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Thursday 11 March 2010

Jeudi 11 mars 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 March 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 mars 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 10, 2010, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: The ushers are very good at locking that door as I try to open it. Anyway, I'm a bit out of breath; if one of them could bring me some water, that would be great.

I stand today to talk about the throne speech, and I want to preface my remarks with a few comments about the Lieutenant Governor, David Onley. David Onley and I go back a long way. We went to university together; we were on the student society at Scarborough College at the University of Toronto. We had many debates as politicians, or hopeful politicians, and I admire him very much for his career, his life, his contribution on the airways and the role that he plays as Lieutenant Governor.

There has been much said in the Legislature in the last couple of days about his reading of the throne speech and whether or not there was proper decorum in the House at the time. I think it's very difficult to talk about the motives of individual members and whether proper decorum was given to the Lieutenant Governor. But I do want to say that he read the speech with great sincerity. He did so in a manner befitting his office. Whether or not he agreed with the contents, I have no way of knowing, but I do know that he read what he was given and that we have an obligation as legislators to listen intently to what he said and not to ascribe to him the contents.

Anything I have to say from this point on, I say not for the Lieutenant Governor and not for what he said or how he said it, but for the government who obviously wrote it. I just want it to be very clear that I, for one, recognize the institution for what it is and admire the institution and the man who holds the office.

Having said that, though, I don't like the content of what the Lieutenant Governor had to read. I listened to

the content intently—it was about 44 minutes long—and if ever I have heard a speech that I could describe as ethereal, this was it. It seemed to me to be snatched out of the air, to talk about a whole bunch of airiness and lack of content.

I know my friends opposite think that it contained great insight, but it was like reading a tome of an ancient religion. That's what it was, with all of these thoughts of angels and all of this stuff that's floating around, rather than the real, practical politics and economies of the situation.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: There's an angel right there.

Mr. Michael Prue: I see that my friends opposite see angels everywhere. This is what I took from this: that this is a bunch of true believers. They are caught up in what Eric Hoffer once said was the state of the true believer. No matter what the facts are in front of them, they still believe; no matter what scientific proof they have, it doesn't matter. They believe and they continue to believe, in the face of everything that has changed.

One of my favourite quotes that I use from time to time is by Goethe, and it's a very simple quote: "What is the hardest thing for a man to see? That which is before his very eyes." That's what I think the Liberals have failed to see—what is before their very eyes. They talk of what they want to do in terms of new job development; they talk about the Ring of Fire. I'm excited about the chromite deposits and that one day there may be a mine there that will help the First Nations communities. I've not been to all the First Nations communities around, but I have been to the one that's closest: Marten Falls Ogoki. I've been there twice.

Mr. Norm Miller: Webequie is closer.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay; whatever. Webequie is closest, I'm being told. I have been to Marten Falls Ogoki, which is one of the closer towns to the Ring of Fire. I've seen the destitution and the poverty of that place. I have sat down on several occasions in Toronto with the chief of the First Nations community and talked about what they want. There is no road or railway into the place, and there is nothing for the children to do.

The council got some money from the federal government and they built a hockey rink, hoping that the First Nations kids would have something to do. However, the very first season, before it could even be played on, an ice storm came and smashed it to the ground. There was no money from the federal government; there was no money from the province; there was no money from anyone. To the best of my knowledge, although something

could have happened in the last few months, it's still smashed to the ground.

It is a place without hope. You go into the store in Marten Falls and you see the huge prices that people pay for every common thing. Everything has to be flown in. A bag of milk for \$12, a bag of potatoes for \$15. All of the things that we take for granted, they can't have.

There are no jobs. I talked to the people who were there. There are virtually no jobs, and they rely upon hunting, fishing and other things to feed themselves and their families. What they want most of all is to be able to develop their community into something that is sustainable, that gives their people hope. I hope one day that the Ring of Fire and the chromite deposits do something for them.

0910

But I also know that when this government reaches out and announces the Ring of Fire and the chromite and how this is going to be the new wave of mining in Ontario, I have to take this with a grain of salt, because I've also been to Attawapiskat and I've seen what De Beers has done in proximity. They've done a good job, but that took 10 or 15 years of hard slogging—first of all, to negotiate with the First Nations communities, then to build the infrastructure, then to bring in the workers and then to start the diamond mine. We all know about the diamonds, because there are two of them sitting right there in the mace, but that was not something that happened overnight.

When this government talks about creating jobs in the Ring of Fire, where there is nothing on the ground, where there is no railway, where there are no roads, where there are no negotiations with the First Nations communities, then I have to wonder what kind of dream this is. What kind of thing have they pulled from the raw ether that this is going to get people to work? It is going to take eight or 10 or 12 years to get this off the ground, if it happens at all, and this is one of the four major planks that you have put forward. I'm wondering if that's going to get Ontarians back to work. In the next eight to 10 years, is it even going to give any hope and opportunity to the people of Marten Falls or the other three communities that surround the Ring of Fire?

What else is in here? They start talking about water. I don't know where there's going to be money to be made from water. Are we talking about shipping our water off? Are we talking about technology on how to produce clean water? I wish this government would invest some money in clean water technology. We have 100 communities in this province under boil-water advisories—100 of them—and most of the First Nations have no clean water.

I remember going once with my colleague Gilles Bisson to Attawapiskat. We went there to look at the water purification facility because people were getting sick. We went there and looked at a facility that was, in my view, not being properly managed at all. There was a guy inside the water filtration facility as we walked through it, and my colleague Gilles Bisson looked at the man and said he didn't think they were doing a very good job

cleaning that water for the people of Attawapiskat. The guy took umbrage at that. But Gilles did something, and I still remember it to this day; he challenged the man to take a glass right from what was being pumped out into the town and drink it, and the man refused to do so—he refused to do so—because he knew, as the water purification guy, that the equipment he had and the facilities he had were not good enough to make sure that that town had clean drinking water, and I don't think they've been improved.

I wonder: We're talking about exporting our technology around the world; we can't even export it up to James and Hudson Bays. We can't even export it to our First Nations communities, and we won't give it to them. So I wonder: "That's a great idea; let's export our knowledge." But if we can't even use it at home, who do you think is going to buy it? Who in the world is going to come running to us when we don't even have the wherewithal to use it ourselves?

Then I heard another thing. Another part was the whole talk about health care: "Let's start making the hospitals competitive." This is the new idea: Blairism coming to Ontario. "Let's make the hospitals bid. Let's recognize excellence. Let's have all the hip and knee replacements in this hospital, because they can do it cheaper and faster and better. Let's have the heart surgery done in another one, because they can do it cheaper and faster and better."

But I have to wonder. I live in Toronto. Is it going to cause me any great deal to leave Toronto East General Hospital and go down to Mount Sinai because one does it better than another? Probably not. It's probably no big deal to me and to the 2.5 million people who live in this city. But what about people in smaller-town Ontario? I've listened to the government. Are they going to compete, too? Are they going to have to compete, and little hospitals are going to have no place at all because they can't compete with the big ones? Are people going to have to travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres to get the service from whoever bids for it cheaper? I don't know, and I don't hear the government talking about this at all.

