, go vote in Smooth Rock Falls etc. We could have fixed some really basic problems with our electoral system, and we didn't get to it.

Election finance reform: The federal government saw the light, along with other provinces in this country, and they've understood that it's the right thing to remove both business and labour from the ability to make contributions to political parties and individual candidates. They did that for a reason, because there's far too much influence that is seen to be had by those who give the money to various parties. We had suggested, and we had pushed for, changes that would put us more in line with what we see federally and what we see in other provinces in this country that would depoliticize to a certain extent the ability that business and others have to contribute to campaigns, and then to say that the candidate might be beholden to them afterwards.

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I think it would have been a really good thing in this province to come to some sort of formula that would have made sense for the political parties and the candidates to make sure that we have a real electoral system that doesn't allow the type of influence to be exercised on political parties and individual candidates in results of how much money a particular person gives that candidate. And in a citizens' assembly: My God, the last time we went through this, here were the rules: You had to have 60% of the people voting in favour, and 50% of the voters who actually voted had to be in at least 60 ridings where 50% of people who had voted got 60%. Does that sound confusing? It is. This is not a citizens'

assembly. If we really meant it, we would have made it 50%, and maybe we could have gotten somewhere.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 30(c), I do now call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

Hon. Brad Duguid: I move concurrence in supply for the following ministries: Economic Development; Energy and Infrastructure; Finance; Research and Innovation; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Health and Long-Term Care, including supplementaries; Small Business and Consumer Services; Community and Social Services, including supplementaries; Labour; Tourism; and Aboriginal Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Debate? The member for Pembroke–Nipissing—

Interjection: Renfrew.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Renfrew.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The main thing is that I know how to get home, Speaker. Unlike Steve Mahoney, I don't have to go out and buy an expensive GPS to find my way home. I can do it on my own, without any help from electronic devices.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Why don't you tell me about that, Steve Mahoney's expense account? Where did he buy a—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ah, Steve Mahoney's expense account. Where would a man start, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Did he buy it in Myrtle Beach?

Mr. John Yakabuski: This is a guy who turned a part-time job into a \$140,000-a-year gig, plus expenses.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: He spent seven days in Myrtle Beach.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Seven days in Myrtle Beach. What did he have, one day of meetings?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: One day of meetings.

Mr. John Yakabuski: One day of meetings. This is the kind of thing that infuriates the taxpayers of Ontario. This wasn't the topic I was going to start with, but when we were talking about finding our way home, I had to think about that GPS and I had to talk about Steve Mahoney.

These are the kinds of things that just drive people crazy, when a government has such total disregard for the taxpayers' money. What was I reading today about when Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance, made a commitment of about \$45 million or something in savings in the budget? And the auditor says it was hooey; it was hokum. They didn't save anything. But the minister gets up and he tells the people, "We're working hard; we're responsible; we're going to cut expenditures," because we have got a \$25-billion deficit, and the reality is, they did nothing.

Then we see in the auditor's report—and I know my friend from Durham is going to talk a whole lot more on that as well—where people are prescribed an assistive medical device such as one of these oxygen providers that they sell for around \$1,000, but the government, because they're always pretty shrewd and frugal—they're going to save us a lot of money—decided that they could pay about \$13,000, or \$18,000—I think, up to \$18,000 for one of those.

That's how this government is saving money for the taxpayer. If you're thinking, "Let's talk about one machine," that's a \$17,000 gap, but when you're doing this over and over again—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: How many did they buy?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I couldn't tell you the number. We didn't get that exact number in the auditor's report, but suffice to say that if these are the things that the auditor is finding—and we have to be very aware of one thing: The auditor only finds what is there for the finding. He doesn't find something and then do a massive investigation of every facet of that ministry.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: He's not a forensic auditor.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He's not a forensic auditor. So what happens is, you see these kinds of things—and we know that they're just the tip of the iceberg. They only scratch the surface.

I know that the people out there watching this today and reading the Hansards and reading the auditor's report and reading the Toronto Star or any of the other newspapers emanating from Queen's Park are asking themselves, "If these are the things that the auditor is finding, how many more are not found at all?"

So they look at a budget of—what is it?—\$110 billion or \$113 billion in this province. They start to say to themselves: "That money comes from us. We're the ones who finance the government, and they're taking our money and just giving it that clockwise twirl before it goes down the drain." If you were in the southern hemisphere, it would be a counter-clockwise swirl. But it really doesn't matter. It's going down the drain, and this government puts the blinders on the eyes and pays no attention, while they keep taxing the people more.

Those people, as a result of what has happened in this chamber this fall, are going to pay more next year. When the HST is implemented on July 1, 2010, those people are going to pay more. Those same people who feel like they've been hosed by the absolutely unconscionable actions of this government in the lack of accountability that we're seeing in the auditor's report are going to get it again come July 1, 2010, with the HST.

When you go to fill the car—8%; when you go to pay that hydro bill, which is going to go up even more under this government's legislation—8%. When you have to pay the heat—you're going to get through this winter, but next winter, 8%. Every time you turn around, it's going to be an additional 8%.

What infuriates them is that people don't mind paying taxes, but they want value for their money. They don't want to pay their taxes and feel that the people who are

receiving that money are squandering it. They want value for their money and they want the people who are receiving that money to act responsibly, not to go around like drunken sailors—and I apologize to every sailor. I apologize to all the sailors because I know you'd do better than this government is doing. Sailors would be more responsible.

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This has got to stop. You just can't treat the taxpayer as a bottomless pit, as a money tree that you just keep taking and taking and taking from until there's nothing left.

The shamefulfulness of this auditor's report, piled on the HST, which is just going to just brutalize senior citizens in this province, has got to stop. This government has to take a good, hard look, reflect and ask themselves, "Is what we're doing really the right thing?" My answer is, it is not.

I'm going to stand down, because I have other members of this caucus who want to speak on this issue as well. Thank you very much for the time.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to start off by saying that day after day in this House I see the finance minister stand up here with that crystal ball of his and say there are going to be 600,000 jobs created. That couldn't be any further from the truth.

I want to be here in a year or two when the numbers come in on how many jobs he actually created, because I think it will fall very short. First of all, he has to get back the 300,000 he lost, and if he's going to create another 600,000, that would be 900,000, so we're pushing a million now. I don't know where he's getting these numbers from, but I'll just give you a few here.

I want to start off by talking about HST. Some 200,000 jobs have been lost in the last year. Ontario families are looking for a plan to create jobs and make our economy work for them, which makes sense. Instead, they get a new tax on the basics, a new tax that will kill up to 40,000 jobs a year.

I'm not making this up. This comes from a report commissioned by none other than the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. The chamber's report was very detailed. It predicts 3,300 fewer jobs in construction, 9,800 fewer jobs in professions, 3,500 fewer jobs in accommodation and food services and 4,600 fewer manufacturing jobs. I think that the 4,600 in manufacturing jobs is a low estimate; I think you could triple that with no problem at all. We can't afford to lose any more jobs right now, and Ontarians are worried.

Worried about how Ontarians might react to hearing that this tax will kill jobs, the Ontario government needed to find somebody to write a different report, because they're trying to say that it won't lose jobs, that it's going to create jobs.

So they hired Mr. Jack Mintz. I should remind the House that the Minister of Finance previously referred to Dr. Mintz as an Alberta academic whose neoconservative

ideas simply don't work. I guess when it's convenient, the finance minister is willing to embrace old ideas of that so-called Alberta academic, as he used to say.

But nobody believes those numbers. After all, who believes that a new 8% tax on gas and hydro will create jobs? I doubt it. Who believes an Alberta academic who, one year ago, wrote a paper that predicted the HST will kill tens of thousands of jobs every year? Now, this is the guy that the Liberal government hired, and he has done a 180 in a little over 18 months, from saying it will kill tens of thousands of jobs to saying it will create 600,000 jobs. It's hard to believe.

Small businesses sure don't believe it. A recent survey found that nearly 60% of all small businesses couldn't think of a single reason why the HST is good for them.

Paying more and getting less: Everybody assumes that an 8% tax on gas, hydro, magazines, haircuts, legal and accounting services, real estate commissions, taxis and Greyhound bus tickets will raise a lot of money for this government, and for public services like health care and education, it will raise billions from consumers—up to \$7 billion, some economists say—but it won't help fund public services like health care and education.

In fact, the tax package actually costs the government money. That means there will be less money for critical health services or to get elderly loved ones into a long-term-care facility. The reason a new tax costs the government money is because of the massive corporate tax giveaway. We've all discussed the \$4 billion that they're giving to business. That's going to create jobs? I doubt it. A lot of those businesses have gone south and a lot of businesses take the money out of Ontario; they don't keep it here.