But I do know that if you ask the people of Great Britain about this whole plan that Blair brought in while he was Prime Minister, they will tell you that it was an abject, total and utter failure. This is a province and a government that is trying to emulate the failure in Great Britain. You are trying to do the same plan with almost certainly the same results, and I think this is a desperation plan.

Then I heard the fourth plank, which was to ask the federal government to finally pony up some more money. This is the old bugaboo, "Let's get the federal government to pay for all of this." I have watched—

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: What's wrong with that?

Mr. Michael Prue: My friend across there says, "What's wrong with that?" What's wrong with that is that the federal government doesn't have the responsibilities in the two areas that you want them to pay for.

The first one is child care. The last time I checked the British North America Act, the Constitution of Canada, social services are the responsibility of the provinces.

I welcome the federal government, and I'm sure all socially progressive people welcome the federal government, trying to get into the child care game so that we can have an even playing field across Canada. We know that medicare worked to considerable greatness by leveling it out so that people can go from one end of this country to the other and get similar, if not exactly the same, services. And those provinces that were not able to afford it now have the luxury of equal or nearly equal care to Ontario, British Columbia or Alberta. I recognize that, and I welcome any kind of daycare activity by a federal government that will do that, but it is our responsibility.

This government chose, when the Harper government was elected nationally, to sit down with them and accept \$63.5 million, spread out over four years, as Ontario's contribution. I would not have chosen that. I would not have done that. I would have built some daycare centres and done some other things as opposed to the operating costs, because at the end of the time, the \$63.5 million runs out. There will be no money for daycare. I will hazard a guess that, come the end of March, when we hear the budget from the finance minister standing in this place and talking, there will be no money for daycares.

All nine of the daycares in Windsor have been shut down by the city council because they know there's no money. The city of Toronto has told me that they are closing 2,050 daycare spaces this year; and next year, another 3,000 spaces.

Mr. Dave Levac: They found \$100 million.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: They found \$100 million.

Mr. Michael Prue: They're yelling at me that they found \$100 million, but they've already earmarked it because there is no ongoing funding. There is no ongoing funding from this government because this government has never taken daycare seriously. The only thing that it has ever done is passed on the federal money. Tell me how much of this government's own money it has spent on daycare. I will be shocked if it's anything at all. All they do is pass along the federal money, and when that federal money dries up, they have absolutely no plan except to tell the federal government to give us more money for something that is our responsibility.

The second one they talked about was immigration. Ontario has equal jurisdiction with the federal government. That's why we have a minister responsible for immigration in Ontario. But we spend next to none of our own money on immigration procedures. We take the federal money and we pass it on. We complain that it isn't enough, but we don't do what is necessary.

I think the federal government would take us far more seriously if we invested some of our own time and resources and ran some of our own immigration programs. We know that other provinces that have done that—especially Quebec, but increasingly Manitoba—have had spectacular results in integrating new immigrants and

have been able to choose those immigrants who are best for the economy and bring them here more quickly than if they were coming to Ontario. But Ontario invests none of its own time.

To simply stand back and say to the federal government, "Give us more money for child care, which is our responsibility, but we don't want to spend any of our money on it," or to say, "Give us more money for immigration, which is equally our responsibility, but we don't want to do what other immigrant-receiving provinces are doing, and that is setting up our own system to allow immigrants to become part of the Canadian cultural fabric," I have to say, is not much of a dream, and it's pulled out of thin air as well.

0920

Getting back to health care, I had an opportunity to go to Toronto East General Hospital—or just adjacent to the hospital—the other night. People there were upset because the physiotherapy unit at Toronto East General Hospital is being shut down. When I talked to Rob Devitt, the very capable CEO of that hospital, he told me that he doesn't like to have to shut it down, but what choice does he have? This government has already told him that he's getting 0% or 1% or 2%, but he's budgeting that it's likely to be 0%. He has no choice but to cut out what he thinks are those services that are non-essential or that may be provided elsewhere.

As I listened to the people who were there, all of the people who use the physiotherapy services are poorer people. They're people who do not have their own insurance and do not have the financial wherewithal to go out and have it done privately. They are very upset that their hospital is doing that.

When I listened to the nurses—there are some 100 nurses who are on the chopping line in the latest round—who are being told that they too might be released, I wondered: Where is the government's grand vision? Is this vision only about paying for performance, or is this vision about the people who are going to be affected? I didn't hear anything about the people being affected.

I listened to the whole thing about education and about making international students come to Canada and pay more. I'm wondering how that is going to help our educational institutions and the people who don't have the money to get in there in the first place. We charge the highest tuition fees in Canada. On a per capita basis, we are 10th out of 10 in funding our students. I didn't hear any vision about this. All I heard was: Bring in more foreign students who can pay the full rate, and that's somehow going to help us and make us some kind of centre of excellence.

I think we have an obligation to the 13 million people, especially the people leaving secondary school, to give them the kind of education that will make us great. I am not convinced that bringing in foreign students to pay the full rate is going to allow for that. I am not convinced that that is in the best interests of Ontario, although I do understand it's a bit of a cash cow for this government.

I was most disappointed that there was nothing about poverty. In 2007, this government ran on eliminating

poverty. The 2007 throne speech was filled with how you were going to eliminate poverty, and you've done next to nothing since 2007 except set up some committees. I hope the committees report, but you've done absolutely next to nothing in eliminating poverty.

When I ask the question about diet supplements, I know that cut is coming. I know from the attitude and the reaction that that is coming. When I ask about the disabled, I know there's no money, and I wonder where this government's priorities are. Pick things out of the air and do nothing.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the comments by the honourable member. I also appreciate the comments in regard to decorum. I understand that sometimes our ideologies may differ, but I think people's intentions are good. The bottom line is that we have to recognize that.

Speaking of intentions, the throne speech is visionary. To my colleague's comments, it does take time and it's not meant to be something that takes immediate reaction. But we have to do things concurrently. It is, after all, a five-year plan, and we recognize that we have to establish the foundations now in order to reap the benefits in the future.

Some of those benefits that have to be instituted have to start now; that is, around water treatment technology and about selling Ontario's expertise around the world, just as we're trying to do with renewable energy and other sources of technology; and to incentivize those businesses and companies to come to Ontario to do that R&D and do that manufacturing so we can export some of that expertise around the world.

In regard to hospitals and hospital care, we have been measuring wait times, which had not been done before: wait times in terms of surgeries and wait times now in emergency care. We are measuring it, and now we have noted that in Ontario we're exceeding the national average. It's important to measure it so that we can indeed make the amendments and the improvements necessary when it comes to hospital care. We have more doctors, we have more nurses, and we have to ensure that we maintain that, especially with the influx of more Ontarians coming to the province.

In regard to all-day learning, post-secondary and education generally, we've made those improvements too, and it's important that we invest in education going forward. Some 62% of Ontarians have post-secondary education; we're trying to move the bar up to 70%. These things are required in order for us to be competitive.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York. I enjoyed listening to him. I will echo a few of his sentiments and maybe amplify some of them and disagree with some of them.

The member didn't like the content of the throne speech. I have a little bit of a different take on that: There was no content in the throne speech. It was very difficult

for me to judge the content when there was absolutely nothing there. But it's clear that the members opposite are true believers in this non-substantive document.

I think it's very obvious to anybody who actually reads it that the government has the ability to tremendously understate the obvious and overstate the abstract.

On page 1 of the throne speech, about halfway down, it says: "Companies have downsized, some have moved, some have closed their doors for good." Well, it hasn't been "some" companies. This hasn't been a little drip of companies; it hasn't been a sliver. It has been 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of companies have closed their doors, not "some." We have had 62 mills in the north close up; 45,000 people in forestry out of work. And this government says some have downsized, some have closed up, some have moved on.

Maybe the members on the Liberal side think that's just "some." I think it's a tremendous failure of this Liberal government.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was very glad to hear the opening comments of my colleague from Beaches–East York. I came to the throne speech. The House was full of visitors. Many, many cameras from everywhere were shining on us. It was a time for us to shine, a time for us to show that, as MPPs, we are leaders in our communities, we represent the entire population of the province of Ontario, we follow our procedures and the Lieutenant Governor reads the throne speech.

We were not 10 minutes into it when the heckling started. I can't tell you how disappointed I was in the behaviour of my colleagues. I haven't got the personal relationship with the Lieutenant Governor that my colleague from Beaches–East York has, but I respect the position, I respect the man and I respect the procedures that we have in this House. The least we could have done was sit down and listen to what he had to say.

We have plenty of time to speak about what we think about the content—and you're about to get an earful as to what I think about the throne speech—but that particular Monday afternoon was not the time. I'm happy he brought it up. This is the kind of behaviour that gives all of us a bad name. When people make jokes about politicians being at the bottom of the list, it is behaviour like this that paints us all with the same brush. This is behaviour that I do not condone.

0930

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to make comments toward my colleague opposite. He gave me the perfect opportunity to make comments on the Lieutenant Governor's throne speech the other day. I thought he did an excellent job in his 44 minutes of presentation. I suspect it's rather difficult for any Lieutenant Governor to provide a throne speech to this House and the guests who were here. He has to make it known as to what's in the speech but not to

show any emotion as to what he is stating, and I thought he did that perfectly with the right tone and manner, as all Lieutenant Governors have done.

Talking about decorum, it would have been nice for us, I think, if we could have clapped once in a while for what was in the throne speech because we do believe in what we have heard from it, but we know on this side of the House that we don't do that. Although it was tempting on some occasions—although we disagree on the content—to want to clap in certain situations, at least for me—I would not speak for other members—but I did not do that.

The member opposite says that we don't see what's in front of us, or something in that regard. I beg to differ. We do see what's in front of us and what the new economies will be. I think if the member were to travel down my way near Chatham-Kent, let's say if he were to go to Bob-Lo Island some day, he would see a lot of wind towers in my riding. I think there are another 50 or so going up shortly. The municipality is very keen on this particular endeavour, one that we envisioned some years ago. The landowners, who might not be farmers, also appreciate it very much. Of course, it is a green technology, which one cannot argue with. I welcome him having a visit to Chatham-Kent, on his way to Bob-Lo perhaps.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Beaches–East York has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Michael Prue: I thank my colleagues from Mississauga South, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Nickel Belt and Chatham–Kent–Essex for their comments. I thank them, as well, particularly the members for Nickel Belt and Chatham–Kent–Essex, for the comments about the Lieutenant Governor. From time to time this can be a very raucous place, and I understand it and I appreciate it and I also see the humour in it many days, but I'm not sure that that can be done when the Queen's representative is in the chair. We should all, on those days, be on our best behaviour. I thank you for your comments enforcing what I had to say.

For my colleague from Mississauga South, for sure he is a true believer. Anyone who can truly believe in the comments from the throne speech and amplify them and believe them must really be a true believer in all that is Liberal. I say that with no umbrage and no malice, but the press, the newspapers, the assorted radio show programs are all talking about this document as being very fluffy, that it contains almost nothing. I do understand the need for long-term planning. I appreciate that need, but the short term is what people are looking at.

People are not looking at whether or not the Ring of Fire can be developed 10 or 15 years from now, although I am sure there is some hope that it can. People are not looking at long-term benefits of selling water purification; they are looking at whether or not their small community in northern Ontario can have its water purified.

I think the government has not looked at the immediate and has not looked at what is before their very face in order to try to look to some kind of ethereal, long-term future.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's my pleasure to rise to speak on the opportunity that we have from the throne speech, and more importantly, the Open Ontario plan and the Ontario government's new initiatives outlined in the throne speech.

I should mention that I will be sharing my time with the member from Davenport.

I'd just like to make a brief comment on the comments of my friend from Beaches–East York. I was always taught the old adage at home: "If you can't say something nice about someone, don't talk about that person." Having said that, I will not make any comment about the hecklers.

I would, however, be quick to indicate that we would certainly agree most positively with the very positive comments about the Lieutenant Governor, David Onley. He definitely brings a new dimension to this Legislature, and I, and I'm sure everyone else here, thank him for that.

Since the previous throne speech, our government has come a long way in providing funding for services that we in Ontario need. Sometimes the opposition may speak in generalities, but I have to tell you, I believe our government has demonstrated real, tangible, positive results in what has been brought forward, certainly in this last term of the Legislature.

The results can be seen throughout my riding. This past November, just a couple of months ago, I was pleased to be part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony for an extremely expanded emergency department. The emergency department was originally built for 20,000 annual calls; it was now servicing about 45,000 annual calls. The expansion is complete, in place and open for 60,000 calls a year, well above the current level. So we have not only brought it up to date; we have looked to the future in our health care services. Indeed, we have tripled the capacity for accommodation for Ajax–Pickering and Durham region residents.

This expansion will not only bring more jobs to the community but it certainly brings down wait times, and that's one of the government's criteria. This project cost \$100 million. It's the largest single expansion in the municipality of Ajax in its history, and Ontario pays 90% of the expansion. Our government has also announced, literally at the same time, an additional \$2.6 million for complete training, hiring of new nurses, for our local hospital.

Actually, when I called out to say, "We have funding, it has come through immediately and all of your needs will be met to train new people and to bring on additional staff," they said, "Joe, are you sure that that money is for Ajax–Pickering?" I said, "I believe I am, but let me go back and check." Sure enough, it was as I had indicated: Ajax–Pickering. They were pleased, as was I.

I have to tell you, though, that any member of any party, whether it's the government, the opposition or the third party, probably just does what I did, and that is, the requests go in early, requests are followed up regularly

and good results always follow. So that's not just the government; all parties do that.

I can tell you that our next phase, which is called the complex continuing care unit, is under way as well, and we're on the road to the largest expansion ever in the history of our town.

In addition to that, we had more good news from the Ministry of Health, health being one of our two key components, certainly health and education—and of course in this new economy, a global economy, it's jobs, jobs, jobs. But at our hospital, we were fortunate enough to receive two additional intensive care beds for newborn children and also an additional two at our neighbours' hospital in Oshawa to ensure that newborns can get better care closer to home.