For every dollar, the HST will cost consumers \$1.06. It's going to go to business tax cuts. Those include a juicy \$2-billion corporate income tax cut. People are struggling through a deep recession. Layoffs and cuts to hours of pay are the norm. People want a government that's focused on creating jobs and helping them get back to work. Corporate income tax cuts do not create jobs; in fact, they cost jobs.

In the last 10 years the provincial Liberal and Conservative governments have given away \$20 billion in corporate tax cuts. Billions more in corporate income tax dollars have been given away federally. What do we have to show for it? Two hundred thousand Ontario job losses since December; wages are down and use of food banks has shot up to 120,000 people since March 2008. Now an astonishing 800,000 people use food banks, 300,000 of them children. If corporate tax cuts were the answer, the United States would not be in a recession, and neither would Canada.

Corporate tax cuts are untargeted. They reward companies already making money. They help the big banks cash in but not the struggling businesses that are laying people off, cutting hours and cutting pay. Bay Street and its executives win; struggling businesses and people worried about their jobs lose.

The confusing thing is that Dalton McGuinty had the same criticisms of corporate income tax cuts when he

was in opposition. Now he's done a 180. Times are changing, I guess. He criticized the Tory government's \$2-billion corporate income tax cut more than 70 times in this Legislature, and even in the short time I've been here I've heard the finance minister stand up and point his finger at the opposition and say, "When we took over this government, you guys were in a \$5-billion deficit." Well, they've quadrupled it, or more than that, since this last government.

Here are just a few examples of what's going on. From March 20, 2008: "What the Conservatives are asking us to do is cut corporate income taxes—those are taxes on profitable corporations—by \$2.3 billion.... That definitely means closing hospitals, firing nurses, cutting education. It means driving up tuition fees. It means cutting the Ministry of the Environment and the like, and it means running a deficit."

From May 14, 2002: "They just have to tell their friends on Bay Street that the \$2.2 billion in corporate tax breaks they were expecting is something that we just can't afford.... The truth is that this government is terrible—absolutely terrible—"with" managing "money."

From December 5, 2001: "Minister, you say that you have to make cuts. We say you could easily cut your \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut...."

From November 20, 2001: "Quite simply, we believe that health care, public education and the protection of our environment are greater priorities than cutting corporate taxes by an additional \$2.2 billion. Our priorities are the priorities of our working families...." I don't think so.

November 6, 2001: "We know our revenues are going to drop. We know people are going lose their jobs.... What we believe as well is that it is entirely irresponsible, given the circumstances, to proceed with another \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts ... Minister, on behalf of Ontario's working families, will you now cancel your ideologically driven corporate"—this is the Liberals talking to the Conservatives.

Now they've done a 180. Now they're doing it the opposite way. So I don't know what's different here.

October 15, 2001: "Minister, you remain committed to your \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut. It seems to me it's becoming very clear that this cut in corporate taxes is going to leave you with one of two options: You are either going to run deficits or you're going to make serious and further dramatic cuts to health care, education and the environment." This is the Liberals talking to the Conservatives when they were in opposition. Wow. It's changed—not much; same old song, I think.

I could go on, but I think people get the point. Once upon a time, this Premier thought corporate tax cuts were bad policy. Once upon a time, this Premier saw no connection between jobs and corporate tax cuts. Suddenly, he doesn't. While the McGuinty Liberals are helping to fund million-dollar executive salaries, they're telling Ontario families to brace themselves for cuts, cuts that people in some communities are already experiencing and have been for years.

We've lost probably 70% to 80% of our industrial base in the city of Hamilton in the last 10 years. I wonder who was in power. The emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne are closed. More, like Wallaceburg, and Matthews Memorial Hospital near Sault Ste. Marie—they're also on the chopping block. Deficits and cuts loom at Bluewater Health, Sault Ste. Marie hospitals, Kingston General, Cambridge Memorial Hospital and the Niagara Health System. The provincially appointed supervisor at Cambridge Memorial Hospital is finding savings by not replacing positions; that means not hiring, letting people do double the work.

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And it's not just health care; it's the care of vulnerable children too. Faced with a \$67-million shortfall, children's aid societies have begun to lay off employees. Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Family Services has sent layoff notices to 120 management and front-line staff. That follows the cuts at York Region Children's Aid Society.

There are clear winners and losers here. To the people, the Premier says, "Pay more, get less." To those needing public services, like the elderly waiting for long-term care and vulnerable children needing support, the Premier says, "You'll have to wait." But to companies that are doing just fine and paying their executives million-dollar bonuses, the Premier bends over backwards for them.

If you're an average person in this province watching the goings-on here and you're watching the multi-million dollar payouts to consultants, over \$1 million a day—that's one agency, a health agency. There are 22 that the government has decided they might want to audit now, out of the 390 that they have control over. If it's \$388 million for just eHealth, what would it be for all 380 agencies? I don't even want to begin to think. It's billions of dollars that could have gone into health care, to our seniors, to our kids, to poverty—just waste upon waste. If people really saw the numbers, it would boggle their minds.

I also want to talk about pension reform, another one of our priorities. With only 35% of Ontarians covered by an occupational pension plan, there is a clear need for expanded pension coverage for all Ontarians. Sixty-five percent of the people in this province do not have a defined pension plan; they don't have a pension plan at all. Ideally, the way this would be done would be to increase the benefit levels of the Canada pension plan. This would draw on existing economies of scale, risk sharing and administrative efficiencies of the plan. The Ontario NDP joins with the federal NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress in the campaign for an expanded national universal pension plan in the form of enhanced CPP and also old-age security. We want that, but we also believe there should be a plan for Ontario, because we don't feel that the federal government is going to come forward with that much of a raise that it's going to be significant to help people.

That said, the issue of expanding coverage is an urgent one, and the Ontario NDP believes there's an important

role to be played at the provincial level in greatly expanding workplace pension coverage. Therefore, the NDP believes that Ontario should move ahead on its own to develop an employment-based pension plan for all working Ontarians who presently lack occupational coverage.

The NDP also supports the Arthurs recommendation for establishing an Ontario pension authority. We believe that pooling, administering, investing and disbursing stranded pensions would be an important role for this authority.

The level of monthly pension benefits eligible for protection by the pension benefits guarantee fund is completely inadequate. We believe that the monthly guarantee covered by the PBGF should be increased to a maximum of \$2,500 to reflect the effect of inflation on the original maximum of \$1,000. It hasn't been changed since 1980.

While the NDP agrees that the basis on which the levee will be paid by plan sponsors is a complex matter and that a phase-in period may be necessary, it is absolutely essential that a commitment to implement the key Arthurs recommendations be made in the first package of this pension legislation, to be tabled any day now, or maybe after the Christmas break.

The NDP also believes that the existing grow-in rights that provide access to early retirement benefits for all qualifying single-employer pension plan members in the event of a full or partial plan wind-up should be extended to all such members who are involuntarily terminated. Qualifying members should continue to be those whose age and years of service add up to 55. The NDP strongly supports the key Arthurs recommendation. We believe that it would increase equity and reduce the number of disputes about full or partial wind-ups. However, limiting the grow-in to involuntary quits is highly problematic. It is frequently unclear whether termination is voluntary. Pension legislation does not generally differentiate between voluntary and involuntary terminations and it is not an issue in which the regulator has any special competence. Attempting to differentiate between the voluntary and involuntary quits adds to costs, complexity and inequity. The grow-in provision must not be limited in this way.

Finally, the NDP supports the Arthurs recommendation that all active plan members should be immediately vested for all accrued pension benefits. However, at present, the plan administrator should retain the discretion to circumstances. The NDP strongly supports these key Arthurs recommendations and believes the recommendations should be implemented immediately.

When the government comes out with their pension reform, some now and some in the spring session, I have a feeling that it's going to fall drastically short of the needs of the people of Ontario. I hope they're not just doing it for mileage. I hope there's actually going to be some meat to the bill. I hope they're actually going to increase the PBGF fund. I hope they're going to actually make a difference in the lives of Ontarians. I have my

doubts that it will go far enough, like most of the bills that have been presented in the two years I've been here; they don't go far enough. They're half measures, and people need help now.

People worked all their lives for their pensions. People worked all their lives for that security in their old age, and what do they do? Let's take Nortel: They pull the rug from underneath these people at the end of their lives, when they need it most. It's absolutely outrageous. These people deserve good treatment. They helped build our province. They paid their taxes, they followed the rules, and at the end, money managers and other unscrupulous people are pulling the rug out. What's wrong with this picture? It's time that governments stood up, federally and provincially, for the people of this province who have worked hard all their lives, hoping to have some kind of a decent retirement in their later years. Believe me, a lot of them are scared right now. A lot of pension plans are under threat. Many of them are underfunded. Something has to be done immediately. The elderly people in our province have built our province; they have gone to war for us. They deserve better treatment, and it's the people in this House and the people in Ottawa who should be jumping to their defence and doing something immediately to fix these pension problems because, believe me, they've earned it. They earned the protection.