Our Minister of Health, Deborah Matthews, remarked on how crucial it is to give Ontario's most vulnerable babies the critical care supports they need to get better faster. The CEO of our Central East LHIN, Deborah Hammons, indicated that the additional four new—

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: With all due respect to the member from Ajax-Pickering, this is a debate on the throne speech. I've not heard anything about the throne speech other than his local hospital—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Traditionally, during the throne speech debate, we allow a wide range of topics. I do believe the honourable member was on topic.

The honourable member.

0940

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I appreciate that. I do have a number of items that I am addressing that were certainly addressed throughout the throne speech. This new investment in our community ensures that our health care system, our hospitals, will be able to provide advanced and often life-saving care to newborns closer to home.

Further, I'd like to talk about investments in jobs. The first one that comes to my mind is called a "three in one" project in the city of Pickering. It's going to be something that the mayor and his council have actively chased for about eight years now. Pickering, as most people know, is kind of the gateway into Durham region. The three items that are going to be built, with our government's assistance and different levels of government's assistance, are, first of all, a 500-car garage to take transit riders' vehicles and have them parked. It will be a direct drop-off for GO Transit as part of the new Metrolinx plan. It will include a third part, and that will be a gigantic new office tower. I can tell you that the government of Ontario is involved, the federal government is involved, and GO Transit with Metrolinx. The city of Pickering, the major proponent, has done a great job on it. The construction company is 20 Vic.

The nice thing about this is that it's not going to impact the existing GO train station; it's going to be built on the other side of the highway, with a walk-across bridge. That's at the area of Liverpool and the 401, as you drive through beautiful Durham region.

Other investment items: We all sit here with bated breath, and I know some of my colleagues in Durham region in the opposition do as well, in reference to how General Motors goes. It's a different world—it will never be the same—but we have some good news from General Motors. Of course, they have a line going now, the Camaro line. I think Mayor John Gray of Oshawa took the first vehicle off that line. We have a line planned to bring back 700 of the 1,200 laid-off members, and that will be for the Buick Regal. That should be going later this year. They're looking at a November time frame. Also, they're considering the Impala with the new high-performance, 300-horsepower engines, and down the road they're also looking at the Cadillac XTS, a very beautiful car.

Things continue to improve there. I can tell you that our government was the first non-national government to stand up and say, "We're going to stand up for the automotive industry, and we're going to stand up for manufacturing in general." At one of the last events I was at in Oshawa—in the GM Centre, as a matter of fact, with my wife—the mayor came over and said, "Please pass on our thanks to the Premier and to the entire government. You stood up before the Prime Minister did and before the American President did, and you committed to our industry."

Mr. Jeff Leal: Joe, are you buying a new Camaro?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I can't afford a new Camaro; I drive older cars. But all of the vehicles I have are North-American made, I can assure you of that—a lot of them right in Oshawa.

There have also been a lot of questions on what's happening with our nuclear power, what's going on in Darlington and what's going on in Pickering. There's a big change taking place. It has been expected to come, and it's going to be here in the next 10 years. The Pickering nuclear plant is going to be tuned up, but it's going to be phased out in about 10 years' time. Minister Brad Duguid was at the GT Marketing Alliance international leaders' breakfast at the Ajax Convention Centre last week. He made clear the fact that there will be additional nuclear in Darlington.

I've got so much to say, but I have an excellent partner in this venture this morning, so I'm going to stand down to him and let him carry on in the next 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Davenport.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for permitting me to make a few remarks on the throne speech.

I'd like to also welcome some international students who are watching this televised debate this morning. I hope you will find it very interesting. It might be confusing to you, because you will find that literally all members of the opposition, without exception, will be highly critical of the throne speech. If you listen to them very carefully, you might even think that the sky is falling, and they see nothing whatsoever of benefit to the people of Ontario in this throne speech.

What's interesting is that, actually, we're paying them to criticize us. And when we were in the opposition, of

course, we got paid to criticize them, too. What an interesting institution. This is called British parliamentary democracy. It's an interesting concept. Here we are this morning, expecting them to criticize us and for us to say that this throne speech is a good idea.

In the end, it's a question of trust. Yes, there are very many details that have to be fleshed out. Of course, that will be done by the budget that we will be hearing within two or three weeks. In the end, as I said, it's a question of trust. The details will be different, but the details will flesh out the throne speech, and the details will flesh out what our government will be doing in the next few months—in fact, in the next five years. It is a five-year plan.

But when I say, "In the end, it's a question of trust," I mean that, and the question will be this: Who do you trust, in the end, to come up with the best idea that will steer the ship away from the rocks of an economic depression, a recession, into a safe harbour? Who do you trust, in the end? Who will steer the ship in the right direction? There's no doubt, whether we are true believers or otherwise—and even the opposition will have to agree—that the best captain is the Premier, and the best team is this team of the government. I hear no objections from the opposition, so this must be true.

We say that we trust our Premier and our team to come up with this five-year plan to take Ontario in the right direction, because things have really changed dramatically. The whole world, economically, has changed. How did this happen in the first place, that our whole manufacturing sector, to some degree, is being decimated? But it isn't just in Ontario; it's all over Canada. It's not just in Canada; it's really in every country.

Today you listen to the news, and what do you find? You find that Greek workers are going on strike. There are thousands and thousands of people right now in Athens who are striking against the government's austerity measures. So we in Ontario, in Canada, are really lucky, because we at least have some resources, and that, to some degree, is our history. We've always been identified in the past as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The towers of financial institutions, in fact, are really a sign of that history.

As some of the members of the opposition pointed out just yesterday on this throne speech, the trick is, how do we take our great resources that we have in Canada and add value and add work to these resources before we ship them out? It can't just be that we ship out logs and in return import back Kodak fine paper.

So the question really has been, and the trick has to be here, to ensure that our workers add value to the resources—

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We do not have a quorum in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'll ask the Clerk to check if there's a quorum.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): A quorum now being present, the honourable member for Davenport has the floor.

0950

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: The question I was raising was: How did this happen? How did this world change suddenly and so dramatically?

I remember that my own brother, just about 12 years ago, worked for a company, and this company was subsidized by our government to not only export our know-how but even export equipment that then could be used to compete against us. So we were subsidizing, to some degree, our own demise.

But having said that, we should also know that Canada is a very generous country. This generosity, in fact, has been shown everywhere that we do try and help people. We've said to those developing nations, "Here we are, we've got some expertise in Canada, and we're ready to help you out." Of course, now the world has changed, and the very people that we've helped are now competing against us. The question should be: Is this the way it should be? Or should we cut them out and only keep our wealth, our information and our technology for ourselves? Now the world is different. Now we have to make sure that we are supporting our innovative products.

The Premier and our team are absolutely correct when they say that there are two ways out of this. I can't think of any other way out of the recession and out of this sometimes depression. There are two ways out of it, and one of them you always keep saying to us in caucus: education, education, education. Yes, he is the education Premier, and it's working. We're going to have the most highly educated workforce that we've ever had in Canada. Class sizes are down. Test scores are up. Graduation rates are up. The five-year Open Ontario plan will make sure that we will be the first North American area to implement a full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds. Great. Do we hear any applause from the opposition? No.

Our plan also means new opportunities in our colleges and universities. We'll be increasing spaces in colleges for 20,000 students. This five-year plan, Open Ontario, will also open up new post-secondary learning opportunities for Ontarians. We'll create a new online learning institute to give the Ontarians an opportunity to learn online from the best professors and best teachers. Do we hear any kudos from the opposition? No.

Finally, Open Ontario will open up Ontario to new foreign-born students, who will bring new, innovative ideas to our province and generate new revenues that can then be used to reinvest in colleges and universities.

It is clear that this is a good plan. This is a plan with details. This is a plan that can be followed, and this is a plan that will bring us out and help us when this recession is over. While we're here right now, we know that the recession—it's just baby steps to get the recession over with. Education is a way out, because only educa-

tion will bring us the good jobs and the innovative experience.

I want to talk about innovation. Let me simply say this: We don't have to reinvent the wheel. What is new and what has to be done in Ontario is to ensure that there will be marketable new products, new inventions and new innovation. How do you do that without education? Education has to be the key. It will be the key to bring Ontario out into a competitive market. How are our kids going to compete against Chinese kids who are willing to work harder, stay in school longer, and yet we say, "Well, we want to compete in a way that is fair and in a way that we get value for our money"? But how are we going to compete when we want \$10.25 an hour and the same Chinese worker gets 60 cents to 80 cents an hour? That marketability, that kind of an economy, is over, and the Premier recognizes that. So the only way out—the only good way out—is to try to ensure that we are leaders in education. We'll have to look for those opportunities, but the basic thing has to be an educated workforce that is the best, not just in North America, but one that can compete internationally.

Are there storm clouds on the horizon? Yes, there certainly are. We're living in the midst of climate change, and we're still going to the altar of growth and we're worshipping there. We say that we need growth, we need more jobs and we need an educated workforce. But we have to change. There's a change taking place, and it has to be done and it has to be led by us, hopefully. It may just be that the human growth area may be changed or may be over, that now we have to move away from individualism to a much more co-operative structure through the united nations in the world. That's our way to go.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It was interesting listening to the member from Davenport. I think it really illustrates the contradictions of the Liberal Party. At the beginning of this speech, he said that the details would come out, the details would be fleshed out, the details would be different. Then at the end, he said, "This throne speech is full of details." Full of details? But at the beginning, it was not.

I think it also exposes the false premise of their understanding of the problems. Here, he was talking about education: "All we need to do is be smart, all we have to do is be well educated, and that is how we will compete with foreign countries and build our economy." I'd like to mention to the member from Davenport that it takes more than just education. All he has to do is look up at Timmins, look up at Xstrata. We have a copper smelting firm that is leaving this province.

This tremendous industry is not leaving for China, Mexico or India; it is leaving for the province of Quebec, not because the people in Quebec are smarter—as the member from Davenport suggested, "All we have to do is be well educated"—they're leaving because the cost of doing business is cheaper—not the labour rates, but the

cost of energy is less; the cost of the regulatory burden, the red tape, is less. We are not losing our jobs to China; we're losing them to Quebec in this case.

This throne speech does nothing to address the economic failures of this Liberal government, and indeed—although the member thinks that the sky may be falling for some, and that this is false, it has fallen tremendously for very many.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was rather interesting to listen to the member from Ajax–Pickering talk about the tremendous amount of joy and support that the new neonatal unit had in his riding. It was in stark contrast with what I heard in Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Welland and St. Catharines. One of the deputants actually said it best when he said, "How it could be that Niagara Falls, being the province's, the country's and, I would say, the world's honeymoon capital, does not have a maternity ward anymore? How could it be that there will never be another Ontarian born in Fort Erie?" There will never be another Ontarian born in Port Colborne because their maternity ward has been closed. There will never be any more. Nobody will be able to say, "I was born in Port Colborne," or, "I was born in Fort Erie." There will be no more babies born there because the maternity wards have been closed.

What the member was describing is a situation that pits rural areas against bigger centres. The role of community hospitals is being eroded.

I'm happy for his constituents, that they were able to hold onto a service as basic as being born in your hometown. Isn't this something that a town of 30,000 people should be able to have, to have babies in their own town? Well, it's considered rural Ontario and it's no more.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: It was indeed a pleasure to listen to the remarks from my two very distinguished colleagues, the member from Ajax–Pickering and the member from Davenport.

Indeed, I was very concerned with the decorum on Monday when the Lieutenant Governor delivered his speech. I think it was summed up particularly well in a statement that was made in this House yesterday by Mr. Levac, the member from Brant, outlining the long-time tradition that we have in this country, something that we inherited from Westminster: respect for the crown. When the crown delivers the throne speech, we ask people to be on their very best behaviour out of respect, first, for the individual and, secondly, for the office that one holds.

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I remember I was a young staffer here in 1989 when Queen Elizabeth, the late Queen Mother, came to Ontario for a celebration of the 50th anniversary of her famous tour along with King George in 1939. On that particular day, everybody was out to see the Queen Mother on that occasion. Mr. Speaker, you may have been a member back then; I'm not sure. But she came here and delivered

an address. It was one of the great occasions for this Legislature, to hear from the Queen Mum, whom Canadians, Ontarians and Peterborians have had great affection for.

It's interesting that this throne speech talks about hope, and that's very important as we move forward. Next Wednesday, I'm told, the Conference Board of Canada will release a report on the Ontario jobs situation. It indicates that unemployment has now peaked and that we expect that some 223,000 new jobs will be created in the province of Ontario in 2010, which will shave approximately 1.3 points off our unemployment rate—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further questions and comments.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on the presentations made by the members from Ajax–Pickering and Davenport.

I want to thank them for their explanation, because I did have the privilege of being here when the throne speech was read, and when it was completed I couldn't see anything positive that had been said, or very little positive said. What I was even more surprised at, as I was going home, was that on the radio in my car somebody was reporting the comments from the government side about the throne speech. This throne speech was going to create a million jobs, from the report, and I said, "Well, that's strange, because I didn't hear that in the throne speech at all." All I heard about jobs in the throne speech were things that the government has already done, which is not announcing where we're going; it's looking back at where we've been, where they have made announcements but not yet delivered on them. Obviously, they are expecting people to believe now that they're going to deliver on it in the future. It would seem to me that if these jobs were going to be created in that term of office from the previous throne speech, we wouldn't be hearing about it again in this throne speech.

Another thing that I think was very important: The member from Ajax–Pickering was speaking about the discussion in the throne speech about changing the way hospitals are funded. I would be the first to agree that a change needs to be made on how hospitals are funded. But, first of all, if we're going to go with the money following the patient, going strictly on the competitive nature and getting it from the most economical places, the economies of scale will dictate that it will go to the large urban centres, and in fact those hospitals in small-town and rural Ontario will be seeing a decrease in funding as time goes on, because they will be looking at the big picture of how many are being done as opposed to how much each one is costing to get done. So I think a lot more work needs to be done before they implement that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Either the member for Ajax–Pickering or the member for Davenport has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I want to thank the members from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Nickel Belt, Peterborough and Oxford for their comments.