In closing, I hope that the pension reform that this government is going to bring forward will be beneficial and not just a lot of—how would I put it?—hearsay. I want actual meat in the bill. I want actual implementation of the bill: not five or 10 years from now and not two months before the next election, coming out with promises, and once they get elected, it all goes out the window again. The Liberals are famous for making promises and not keeping them when they get elected. I hope the people of this province realize it and see, through the mist, what's at the end of tunnel because, believe me, it's going to be a scary sight.

I'm going to share some time with the member from James Bay, and he will carry on with this discussion. Believe me, it's something that's very important to the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I appreciate the opportunity. It's unfortunate; it would appear that the government members are not going to participate in this debate. Perhaps they'll do so later. I hope so, because certainly the financial challenges facing the province are significant. We just have to look at the projected deficit—just under \$25 billion—and a series of significant deficits projected as far as the eye can see. I think one has to suspect that the deficit prediction for this fiscal year is once again going to be incorrect, given some of the recent expenditures. We've seen the unforeseen expenditures on H1N1, as an example, so I think we may be looking at something significantly in excess of \$25 billion, which is a scary prospect with respect to the

burden that we're placing on future generations in this province; with respect to a growing, mounting debt and the increasing percentage of the annual operating budget that debt repayment will be taking. That should be a concern to all of us who care about the future of this province for our kids and our grandkids.

I think that this government, quite fairly, has been described by the National Post as the worst government in Canada. I think if you look at what has transpired, especially over the past year, clearly an increasing number, a majority now of Ontarians, would share that perspective. If you look at the most recent Angus Reid poll, it certainly reflected that. Some will say that's an impact of the HST being brought in by the government, but I think it's a whole series of things, when you're looking at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming scandal, followed by the eHealth billion-dollar boondoggle.

1700

Now we see the Auditor General's report this week, the Provincial Auditor's report, again going into details of mismanagement and the culture of entitlement that has grown like Topsy within this McGuinty Liberal government: waste everywhere you turn, a lack of concern for taxpayers' dollars, and this in the midst of probably the most significant economic downturn we have seen in 70 years. We're seeing this kind of treatment—or lack of respect may be a better way of describing it—for the value and the importance of ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are treated with the respect they deserve in these very difficult and challenging economic times. Clearly, that has not been the case with the performance of this government. Hence, they've been described as the worst government in Canada.

Again I say—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Yes, they have significantly passed the NDP, which they frequently criticize in this Legislature, and the deficit, which is not a real deficit, that they continue to criticize the former Progressive Conservative government for leaving them—once again at the six-month point in a fiscal year.

I'm going to talk briefly about a number of things. As you know, eHealth—we mentioned the provincial auditor's report yesterday, describing real concerns related to the distribution of welfare moneys, of the WSIB and the ballooning deficit. It's over \$11 billion now, the unfunded liability, which I believe the auditor has recommended be combined with the provincial deficit to give Ontarians a fairer assessment of the challenges facing this province. If you accept the \$25 billion, that immediately moves us up to a \$36-billion, \$37-billion deficit facing Ontario taxpayers. It's not just frightening; I would think "alarming" would be a more accurate description with respect to that.

Ontario Buys: When you look at the insider deals that were going on with respect to this Ontario Buys program—I look to our finance critic. Is that the program, our finance critic, where the government in their budget last year claimed they had saved significant millions of

dollars? I don't think Mr. Miller is paying attention to me. He's deep in thought. Is that where they claimed in their budget that they had saved \$45 million?

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: They said they had saved \$45 million. The Minister of Finance gets up and boasts about it. Of course, we find that he was only off by \$44 million. And we look at what was going on within that operation and the sweetheart deals that were being arrived at for certain people. Again, if you look at the auditor's report, he says quite clearly that it appears that fraud was committed. That is a very serious allegation. I would hope that we're going to see the Premier or the Attorney General or the minister of public safety within the next few days, based on the concerns clearly expressed by the provincial auditor, call in the OPP for a thorough investigation. This is an allegation that's in black and white, a concern expressed by the provincial auditor. It's something that should be taken seriously by the government and acted upon, rather than simply standing up this House day after day, week after week and saying, "Yeah, well, we're sorry. Obviously we have more work to do," yada, yada, yada, after going on six and a half years in office.

One of the other things that bothers me on a regular basis, not just getting up and saying, "We saved \$45 million," and he was only off by \$44 million, is that they continually get up and use quotes from people like myself with respect to the HST. And I have said in the past that the principle, the concept, of a harmonized sales tax is attractive and is worthy of consideration. Then, of course, we've talked about widespread consultation, that that's required, and that we have to look at revenue neutrality. Those are all of the elements of that conversation that the members opposite neglect to reference when they're quoting the members over here. They parcel out a particular part of a discussion. That's called "distortion" in anybody else's books and, of course, Madam Speaker, perhaps the worst attempt at—I can't use the word; you won't allow me, but you know what I'm talking about—bringing in a tax like this. When we talk about consultation, we saw how they shut off debate in this House. We saw how they closed down public hearings and failed to go outside the city of Toronto.

But this is the kind of issue: such a significant change in tax policy—the largest increase in sales tax in the history of the province. This is something that needs discussion. It should have been something that was discussed in the last election. Yet we had the Premier, once again, in a provincial general election, say, "I will not be increasing your taxes." That's two in a row. Are we looking for three strikes here? The public of Ontario are not going to give you that third strike. They've been led down the garden path twice now with respect to tax increases and commitments made—on television: the Premier standing up there and making this solemn promise to the people of Ontario. Once again, we know how solemn that promise was. Not worth the air-time that was paid for; that's for sure. In any event, it's certainly a concern.

Interjections.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: It's interesting to watch the members opposite, the backbenchers especially, because, as Yogi Berra would say, "It's déjà vu all over again." I remember the NDP government sitting over there, and the polls were looking pretty grim. They knew that the public was not very happy with the way they had performed. We didn't have a fixed election date then, and the Premier of the day, Bob Rae, extended the term of the government for about four and a half years. I think he went on for four and a half years, because they knew that the prospects were grim. Yet we saw backbencher after backbencher getting up and defending the indefensible. There were people who stood up against it—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: —and some are still here—who had the foresight and the intestinal fortitude to tell Mr. Rae that they were not in agreement with him, and they're around here.

Interjections.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: That's the reality of the situation, and we see it again in the member who's harping over there—she's one of those who is quickly jumping to her feet to defend the indefensible on a regular basis. We'll see. We'll see if, indeed, history repeats itself with respect to the next general election. We're not going to jump to conclusions. We still have a little under two years left, and we'll see what happens with respect to this.

But there's a growing sentiment, a growing appreciation, a growing understanding that you have failed the province of Ontario, and you've failed future generations as well with your mismanagement and your lack of frankness—I'll use the word "frankness"—with the public in terms of the commitments you've made in two provincial elections.

We talk about the worst government in Canada. Another thing I want to put on the record, because it has impacted my riding in a very negative way and it has impacted the people who can worst afford to deal with a decision taken by this government—we're talking about low-income families. This government, this great brain trust sitting over there, decided that we had to rehabilitate all of the service centres on the 401. So what did they do? They closed them all. We've had service centres closed for over two years. Now they've got them all closed. In my riding, they closed two and they threw 300 people out of work, in the midst of a recession. These are low-income people who are having to struggle with very few opportunities available to them, and this government—can you see any retailer, can you see Tim Hortons, closing all its outlets at once? This is unbelievable. Total mismanagement. Total incompetence.

If anything has reaffirmed the view that this is the worst government in Canada, the closure of those service centres really put the nail in that coffin, let me tell you. Stupidity, stupidity, stupidity—unbelievable stupidity. There should be somebody resigning over that one. But, no, this government goes on leading us down this very unfortunate path.

1710

I have to let my colleague have some time here, but I want to put something on the record with respect to the HST which has not gotten a lot of prominence, but I think it's a significant concern and should be a concern of the people over there, but, of course, nothing is a concern to them. The fact that they're running the highest deficit—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: —in the history of the province. The fact that we are now a have-not—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

The member may continue.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's unfortunate that they can't deal with the truth.

I want to talk a bit about the impact of the HST on the tourism sector in the province of Ontario. The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario—badmouth them if you wish—retained a firm to conduct a review of the impacts of the harmonization of sales taxes in the province of Ontario. They reached this conclusion: "The impacts on tourism appear to have been either overlooked or not considered"—either overlooked or not considered.

What they've said—and I'm going to just go through a few quick examples in this: "Transitioning to a harmonized sales tax environment in Ontario will have negative implications for the province's tourism businesses and individual tourism businesses. Pricing to the end consumer will increase.... Further, from the perspective of Ontario tourism businesses, the costs savings from tax harmonization will be limited given the tourism industry's preponderance of input costs ... not being eligible for input tax credits." They tell me only about a third of their inputs will be eligible for the tax credits.

They also say—one other item they highlight with respect to the ineligibility of income tax credits on electricity: "The Ontario government's decision to delay eligibility for claiming input tax credits on electric power will damage the major Ontario ski operators who will face a one-time cost increase of 8% with no ability to claim the tax credit offsets"—can I get a drink of water, please? Those are just a couple of examples.

They also carried out a number of detailed visitor scenarios. I hope the people who have tourism businesses in their ridings who are sitting in the Liberal backbenches are paying attention to this. This is a weekend getaway scenario: two adults visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake, two nights in a hotel, two sets of theatre tickets for the Shaw Festival, meals and shopping. Now, what's this going to mean for the cost of a weekend getaway as described in Niagara-on-the-Lake? An additional cost, tax as a total percent of total cost: 44%.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Yeah, sure.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Just in helping my friend take his drink of water,

I'd like to signal that former member Karen Haslam is here with us in the public galleries.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much, and welcome.

The member may continue.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: You know, some of the Liberal backbenchers again are yelling, "Well, that's not true; that's not true." Well, this is not the MPP saying this; this is the organization that I cited at the outset. So you're suggesting that they're misleading the people of Ontario. This is the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, a very well-respected organization. So this is what Liberal members think of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

So that's a weekend getaway; a weekend getaway in Niagara-on-the-Lake up 44% because of your HST.

Okay, let's talk about a one-week camping holiday, a one-week camping holiday for a family of five: two adults, three kids, staying seven nights in a campground. What's the total tax as a percent of the total cost? What's this going to be up? Some 33%, as a result of your tax grab.

Here's a family ski holiday: two adults, two children, four nights in a two-bedroom chalet, with three days of skiing, partial equipment rental and meals. What's it going to cost? How much more is that going to cost? It's a 25% increase in cost. Those are the impacts.

Go on their website and take a look at this. Read it. You should be looking at this kind of material, especially if you have tourism operators in the riding that you are supposed to be representing, but certainly you're failing them like you're failing most Ontarians.

This government and the conduct of its backbenchers is nothing short of shameful.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: There are several issues that I'd like to cover in the very brief time that's been left. I could seek unanimous consent for an extended hour, but we'll just wait and see how it works out here.

I guess I want to start by setting up sort of an index of reference points so that we can all keep track. I want to start by thanking the staff here, because I think this session is pretty well wrapped up. It's kind of a sad and nostalgic moment for me. So I extend my thanks to all of the staff, both the political staff as well as the legislative staff, and wish them all the best of the season, which would include Merry Christmas.

Mr. Robert Bailey: What about the members—

Mr. John O'Toole: And also the members on each side, especially the NDP, who have worked very cooperatively with us in trying to hold the line on the HST. Also to the government members: Some of them I know are suffering in silence, because they are getting the same calls that I am. They're getting the same calls—the calls from the people who this year, when they're buying the toys for under the Christmas tree, are going to next year cut back on the toys by 8%, because they're all going to cost more. And getting there—the gas for the car, everything.

But I think what's important here is that Bill 218, the bill that's being foisted on the people of Ontario, is, I think, an important milestone that they've achieved this session. By that, I mean that they've made it clear—it's the largest tax policy change in the province's history, and the change is fundamental to Ontario's structure. They used to get most of their revenue from the province from taxing payroll, corporate profit and goods in the marketplace. Now they're switching the channel on you; this is the tax-channel change. What they're actually doing is reducing tax on that side. Why? Because there's no economy left in Ontario. There are 300,000 individuals out of jobs; that's 300,000 families with no income.

Interjection: They don't pay any tax.

Mr. John O'Toole: But those people who aren't working actually don't pay tax; they collect services. They're in Second Career or on social assistance.

I think that on the other side what they're actually doing, fundamentally, is changing the revenue stream from taxing income and corporate profits to taxing consumption. Now, consumption for the average earner is their only way of discretion: whether they buy chips or diet food or something. They have choices in their consumption pattern, but all of their money is spent, basically. If you're making less than \$50,000, you're spending all your money. If you make \$50,000, you probably spend \$51,000—and with young kids, certainly, if you make \$50,000, they spend \$60,000. But I think the point here is that if it's on consumption, they are guaranteed to get your money quicker, because on the income side, you could have RRSPs; you can defer taxation. Corporations can retain earnings and not declare it as a dividend or profit, so they can defer and recapitalize. The government doesn't get the revenue, is what I'm saying.

The best way to explain it to my constituents is this: If you're spending, let's say, \$100 a week now, that \$100 a week is now going to be \$108. Now, eight times 52 is \$416 more a year that they're going to get from you. Just think of that, because \$100 a week could be your gas, but it's probably more like \$300 or \$400 a week that you spend, so it's going to be about \$1,200 to \$1,500 that they're taking from your pocket, all new money—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Per person.

1720

Mr. John O'Toole: And that's per person, exactly, for a man and a woman both commuting to work.

Say they're commuting from Durham region, my riding, to Toronto. It's going to cost them \$816 a year more just for the gas, and it's going to cost them more for the insurance for the car. It's going to cost them more for everything, and from the news I heard this morning, they're going to be tolling roads in Ontario before long, and your transit is going to be taxed as well. So there is no end, and I put on caution all of the people of Ontario.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Now you're making it up again.

Mr. John O'Toole: One of the members—the member hasn't spoken on this bill and she's over there, yelling.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm going find out. She's actually quite a nice person.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. John O'Toole: Member from Huron-Bruce, I would like to engage you in this because it is important for you. I know your constituents are just as upset. I know they are because they're just like my constituents. The ordinary Ontarians are getting hosed here, and that's the truth. Why have they got a special ministry set up now? It probably cost them, I would say, around \$15 million to \$20 million to set up the new Ministry of Revenue: new offices, new furniture—we've seen what they've done all along—and a new driver, a new limousine that they had to buy for the minister and his travelling all over the province. Why have they got the separate ministry? So he can go out and communicate the plan of how to get more money. This is true.

When all of the shell game is over with, that they're reducing taxes here and there, whether it's a senior tax credit—all of it's income-tested, by the way, so there are income thresholds where you no longer get it. So it's not a universal benefit. It's income-tested. Here's the deal: The reason they're doing it at the end of the day—this is the second point of my major thesis here tonight—is this: They have a \$25-billion deficit. It's huge. That's thousands and thousands of dollars per every individual in Ontario. They have to pay it off because they borrowed it from somebody. So the plan—

Interjection: About 15 grand.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's about \$15,000 per individual. But here's the deal: The plan here is to get more money, and this is how they're doing it. That's what the people of Ontario don't trust anymore. You've broken the trust. Now, why do I say that? Trust is established through performance. I can predict future behaviour by looking at past behaviour, and the past behaviour is this: two elections based on two promises. "I won't raise your taxes," is one of them. And this was never, ever debated.

The minister says, "It's the largest tax reform in the history of Ontario, 40 years, and the Conservatives don't get it." Yes, we do. We've been preaching how important tax policy is right from the beginning, in early 1990s. What's happening here is that the trust is lost because they won't tell the absolute—they won't talk about it. In fact, the members today aren't talking for that reason. Why aren't they having public hearings? Because they don't want to talk about it. No public hearings. Why not? The public hearings have been speeches by the minister, period. They weren't a dialogue with the people of Ontario. They were announcements, proclamations. A dialogue is listening and responding, and you don't respond to our questions, nor do you respond to the people of Ontario. It's quite tragic.

This goes deeper, and the real evidence of this—in my kind of eulogy or my compliment, if you will, on this party's behaviour—is best said by the Auditor General of Ontario, Jim McCarter. I commend Mr. McCarter for his report, and I recommend it to your reading, the viewers here today. There are several sections in this report that I'm just going to take a very brief time to comment on.