While we said we do not want to be confrontational, it might just be interesting to note that when the NDP came to power in Saskatchewan, I just wanted to remind the member, because of her comments, they closed 52 rural hospitals. That's quite a number.

In terms of what will actually help Ontario to get out of the recession and be really competitive internationally, it's interesting to note that, yes, this throne speech is full of details. I've indicated in fact what some of those details are, and unless you do not wish to listen, it's easy to see what they are. I don't want to repeat them again, but there are so many details in this throne speech that it is beyond belief that you can't even identify a few.

So I say to my honourable colleague, while the throne speech is still full of details, of course some of these details will have to be fleshed out. This is only natural. You don't bring all the details into a throne speech. You have some details to be fleshed out later on in the budget, and that will happen two weeks from now. The honourable member knows what the process here in this House will be, so we don't take this criticism too seriously.

I wish just to make one more comment, and that is, it is education that will help us, and it is this education Premier who has the vision for education in Ontario to make us competitive. But in addition, without an educated workforce, how else are you going to compete and produce these innovative products that are necessary in order to compete internationally? Someone has to bring these products from the universities, from research, into the marketplace. That's important.

We have the plan, and it is clear what the throne speech—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to speak about the non-content throne speech that we have before the House.

I've been watching with great interest over the years this Liberal government and how they've been conducting the administration of our province, and it has always confused me. I know the member from Beaches–East York used the term that they're all absolute "true believers." No matter what is in front of them, they do not see it. They are just true believers. I believe that there's merit to that statement by the member from Beaches–East York. It has always puzzled me just how this Liberal administration can say one thing, do another thing, do the wrong thing, never get the right thing done, and they always get full support from their caucus.

It was interesting: During my little recess from the House—I enjoy reading and I enjoy learning new words. One of the words that I looked up—it was quite surprising to me, but the word "daltonism" is a real word. There is a word "daltonism." Daltonism refers to a defective gene within people that prevents them from distinguishing between red and green. They cannot tell the difference between those two colours, and it's based on this defective gene. And I thought: Did somebody make this up? No; there was a scientist—I believe his name was

James Dalton—who found this defective gene within people that prevented them from seeing the difference between red and green.

I thought: That must be the answer to how the Liberal caucus acts and behaves. They are colour-blind. When they see red ink, they see green energy. When they see green energy, maybe they don't see the red ink. I guess that's what it is. They can't distinguish that difference. It was pretty amazing that we could find—what is it?—70 members, 72 members who all have that defective gene all within one caucus. But sure enough, they are colour-blind. They cannot tell the difference between their actions and what is going on with it. They're colour-blind: Is deficit surplus or is surplus deficit? Is debt wealth or is wealth debt?

They're confused. I think that was very clear during the throne speech. They are confused. They do not know what it is that they're actually doing or why they're doing it—and of course, no content as well.

As I stated earlier, in here they're very good at understating the obvious and overstating the abstract. As I mentioned earlier, in the throne speech they say that some companies have downsized—some companies. Well, hundreds and thousands of companies, with hundreds of thousands of people, are not “some.” Let's not understate the reality of this.

1010

Further on in the throne speech it says, “No place has escaped the great recession....” I would say that no place has, but I'll also say that there is no jurisdiction in this country that has fallen further and faster during this great recession than here, our province of Ontario. We have lost ground in relation to all others significantly. We are now a have-not province. So let's be honest and truthful within our discussions and our debate. Let's not try to sugar-coat or understate those obvious failings.

I think that's why we are critical. We're expected to be critical of the throne speech, but our criticism has to also have merit. It has to have justification. It is justifiable. It is a meritorious argument to criticize a failure.

Now, do we go around and clap you on the back when you do something well? That's not our job. That's not what we're paid for. It doesn't happen too often when we have that opportunity anyway.

In this throne speech we have a lot of unaccountable, immeasurable thoughts. That's what's in it. The people of Ontario can't hold the Liberal government to account on this throne speech because there are no measurable targets, there are no measurable objectives. It's all fluff. Everybody can see that. We haven't got any measure in there of how we are going to reduce—how much red tape and costly overregulation is this Liberal administration going to remove in order that our economy can grow? There's not even a mention of it, not even a mention that regulation and overregulation is a problem, even though it was just a year ago—two years ago, pardon me—that the Premier said, “We are going to remove one regulation for every one that we bring in.” That was another promise. Who knows what happened to that? He forgot, I guess. I'm going to be critical on that one as well.

I think it's also important to expose when the government brings forth contradictory statements or legislation or statutes. We should identify that. There is no better example than the hype of the Ring of Fire. I want to see the north developed. I want to see wealth created in the north and I want to see that wealth shared and benefit the people in the north. That's what I'd like to see. I know there are people on the Liberal side who would like to see that happen as well. Well, some, anyway.

But look back and see what legislation you brought out last year which will prevent the Ring of Fire from ever being developed. Bill 191, the Far North Act, excludes any and all development on a quarter-million square kilometres of northern Ontario. That means no roads, no ice roads, no bridges, no trains, no mines, no transmission lines—nothing. It's an exclusive, empty park on a quarter-million square kilometres—50% of the north.

How are we going to develop the Ring of Fire when, on one hand, you're saying, “We want to do it,” and on the other hand, “We're not going to let anybody get there”? That's a contradiction; that's hypocrisy; or it's something else, but it is not compatible. Those two ideas are not compatible with each other. So something needs to be done here. Where is it in the throne speech that they are going to fix that? Nowhere. We're getting contradictions, and as I mentioned to the member from Davenport when he spoke—and he used some interesting terms. He used the terms that we have to “end the individualism” and we have to “become co-operative.” I was listening to those words, and I'm sure the members opposite heard those words: “an end to individualism” and “the beginning of co-operative”? What? That sounds very socialist in my books. Is that the intent of—

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Are we over?

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Is that the intent of this throne speech? Is that just a socialist document to be brought forth under the guise of a throne speech?

I'll be happy to finish off my comments at a later time. Thank you.

Debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm very pleased to welcome the grade 7 class from Stonebridge Public School and teacher Meaghan Phillips. They're here to surprise their classmate page Jullian Yapeter.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, my favourite page, Julia Louis, has more fans here—this is a daily occurrence. Today, it's her sister Joanna and her mother, Josie-fina. I'd like to welcome them here.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Lakewoods Public School will be joining us shortly to watch question period, and I hope they thoroughly enjoy it when they arrive.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome the outstanding students from Regina Mundi Catholic School in my riding who are here today and their teachers. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I am delighted to introduce to the Legislature the national president of the Lithuanian community, Ms. Joana Kuras-Lasys, who is inviting all of us to celebrate, when we raise the flag after question period, the 20th anniversary of Lithuanian independence.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Cambridge and page Quinton Lowe, I'd like to welcome his mother, Liliane Chandonnet, and his grandfather Pon Hasheg in the public gallery today.