My critic role is the Ministry of Government Services. A good place to start would be your own critic file. But there are three major areas that the Auditor General was very critical of. One of them was the assistive devices program. I have examples of the assistive devices program where they're wasting taxpayers' money by paying—for instance, for an item that cost \$250, a TV screen for a computer module for a person with special needs, the supplier paid \$250 and the device provider charges \$1,500. Who's looking after the small change is evidence that they're not looking after any change. It's tragic. Then other families, with children needing a wheelchair or whatever—there's no money left for them because of the waste. There's no respect for the taxpayer dollar. I'm talking about the small items. I'm not talking about eHealth, the billion-dollar scandal. I'm not talking about it. I'm talking about the child needing a wheelchair, and there's no money left for them. That's where a government is failing the people of Ontario.

The second item that was criticized profusely by the Auditor General was Ontario Buys. This program was about trying to create efficiencies in bulk purchases. That's really what it was. Having worked in business for 30 years, I know that when bulk purchasing, there should be economy of scale. The first thing they did is they hired 31 people; that's a start. I think it cost them to set up what they call this shared services organization—I think they spent about \$61 million—sounds like a fair amount of money—before they saved one nickel. The Auditor General was highly critical of it. I look at the viewers; they won't give me the time to tell you the whole story. It's on page 203. You can look it up, or you can call my office. I'd be happy to share it with you.

There's another very important part—I would hope that we don't recess tomorrow because I'd like to stay here for weeks and talk about this stuff—the unfunded liability of WSIB. Now that's the third leg, that's the third rail, in my opinion. Why do I say that? There are three programs that in Ontario have—that seems like the new litmus test.

The new litmus test is the billion-dollar scandal. First we had \$1 billion on eHealth. The second one was the \$1 billion on social assistance. The third one is the \$1 billion on the WSIB.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: There's \$12 billion there that's unfunded, but it grew by \$1 billion in just recent times. I think those are indications.

Going back to that assistive devices plan, going back to that family that can't get the support they need when they need it—you can't get to the hospital when you need it; you can't get to your schools because there are no service for autistic children. It's in all areas of all service delivery in the government. I think if you put all this into context, it's very important. This is the one thing that I think is shameful, really. This is how low you can get actually in terms of how—focus has rightfully been on overpayments, waste and fraud of \$1.2 billion in Ontario welfare and disability. That being said, examples of the

McGuinty government's questionable taxing and spending do not end there.

This government has raised a half a billion dollars in potentially illegal revenue from user fees. I question this illegal revenue from user fees. Yesterday, from the Auditor General, we've learned that the government is adding—now, this is important; listen up—a convenience surcharge of \$1 for each electronic ServiceOntario kiosk; \$1 billion is what they're going to collect in the long run. These services should be discontinued because the whole service of not over the counter is supposed to cost less.

Check out the Auditor General's report on page 148: "Revenues collected by the Ministry of Government Services for certain registration services significantly exceeded the cost to provide the services by approximately \$60 million, which is six times more than the costs to deliver them" in person.

The travesty doesn't end there. When you look at this whole idea of—

Mr. Robert Bailey: There's more?

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, there is. The Archives of Ontario is a good example. This is the lack of accountability, one example: "The archives informed us that, due to weaknesses in its ISR container-tracking system and backlogs in data entry regarding storage and container movement archives continues to pay without verification" of delivery of the service.

This is rampant in every single ministry, and what we're trying to say is, "Your time is up." You've taxed people to death, and I have nothing but a concern about the future, with the economy going down and the loss of jobs.

Now they're introducing the largest tax increase in Ontario's history. This is not a very pleasant time of the year to be doing this to the people of Ontario. I hope the members of the government side actually respond in some way and refute some of the things I've said. If you don't, I'll take it that everything I have said is true. It's unthinkable to be doing it at this time of year and at this time of the economy. So I put to you—

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

1730

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm pleased to take part in this debate, because it gives us an opportunity, in concurrence, to speak about a number of things. I want to see, for the House and for my colleagues here, if we can make some headway on a couple of things. The first thing, obviously, we need to talk about is the HST.

I've been listening to the speeches up to now, and peoples' memories serve them right. I remember two elections ago, when Premier McGuinty went out as Leader of the official opposition and said, "Vote for me. I'm going to sign the taxpayers' pledge and I'm not going to raise your taxes." He gets elected in his first majority government, comes back, and what does he do? He increases the health tax. Then he argues, "Well, that's not really a tax, so therefore it doesn't count and, trust me, I won't raise your taxes." Then he's asked, and his

finance minister is asked, "Are you going to implement the HST? Will you merge the PST with the HST?" The McGuinty government had a position, and their position was "no."

So here was the lay of the land: You had the Liberals, who were saying they would under no circumstances introduce the HST, and you had the Conservatives who said, "We think it's not a bad idea." So it was pretty clear for me to understand, as a New Democratic, where the parties sat. The Liberals said they were opposed to the HST, the Tories said they didn't think it was a bad idea, and we opposed it, as we always have, as the Manitoba government has, as the Nova Scotia government is and as the Saskatchewan government did—and yes, the NDP government in Ontario, same thing. So we've always been consistent as New Democrats. I've got to say that Andrea Horwath, our leader, has been doing a stellar job travelling across the province, meeting with people, raising the issue, ringing the bell, letting people know what's going on, trying to get people to have their say in coming to this Legislature day in, day out in order to raise this issue, in order to put the fight, so that this government comes to their senses. We have to take the government at their word.

If the government says at one point, "We're opposed to merging the PST with the GST," so therefore they're opposed to the HST—well, you know, we're all honourable members. We have to trust that, when the Premier said that and when the finance minister said that, they meant it. When the leader of the now opposition said that he wasn't necessarily opposed to it, and Mr. Runciman said he thought it wasn't a bad idea, we took them at their word. There's been a collision in this Legislature, a huge collision. All of a sudden I'm having a hard time trying to discern who the Liberals are and who the Tories are and who the Tories are and who the Liberals are. Now you've got the Liberals, who were opposed, saying it's a great idea, and you've got the Tories, who said they thought it was a good idea, saying it's a bad idea.

But the one consistent thing through this whole mess has been New Democrats. We've been opposed to this from the beginning, and we have been opposed to this since our good friend Mr. Mulroney—who you now think is a great guy on the Liberal side of the House. We have opposed it since then. We continue to oppose it, and we look forward to our federal caucus, who have already shown last week that they will vote in opposition to the HST and will continue to do so. There are only New Democrats who can stand in this House or can stand in the federal House and be consistent on that position. I've got to say that I'm proud to be a New Democrat.

Let me tell you why I think the HST is a bad idea. Aside from the political ramifications—let me start with the political ramifications. What is it with the Tories? Excuse me, I've got you mixed up again. What is it with the Liberals? Do you guys have a thing where you want to absolutely lose the next election? Normally there's a bit of a fight in the government in the last year, year and a half of their mandate. These guys are doing absolutely

everything they can to alienate every voter in Ontario. So I'm saying to myself, "What is this all about?" Are you guys all of a sudden, you know, going into the caucus room and having some grand strategy that none of us can understand? You guys are really moving down the way of committing political kamikaze. Because I'll tell you—

Mr. Paul Miller: Kool-Aid.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I didn't want to use that because that has a bad connotation.

Mr. Paul Miller: Jonestown.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Jonestown was a pretty tragic thing.

Mr. Paul Miller: It was.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're not drinking Kool-Aid. They're all still standing.

So I just say that these people stood in caucus and decided to go forward, and 75% of the people, according to polls that I've seen over the last week—the two polls that came out, the public domain polls—say they strongly disapprove of the HST.

I've only been in politics for 20 years. Don't take it from me. I probably don't know a heck of a lot about this. But I do know one thing: When 75% of the voting public are opposed to something, I think a government should pay attention.

This is a really, really bad political move—and this on top of a whole bunch of other initiatives and a whole bunch of other scandals that we've seen happen over the last little while is a cumulative effect. I say to myself, why is the government doing this? I don't understand the political side of what you're doing this for, because there's no upside.

The government says, "Don't worry. Trust us. We're going to lower your other taxes so that the HST, when it's increased, is revenue-neutral." When is the last time we heard a government talk about revenue neutrality? Ah, it was under the Harris government. And did that happen? Absolutely not. I don't trust any government that walks into this place and says, "At the end of the day, it's going to be revenue-neutral." The Tories ran on a platform of saying they were going to download a whole bunch of services, and they were going to take things back, and it was all going to be revenue-neutral, and not to worry. Well, we all go to our municipalities on the weekends when the House is not sitting and we sit with them and meet with them and do things with them. Are they happy about revenue neutrality? They'll all tell you—every mayor, every councillor—that was the biggest joke; by the end of the day, it wasn't revenue-neutral. Municipalities are paying for things they never dreamed they would have to pay for before. So why should the public believe now that it will be revenue-neutral when it comes to the individual taxpayer vis-à-vis the HST and the tax credits you're saying you're going to apply? In reality, it ain't going to happen.