As well, on behalf of the member from Oxford and page Rachael Heleniak, seated in the Speaker's gallery, is Rachael's mother, Edith Heleniak. Welcome to Queen's Park. I can say that if you're ever looking for great meat, go to Norwich Packers. And thanks for the potato pancakes that I'm going to enjoy for lunch today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Acting Premier. On page 7 of the so-called Open Ontario plan, you applaud the Conservatives for creating a national regulator and say that it should be headquartered in Toronto. But the media are reporting that the national regulator is rejecting Canada's worst government.

Is Premier McGuinty's poor economic performance killing his ability to deliver on this throne speech promise?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In fact, there is not yet a national securities regulator, and I would remind him of that. I would remind him that this government has supported that and will continue to do that.

I would remind him that 80% of Canada's financial sector is located here in Toronto. I would remind him that that sector overwhelmingly supports the location of the securities regulator's headquarters here in Toronto. I would ask the federal government not to take the federal regulator out of Toronto and out of Ontario. It only makes sense. This is one of the world's leading financial sectors.

Our government, working with the Toronto Financial Services Alliance—Janet Ecker is very involved in that; you might be familiar with her—believe very strongly that we need a national security regulator, and it should be headquartered right here in Toronto. Stand up for your province, stand up for what's right and don't just toady to your federal—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you for that answer from the minister. It has only been a week, but already Premier McGuinty's so-called "plan" has turned out to be nothing more than empty promises.

While Ontario used to be the economic engine of Confederation, the McGuinty Liberals have turned us into a have-not province whose performance no longer warrants placing the national securities regulator in Toronto.

Minister Duncan arrogantly said it would be a slap in the face to Toronto and the financial services community if the headquarters weren't here. Did you ever consider it might be an indictment of the McGuinty Liberals and Canada's worst economic performance?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Number one: Ontario is the third-largest financial centre in North America, and it has grown every year under this government. Number two: more than 450,000 net new jobs in this province; a solid sector in this province.

I say to the member opposite, I say to the Conservative Party of Ontario: Stand up for Ontario; stand up for Toronto. Don't let them move the financial securities regulator out of Toronto. Let's keep building a better sector. Let's build new jobs. Let's support our province, to build a stronger Canada.

They just don't get it. It's about a better future for Ontario, not about selling out to your federal brethren in Ottawa.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'll say one thing: The minister sure is full of hot air.

Ontario used to lead the nation. There was a time when Toronto would be the only choice for the headquarters of a national securities regulator. Ontario can lead again, but not under this arrogant, out-of-touch and out-of-ideas Premier and his McGuinty Liberals.

The McGuinty Liberals have turned Ontario into a have-not province, collecting welfare from the federal government for the first time in history. What made Canada's worst government think the national regulator would ignore Canada's worst economic performance when deciding where to locate its headquarters?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: So where does the member want it? Does he want that headquarters in Vancouver? Is that where you want it? Do you want it in Victoria? Do you want it in Edmonton? Is it Edmonton, or do you want it in Calgary? Is it Montreal where you want the headquarters; or is it Saint John, New Brunswick; or St. John's, Newfoundland? Where would you put that headquarters, I ask you?

Today's RBC report is clear and unequivocal: Ontario's economy is growing again. It will exceed the national average because of the plans that this government has laid out.

The financial services sector is all about Toronto; it's all about Ontario. We would welcome regional offices across the country, but its headquarters belongs right here in the financial capital.

You ought to stand up for Ontario and Toronto and not toady to your federal brethren in Ottawa who want to take it out of Ontario.

FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Mr. Norm Miller: Let me be very, very clear: The Ontario PC Party supports the national regulator being located in Toronto. We're afraid this government is going to jeopardize that.

On to my next question, again to the Acting Premier: Premier McGuinty called the throne speech the Open Ontario plan, but Ontario families don't use McGuinty-speak. For them, 24 words on deficit reduction don't really count as a plan. It doesn't get any better with your 28-word plan to make Toronto an elite financial centre.

Why would you tell Ontario families you have a plan to build Toronto into an elite financial centre when you don't?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Finance.

1040

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have a plan; it's clear and it's unequivocal. We need a national securities regulator. I would welcome you to join us. I'm glad to hear you've changed your mind between your last question and this question and that you want the securities regulator here in Toronto. I'm glad you're putting Ontario's interests ahead of your federal brethren.

I want to remind the member that they added \$48 billion to Ontario's debt through one of the greatest growth periods in history. Their interest as a percentage of revenue was much higher than it is today. They left a hidden deficit, which this government cleaned up, and it's the right thing to do.

I'll remind him that the stimulus we spent last year is creating more than 200,000 jobs here in Ontario, according to the conference board, and today the Royal Bank says that Ontario is going to lead Canada in growth in the coming year. This economy is getting bigger, it's getting better, and it's—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I don't think the finance minister and this government are in any place to talk about deficit and debt with their record.

The McGuinty Liberals' 28-word plan just isn't credible. Don't take my word for it; take the word of financial advisers who manage income funds for Ontario seniors and families. CI Financial and Mackenzie Financial say they would advise Ontario families to set up their accounts in Alberta and avoid your greedy HST tax grab. Adam Felesky, whose firm manages \$3 billion in funds, says, "Why wouldn't you set up your fund in Alberta? We're supposed to be low-cost."

How can anyone trust the McGuinty Liberals to build an elite financial sector in Toronto when the financial sector is relocating funds to provinces that don't have HST tax on management fees and mutual funds?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The mutual fund industry is one of those that hasn't supported our jobs plan. You know what? They're wrong. I think their clients ought to take their money out of there, because we have a strong economy here. We're about building the financial services sector.

Let me just remind the member, who doesn't want the securities commission to be located here, that this sector, in the last five years, has added 62,000, or a 3.3% increase, in the workforce in this area. I have had the opportunity to speak to all of our major banks, insurance companies and a whole variety of others, and they all believe that those securities commission headquarters should be right here in Toronto.

I'm glad the member changed his mind between the first question and the second question. I go along with what the Royal Bank said today: This economy is coming back. It's coming back bigger, it's coming back better, and it's coming back stronger, in spite of your opposition to the—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: A week hasn't even passed since the throne speech, and your latest plan is no more credible than previous McGuinty Liberal plans to hire 9,000 nurses, build 35,000 new long-term-care beds, shut down coal-fired generators and create permanent full-time jobs. You're not just driving retirement investments to other provinces. Som Seif, president of Claymore Investments, which manages \$3.2 billion in funds, says, "The US market is much more developed and not a single penny in taxes is charged.... What you will end up with is billions of dollars leaving Canada."

How can anyone trust the McGuinty Liberals' so-called plan when your greedy HST tax grab is hollowing out Ontario's financial services sector?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I reject Claymore and anybody like that. I think Ontario and Canada are the best places in the world to invest. I don't think I'd be following the advice of an American financial institution at this point in time.

There's no doubt that there are challenges in our economy. I'm going to continue, and this Premier and this party are going to continue, to build the economy here in Ontario. We're not going to tell the federal government to relocate the securities regulator out of Ontario, as that member and his party seem to want to do. We're not going to play games with that kind of nonsense.

I would remind the member opposite about today's Royal Bank report that says, "Although the HST will result in certain currently exempt products and services being taxed, moving to a value-added tax structure will make the ... system more economically efficient and will improve the competitiveness of Ontario."