It's a consumer tax, and the problem with a consumer tax is, once you apply it and you apply 8% on goods that are, so far, exempt and on services that are all exempt, people will end up paying more overall. Yes, there may

be the odd person who may end up in a better position, but they're not going to be anywhere close to the majority, because we are a society of consumers. People love running out to the corner store—I wish they would run to the corner store and their local stores, but they run to Walmart and the big chain stores—and they love to spend that money. They like their big-ticket items. That's the society we have built. People go out and buy things, people do investments through RRSPs, people buy mortgages when they're buying houses, all of which now are going to be increased in cost as a result of this new HST.

The public gets it. That's why 75% of the public are saying, "Absolutely not. We're not buying this argument for two seconds." When a government comes knocking at the door and says, "Trust me, I won't raise your taxes," they know to run because, quite frankly, they've heard that far too often. If I was a member on the government side, I would be a little bit nervous now.

I speak with some authority, because I was a member of government that did something pretty stupid called the social contract. I was one of those members who went along with the government, as every backbencher does in a government. At the end of the day, it cost us a whole bunch of seats, it cost us an election, and we've been paying the price up until the last election.

Maybe you guys want to follow the road of Bob Rae, because he has now become a Liberal. I've got to believe that maybe what you're doing is, that Dalton, Dwight and George—I should say, the Premier, the finance minister and the former minister of infrastructure—have been talking to one Bob Rae, and he says, "Listen, guys, now that I am a Liberal, let me tell you how to do it." Well, you're welcome to it. You can have him and his ideas, because at the end of the day the social contract really hurt our party, to the point that it took us two elections to get over it. So, if that's the way you guys are going, it's your choice, but I've got to say, my God, it is a very, very interesting choice.

From a policy perspective, why is the HST such a bad idea? Do you raise consumer taxes in a recession? Hello. We're trying to tell consumers, "Have confidence. Go out and purchase. Become good, responsible consumers, and get the money back into the local economy so that we can get Ontarians back to work." Well, at the very time that we're trying to do that, come July 1 of next year somebody is going to take their bank card or their credit card or their finance company or bank loan and they're going to go to buy something, and they're going to say, "What? Another 8%? What do you mean another 8%? I'm not buying that. I'm walking away from a sale."

Why do we know that? Look what happened after the GST. It was the same argument during the GST. Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson, then finance minister, made the same promises that the McGuinty government is making today. They said, "Don't worry. This is going to be revenue-neutral. It'll be fine. It'll be wonderful. The savings by manufacturers will be passed on to the consumer. Everybody will be fine." Well, they went

down to two seats, so we know what happened to them politically. I wouldn't say the GST was a pretty big part of it.

1740

What happened to the consumer when the GST was put in place was that we saw a reduction in consumer spending for the first while after the GST was introduced. Eventually it came back. I'm not saying it never came back, because we know what has happened to the economy, but the immediate effect was that they went trucking along with fairly good retail sales, there was a bump when it was announced because everybody knew the GST was going to be implemented on a certain date, there was a spike in sales and then she dropped. That hurt the Ontario and the Canadian economy.

So why are we doing this? The government says, "Look what happened to the Maritime provinces. My Lord. In the Maritimes they introduced the HST and they had a big boom." Well, Jeez, the boom was oil. Don't you guys know what's going on in Newfoundland, Labrador and Nova Scotia? Haven't you been out east in a while? Are you all CFAs? Do you all come from away? Come on. What's going on over there is that Hibernia and others, those oilfields, have really stimulated the economy of the Maritimes.

What we saw in the Maritimes is what we saw in Ontario. Did the economy of Ontario go into the boost that it did for the amount of years that it did because the Maritimes put in the HST? Our economy here went up because the general economy was up, and what we saw with the Maritimes was oil. So for the government to argue, "Hey, this is all about the HST. That's what happened in the Maritimes," I say to my friends across the way: Boy, oh boy, you're sadly mistaken, because I believe that's not the case.

As my good friend Mr. Rosario Marchese—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —the member from Trinity–Spadina says, the consumers are going to get whacked and whacked again.

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Levac: He says, "Ba-da-bing, ba-da-boom."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So, ba-da-bing, ba-da-boom, as my good friend says.

So I say to my friends across the way—and I want people who are watching this debate to know that Liberals and New Democrats and Conservatives may have debates here and at times we may be hot and heavy, but most of us talk to each other. I respect the people of this assembly. I'm just trying to give you a bit of advice: I've been through it, and you don't want to be voting for an HST, because my friends, at the end of the day that is going to be one that'll be long remembered by the voters come the next election.

The other thing that I want to get into is the northern economy—off the HST to another issue. We have seen, over the last seven years, a huge, huge drop in employment in northern Ontario, mostly originally in the

forestry sector. The government changed the policy that used to always be in place when it came to what happened in the forest industry. It was, until Dalton McGuinty got elected, the policy of this province—the Conservative government of Mike Harris, the NDP government of Bob Rae and, yes, the Liberal government of David Peterson and governments before—that when a mill shut the doors and said, "We're no longer going to be in operation," the crown said, "We're taking the wood back." Why? Because the wood is a crown resource. It doesn't belong to the company. The facility that was using the wood—in other words, the mill—lost the wood because they shut their doors and then the wood came back to the crown. The crown would do a request for proposals and somebody else would come in and bid for that wood and put a proposal together as to how to use the wood. My good friend Mr. Brown would remember some of the issues that happened in his own riding, in places like Jager and others.

But the point is, the province always had that policy. This government changed it when they got elected. They decided that the Tories had started the privatization of wood management in our province, and a lot of the work that used to be done by MNR was transferred off to the private sector so that the forest companies did most of the forest management. A lot of that used to be done by the MNR.

The government just decided that if the costs were increased on the private sector, we needed some way to sweeten the pot and soften the blow. So they decided that they were going to turn the page in Ontario: that if a mill shut down, they would not take the wood back. Well, the list is long. From northwestern Ontario to northeastern Ontario and to places in central Ontario, we've seen mill after mill, sawmill after sawmill, close; we've seen pulp mills close; we've seen paper mills close; and we've seen no wood coming back from the crown. That has been a travesty, because we are no longer using public policy in order to be able to do what's right for the residents of northern Ontario: the ability for them to stimulate the economy by finding a successive employer.

Companies like Tembec and others—I've had these fights with them, and what I say here is the same discussion I have had with Frank Dottori and John Valley and others from Tembec and other companies in my riding. I've always said what they were doing was wrong. I don't believe that the forest companies should control the forest. Those trees are a crown resource, and we need to be able to control it.

But this government decided they weren't going to do that. That was the first part. So when the mills started to close, the company said, "What the heck? We don't have to worry, because we're not going to lose the wood. So we'll close down the mills, and eventually we're going to do supermills." That was the original plan. Those companies wanted to move from having a number of medium- and larger-size mills to one or two, depending, supermills somewhere in the geographic area that made some sense to them. But the problem was, nobody

figured that the downturn in the forest industry and the downturn of what happened with the sales of wood products would ever go as low as it did. So those companies that were heavily indebted and not able to refinance in order to do the kind of work that needed to be done to get there weren't able to, because the price fell out of the bottom and the market shrank. They were in no position to be able to do anything about even doing supermills—not that I'm in favour of that; I think it's a bad idea. But the government very, very much misjudged their actions on that.

I remember coming to a meeting with Premier Dalton McGuinty in the room and then Minister Ramsay, along with the mayor of Opasatika—which was the first mill in Ontario to close under that policy—along with mayors from the region and union leaders and others. The Premier made it clear: The policy was changed. They would not take the wood back to the crown. They would allow the forest companies to decide what they were going to do with the fibre, and it was up to them. It was a business-to-business deal, and they were going to decide what was going to happen. Once the industry got the green light, there was nothing holding them back from having to shut down mills.

Now, let me be clear for the record. Would we have had shutdowns if we had taken the wood back? Yes, we would have. Absolutely. But we would have not seen what we've seen in industry today, and in some places we might have been able to do some interesting things such as what Smooth Rock Falls was trying to do in regard to putting forward a multi-use facility in the town of Smooth Rock Falls. They raised \$45 million in order to be able to move forward with that project. What they needed was a wood allocation. The province would not give them the wood allocation and, as a result, that project died. If we were able to give the wood allocation, we would have been in a position—now, fast forward to last week.

The Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, Mr. Gravelle, who I have great respect for, made an announcement. The announcement was that we are going to go to an RFP process, and we're going to allow wood to go back through the RFP process that is not being used, either unmerchantable wood or roundwood, in the province of Ontario. I told my staff, "Get a hold of Minister Gravelle. I want to give him a call." I said, "Mike, if you're doing what I think you're doing and what I've asked you to do, I will stand beside you and I will go 'Kumbaya. Good job.'" I'd be the first one to do it, and I think members of this assembly know that.

As we got the details and looked at it, it was pretty clear what was going on. I would say that around 10% of the available wood supply was being made available to RFP—a fair amount of unutilized, unmerchantable wood, which is not a bad thing. I'm not going to argue that making available unmerchantable wood is a bad thing. That's not my point. But it's only a small part of what's available. There is still lots of wood that is not being used by companies because they've shut down that is not part of the roundwood allocations that would be available.

A case in point is Smooth Rock Falls, Opasatika and other communities, where Smooth Rock Falls had 700,000 cubic metres of wood that was available to them by a minister's directive. Is 700,000 cubic metres available as a result of this RFP? No. The total for the entire region, Constance Lake down to Iroquois Falls, if you add it all up in roundwood, is about 200,000. Northern members will know that 200,000 cubic metres sounds like a lot of wood, but it's pretty marginal to make a mill run. So you're going to be in a position where every community is going to be fighting to get those allocations. It makes it look as if the government's doing something. That, I guess, is the game, but at the end of the day, you don't get to where you've got to go.

Then we get the announcement with Xstrata yesterday. Xstrata decided they're going to shut down the metallurgical site in Timmins. The metallurgical site, for people to understand, is that we have a mine in Timmins called the old Kidd Creek mine; it's copper and zinc—a very rich mine, a very deep mine, with lots of production left in it yet. We have a concentrator and a metallurgical site in Timmins. They're going to ship the ore from the underground. They're going to ship it over to Timmins to the concentrator, and once it comes out of the concentrator in concentrate, they're no longer going to process anything in Timmins any more. It means the smelter, the refinery, everything is shut down. That would be like Hazel McCallion all of a sudden finding out that two thirds of the Toronto Pearson airport is shutting down. That's the effect to the city of Timmins.

1750

So I rise in the House today and I say to the minister quite clearly that it is within our power as a province to decide how we're going to transform mineral products in this province, and who's going to do it. We can do what Danny Williams did in Newfoundland when Voisey's Bay was about to get started and Inco was saying, "We're going to get Voisey's Bay up and running." They wanted to do the same thing. They wanted to mine, do concentrate and ship the concentrate somewhere else. What did Danny Williams do? He said, "No, no way. Those are Newfoundland and Labrador resources and they will be processed in this province. They will not go out, or else it stays in ground." Hurray, Danny Williams. I only wish we had a Danny Williams and not a Tory—trust me, because I don't like Tories. I only wish that Dalton McGuinty would have learned something from Danny Williams and would understand there's nothing in it for Ontario to go down this road.

If we allow Xstrata to do what they're doing in Timmins, it is only the beginning of the end, because we are no longer just individual mining companies or Canadian mining companies, as we used to be. I used to work for Noranda, a big Canadian mining corporation, and they used to have individual mines like Pamour that were run out of Timmins and made decisions about their operations in Timmins. You don't see that anymore. You've got somebody in Brazil like Vale Inco or somebody in Switzerland like Xstrata who says, "Let me look at the

bottom line. Oh, yeah. I can save myself 10% over here, 3% over there. All right, shut Timmins down.” They don’t care, and I don’t expect them to care. They don’t live here. They don’t care. They do what they do for their shareholders. So I say to the government across the way, you have an opportunity here to do what’s right.

I’ve asked the question of the Minister of Natural Resources and mines—no, I always get that upside down, but you know what I’m saying—to look into this particular issue. I put the question to him, and I hope the government is going to do what is the right thing and say, “No, those are Ontario resources, and if they’re in the ground and extracted from this province, those resources have to be processed here in the province of Ontario.” I understand because I know the next argument I’m going to get: “Well, you know, we already have some exchanges.” Yeah, it’s true. We have some exchanges from Quebec to Ontario when it comes to some minerals and when it comes to some forestry products, but those are pretty carefully guarded as far as not throwing away the baby with the bath water. We allow certain exchanges to happen to make sure that our other mills are in pretty good shape, such as we see with Abitibi-Price in Iroquois Falls, where some of the wood from that forest goes to Quebec and we get chips back into that mill. It’s not an unknown thing. So I say to the government, you have an ability to stop this by saying to Xstrata, “No. You want to play that game? You say you’re a good corporate citizen. We’re going to force you to be a good corporate citizen and we’re going to make sure that you don’t have the ability to do so.”

The last point I will make on Xstrata is this: They came to this Legislature and met with the Liberal caucus, the Tory caucus and ourselves about a year and a half ago. What did they say? They said, “We’re here now to tell you that if the province of Ontario does not deal with energy prices and doesn’t deal with some other of our cost factors” that they talked about, being transportation and others, “we are not going to come back and knock at the door. The next time you’ll hear from us is when we close down Timmins and we ship the ore off to Horne in Rouyn-Noranda.” Well, guess what happened? The warning bells were sounded. We raised it is with the government. Howard Hampton for years raised this issue in regards to electricity prices, and the chickens are coming home to roost.

So I’ve got to say to myself, if this is an energy-efficiency policy, I don’t want any part of it, because we’re certainly using a lot less electricity than we did in the past and we’re losing lots of jobs. Xstrata was the largest single customer of OPG, of Ontario Hydro, and we’re at the point where we’re going to lose them if we don’t do something quick.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? Seeing none, I will now put the questions.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 7, this vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 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.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 7, this vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Research and Innovation, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Labour, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Tourism, 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.

The vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 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.

This vote is deferred to deferred votes tomorrow.

Votes deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Sarnia–Lambton has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

1800

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm rising tonight because of my dissatisfaction with the answer given last week to my question to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, which for a reason I don't know was answered by the Minister of Labour at that time regarding the current financial position of the training completion assurance fund.

As the minister should know, the current labour dispute at the DriveTest centres is dragging into its fourth month. This tired and arrogant government has refused to take any action to get the centres back open and testing. I was shocked when the Minister of Labour dismissed the concerns of truck driving schools as an inconvenience upon his answering the question in the place of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. This is more than just an inconvenience. For many people it means not being able to enter the workforce.

My question was directed to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities because he is responsible for training, which includes truck driving schools. All of these schools, like all private career colleges, have to pay a mandatory levy that goes into the training completion assurance fund. That is a fund designed to make sure that if a private college goes bankrupt, the student is then

protected. The arrogance of this Minister of Labour to simply dismiss my question and the concerns of potential truck drivers as a trivial inconvenience, and not answering a word about the status of the fund, was shocking, to say the least.

As I said last week, this is a very serious and troubling situation. For the record, I understand that there have been three draws on the fund, leaving it almost empty. The industry is rife with rumours that a large school is about to ask for a draw, which would possibly bankrupt this fund. This fund is paid for by the industry, but it is the government that is not doing anything to get the drive centres back open. So this should be the responsibility of this government, not the industry's responsibility, to make sure that these same students are protected.

Truck driving is the number one employer in Canada. By not allowing newly trained drivers to get licensed, you are effectively closing the door on employment opportunities. This minister and this government have shown a shocking, cavalier attitude toward getting the DriveTest strike settled, and they clearly have no idea about the status of this training completion assurance fund.

I'm looking forward to hearing this government's response to this question, and I would hope that this time they don't just parrot their old, arrogant, tired lines about the DriveTest strike that we've heard since this strike began.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: First, I'd like to acknowledge the concern of both the truck driving students and the school operators across the province of Ontario. Obviously, when a strike drags on like this, it is a difficult time for everyone. I think that concern would be shared by all members of the House. I'm sure I can speak on behalf of all members of the House when I say that I certainly hope that Serco and the Steelworkers decide that it's time to go back to the table and that they can reach an agreement to put this labour dispute to an end.

We have to think also that in the province of Ontario a great number of collective agreements never reach this stage. The collective agreement process we have in place does not result in this sort of stoppage. But in the meantime, I understand that Serco has made the decision to have management staff provide limited service, in the interim, to the public on a limited basis. It's my understanding that currently 19 sites have been set up across the province. Those sites are able to administer tests, for those who require their licence for either employment purposes or for training purposes, to meet the need in the interim as the dispute hopefully is concluded and everyone returns to the collective agreement process that they had in place before.

Our government has taken a number of steps to better protect students at private career colleges, including establishing what the member from Sarnia–Lambton was referring to: the training completion assurance fund. The training completion assurance fund is a fund that students

in the province of Ontario can access in order to complete their program in the eventuality that they encounter problems at their own school that has to close unexpectedly and they need to complete that education at a different institution, or they can receive, should they choose to, a refund of their fees from the TCAF as well.

I want to be very, very clear how that fund is administered. The superintendent of private career colleges is the person who manages the training completion assurance fund. How that is managed is with the advice of the training completion assurance fund advisory board. They are people who provide expert advice as to the management and funding of that board.

One of their main tasks is to ensure—the question the member from Sarnia–Lambton has asked—that there are sufficient funds to protect students in colleges that close unexpectedly. That fund is under management with the advice of the TCAF advisory board at this point in time, and it's my understanding that this process continues to date and that the fund is being managed well.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Wellington–Halton Hills has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question today. The member has up to five minutes to debate.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm glad to have this opportunity to continue this discussion with the government in the Ontario Legislature, and I'm glad to have the chance to hear from my colleague the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, who I understand is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education.

Last Wednesday in question period I asked the Minister of Education why she is standing idly by while students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett public school in Acton are set to lose their playground. Her response will astound parents in Acton, because it bordered on the irrelevant. According to Hansard, she said, and I quote, "They"—meaning the school board—"have decisions that have to be made about schools that are less than full" and "decisions about building new schools."

First, this issue does not concern a school that is less than full. In fact, it concerns a playground that is needed in Acton and is already well used by hundreds of students and the community at large. I think it's important to point out that Acton is a community that is surrounded by the greenbelt, so it's not going to be able to grow, and there won't be any new parkland in the community in the foreseeable future.

Second, the minister continues to fail to publicly acknowledge that the ministry policy played any role at all in the decision to declare the playground surplus land. Not only did the ministry policy play a role, it was the driving force behind this decision. That's perfectly obvious and clear and was confirmed by a letter sent to the board in May by a senior Ministry of Education official. There's no secret about this. It's on the board's website.

The minister goes on to say that the school board has to "rationalize the use of their property." It sounds to me as if the minister is trying desperately to rationalize her shameful abdication of responsibility. No one in Acton is buying her attempt to spin this as an issue of local autonomy, nor should they.

The solution isn't all that difficult. I have called on the minister to immediately review regulation 444, a regulation entirely under her purview. She must know, because we've told her repeatedly, that it is being interpreted in this case to compel the sale of public land considered to be surplus irrespective of the overwhelming wishes of stakeholders and the community at large.

There needs to be a requirement for public consultation. That was the suggestion of Melissa Secord, chair of the McKenzie-Smith Bennett school council. Her suggestion makes sense.

The minister knows that ministry policy is being interpreted to compel the Halton District School Board to declare the playground to be surplus land. The school board is then expected to sell it in order to use the proceeds to build new schools in other communities. She knows all of that, yet she continues to deflect responsibility to local officials. That's deceitful, and I hope there will be an honest correction to the record which reflects the truth of this matter.

Finally, I want to invite the minister, as well as the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, to come to Acton, to visit McKenzie-Smith Bennett public school, to hear for themselves what parents and local officials are saying. I would encourage them to do that: to hear from the mayor, the school board trustee, the school council and the region of Halton. After hearing from them, I suspect that the minister would be much less likely to defend her government's position, which quite frankly is indefensible.

1810

Acton is not very far from Conestoga. I've had the privilege of representing both of those communities. That's why I would tell the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, "It's worth the drive to Acton."

In conclusion, local decision-makers are not the root of this problem. The problem is in the minister's office. The problem is her own bad policy. This government has been in power for six years now. The Premier purports to be the education Premier. If there are problems in the education funding formula, surely they are his to fix.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga has up to five minutes to respond.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'd like to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for his question. It's my pleasure to have the opportunity, as the parliamentary assistant to education, to respond to my colleague and neighbour. As I understand, this is an important issue for him and for his constituents in Acton, particularly the parents, the children and, of course, the rest of the community at McKenzie-Smith Bennett public school.

I want to assure them, of course, as an educator and as a parent, that we recognize the importance of playgrounds, green spaces and parks for communities and families to use and to enjoy. That's why we encourage boards to work with their municipal partners to create a locally developed solution to these issues. I want to be specific: The policy framework, regulation 444/98, does not—and I reiterate, does not—provide the minister or ministry staff any authority to direct boards, municipalities or other groups to a solution.

School boards own their own property—their schools, their facilities, their buildings, their offices and their land. It's up to boards to decide at the local level how to best utilize their properties. There is a transparent process that all boards must follow if they wish to dispose of surplus property. I will just quickly go over that first.

The board must seek expressions of interest from other public sector agencies, beginning with co-terminous school boards and including municipalities. If no interest is expressed, the board can then offer the property on the open market.

I'd also like to touch on a draft policy that the Ministry of Education shared with our education partners earlier this year. In August, the ministry released a draft of a new facility partnership policy which would encourage boards to work with community partners to share underutilized facilities and to build new facilities together. We hope these partnerships will help make the most of our public assets. We hope that they will strengthen services and supports available to schools and students while building stronger relationships between boards, community partners and the public at large.

We're looking for feedback from boards and other stakeholders about this new policy, and we're working very hard to get this policy in place. We know that boards already have examples of successful partnerships. We want to see more of that, and we want to see it done in a way that is transparent and in a way that is sustainable.

Again, I reiterate that these are situations that are best worked out at the local level. We encourage local trustees, councillors, board staff and, of course, the parents from McKenzie-Smith Bennett and other concerned citizens to work together to come to a solution, to find a solution, of course, that works best for them and their community at the local level.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke also expressed his dissatisfaction with an answer given. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I want to speak to the issue of the question I asked yesterday with respect to the behaviour of the Ministry of Labour.

Let's get one thing straight: The Minister of Finance/Deputy Premier said, "We can't comment on this because this matter is before the courts."

No, this matter's not before the courts. The Ministry of Labour dropped the charges, and the letter that they sent to the defendant's lawyer was that they dropped the charges because they don't believe their witness is reliable. The reality is, the Ministry of Labour dropped the charges because they got caught in their own web. The witness whom they are now trying to discredit is the injured worker, whom they were relying on to give false testimony in order to convict the Gulicks and their company who work out of Palmer Rapids.

We expect criminals to give false testimony. Regardless if they're innocent or guilty, we know that if they're guilty, they're going to say they're innocent. But one of the highest principles of justice in this country is that if you are the government, your interest has to be the truth, the truth above convictions, and this government and this Ministry of Labour have shown that it is convictions that matter, not the truth.

Let me give you a little bit of background here. The accident took place on September 7, 2007. On July 24, 2008, inspector Steve Brennan laid four charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. During the process between the charges and when they were supposed to go to trial, they embarked on a mission of intimidation and threats with the Gulicks, and through that process they denied that evidence existed. Get this one, Madam Speaker: Part of the reports of a previous inspector, Guy Nadeau, who had inspected the premises of the Gulicks in the late 1990s, were missing, and they would have been exculpatory, because they tried to paint a pattern against Gulicks which was totally false.

The lawyers, Linda Chen and Catherine Glaister, who in my opinion should be fired, and at the very least suspended, denied that the notes existed, doctored pages. Fortunately the Gulicks had kept all the originals, and this is what did in the ministry. They tried to present incomplete documents. They even went to on say that Mr. Nadeau lost the notes—it's all in his binder; it's just amazing—in a personal move. I don't know about anybody here, but do people take the notes home at night and lose them in a personal move when they're vital documents needed by the ministry? I hardly think so.

They then interviewed the witness, and tried to coerce the witness into making a false statement under oath—in fact, got him to rehearse and rehearse this false statement. Finally he couldn't do it, and he released and signed an affidavit about what the ministry was doing. Glaister, Chen and Brennan all went to visit him at his home and tried to coerce this out of him. Once that came out, the ministry then withdrew the charges, discrediting Mr. Hudder, saying that his testimony wasn't reliable.

I would be asking this ministry to go back and look at all the cases of those poor shmoe who didn't take on the battle, who were intimidated into accepting a guilty plea by the use of force by this ministry instead of going through the—because they threaten you with the maximum fine of \$2 million. Most people, when they're a small business in Ontario and they're faced with that, take their medicine even if they're not guilty.

So it's not just this case. I think it's about many other cases, and if the names Brennan, Glaister and Chen are attached to them, they should be investigated. There should be an independent investigation of their cases to see where there have been guilty pleas to see if they have in fact intimidated defendants and witnesses.

That's my request, and I hope the minister follows through on it. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The question asked in question period was not answered by the minister in his capacity as Minister of Finance, so I'm

therefore ruling that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance is not eligible to respond during this adjournment debate.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Sorry. There is no point of order during a late show.

Therefore, there being no further matter to debate, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1820.

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Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
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