That's what we're about. We're not about driving institutions out of this province. We're—

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

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Premier refused to tell the House what was on the table at a \$5,000-a-plate dinner he had with developers and other Liberal supporters.

My question to the Acting Premier is a simple one: Don't the people of Ontario have a right to know what was discussed at that dinner?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I would remind the member opposite, and all of the members of this House, that what the Premier did state yesterday very clearly is that we are blessed to live in a province and in a country where we have the freedom to associate, where we have political parties that are funded by the people of our province. One of the major ways that parties raise funds is with fundraisers, and that is a fact of all political parties, whether you are in the Liberal, Progressive Conservative or New Democratic Party. They all receive donations; they all receive funds from the general public.

What the Premier said yesterday is that we do take the responsibility of making sure the Liberal Party of Ontario is well resourced so that we can continue to mount campaigns, so we can win elections, so we can continue to do the good work investing in hospitals, investing in schools, protecting our environment, investing in police—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A lot of people in this province don't have \$5,000 to set aside for private dinners with the Premier. If your local ER is closing, your daycare is closing, and your job and local resources are getting shipped out of the province, you actually have to struggle very hard to get the Premier of this province's attention. But others have no problem at all getting that attention.

My question is: Don't the people of Ontario who couldn't afford a ticket at least deserve to know what was on the table and what was discussed at the Premier's private fundraiser?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: As members of this assembly, we all enjoy the privilege of representing the interests of people in our ridings. We bring those issues to this House and they are debated. It is important for people in Ontario, as well, to appreciate that as members of a political party, we also look to raise funds within our community and within our province for our party so that we can run campaigns. The honourable member runs as a New Democratic Party member; she raises funds for her party in the very same ways that Liberals raise funds to support our members. So it's not inconsistent, and I think the honourable member might want to remember that their party survives in the very same way that our party does as well.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, this is a government that refused to hold hearings on their unfair tax scheme. They ignore parents who are worried about losing local child care centres. They cover their ears when families raise

concerns about ER closures. But some people are getting the government's time and sympathetic ear. Why can't the government simply provide the public with some basic information about this dinner?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I've tried to make the point that all politicians in the province of Ontario have a responsibility to support their party.

I would say to the honourable member, if we want to talk about dinner parties and dollars, I have here an invitation. There's an event on April 1 where the leader of the third party, Andrea Horwath, is inviting people to come to an event, and they only have to pay \$1,800 a table to be at that event. So it goes to the point I have made, that as political parties, we raise money to support our party. The Liberal Party does it in Ontario, as do the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party. That is part of the privilege of living in a democracy.

I would again remind her that on April—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I invite the Acting Premier to attend that fundraising event. It's quite public. It's an open invitation on Facebook, so anybody is welcome to attend and participate in that event.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question, in fact, is to the Acting Premier again. Yesterday, the Premier refused to answer some basic questions about a private meeting that he held with developers in Simcoe. The government has been facing a growing outcry about their plans for Simcoe and decisions to give developers what they want, even if it contradicts the government's own growth plans in that area.

Can we clear the air once and for all today? What was discussed at that private meeting?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm going to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to respond, please.

1050

Hon. James J. Bradley: Yesterday, the New Democratic Party was trying to suggest that something that didn't happen happened. As you know, there was an independent, arm's-length facilitator, who, after years of Innisfil and Barrie arguing over boundaries—and this happens very often. The facilitator put forward a recommendation for the boundaries and the government accepted that recommendation.

There are always going to be some people who are not happy when you have two municipalities, and we've all gone through this locally; one of them is not going to be happy with those boundaries because both would probably like to be able to grow in many of those cases.

Barrie is a booming community, a growing community. The facilitator made his report, recommended it, and it became legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: News reports actually say that the provincial development facilitator recommended that

Barrie get 2,500 acres from Innisfil, but the government, for some reason, decided to give them over 5,500 acres. So, many people are asking very serious questions about the government's plan for the Simcoe region and want to know who is driving that agenda.

Yesterday, the Premier refused to discuss a private meeting he had with developers in the area, and those developers refused to talk to reporters.

Again I'm asking: Can the government clear the air today and tell us where the dinner was held, who exactly was at the dinner and what matters were discussed there?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Let me put it in context for the member again. In 2005, the town of Innisfil asked the province to help resolve a long-standing dispute between the two communities. In 2006, the province referred the dispute to an independent facilitator to work with them. The facilitator made a recommendation on how to change the boundary; Barrie accepted it and Innisfil did not accept it.

In 2008-09, Minister Watson repeatedly asked Barrie and Innisfil officials to resolve the matter. On September 25, 2008, Minister Watson wrote Barrie's mayor, and on March 9, 2009, he asked Barrie and Innisfil officials, "Would you please do it?"

Subsequent to that, there was a bill that was introduced in the House, and I think that bill took about seven months to go through this House. There were all kinds of hearings. People could have all kinds of representations. Finally, there was a vote on the bill.

You're trying to make something out of nothing. This is exactly—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister seems to refer extensively to this report, yet, strangely, the government won't release the facilitator's report. People see this government making key decisions in Simcoe and wonder why exactly those decisions are being made.

Yesterday, the Premier was asked about a meeting he held with a group of people who have a lot at stake in that region. It wasn't an open meeting. People couldn't attend and watch and listen, but they certainly have a right to know whether public business was on the table at that meeting.

Once again, I'm asking this government to tell us where exactly the dinner was held, who was at that dinner and what the issues were that were being discussed there.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Listen, the New Democratic Party is trying to revolve this around the dispute between the two communities.

When we had the committee of the House—and those who are members of this House would know, especially members who live in the area—the committee even went up there. The committee went to Simcoe as part of the hearings to hear from everybody. There were all kinds of public hearings on this. Everybody had an opportunity—

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I know some members are happy with the results and some members are not happy, depending on the municipalities that are represented, but this was a dispute between two municipalities that an independent facilitator made a recommendation on, and that recommendation was a recommendation that the government accepted.

I don't know why you continue to ask these kinds of questions when it was based on the facilitator's recommendation to the government, and this went through the House—

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

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today, we learned that your government's public sector reduction plan actually means that tax collectors are moving from the provincial Ministry of Revenue to the Canada Revenue Agency, complete with a six-month severance package. Apparently, they'll continue to work in the same office, they're not going to miss a day of work, and they're being paid up to \$45,000 to change their business cards.

My constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills know that there's only one taxpayer. My question to the Acting Premier is this: Why are tax collectors getting hefty six-month severance packages simply for changing job titles?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Thanks to the member for the question. First of all, we are honouring provisions of a collective agreement that was in place. We have managed to protect, in the Durham region, some 1,250 jobs. We think it's important to honour agreements that you sign.

We are delighted that the federal government is taking on those employees. This was part of what we think is an appropriate arrangement overall as we transition to the single harmonized tax. I remind the member opposite that we also harmonized the collection of corporate taxes, and we didn't lose many jobs as a result of that.

In arriving at this arrangement with the federal government, we felt it appropriate to work with the bargaining unit and with our employees and honour the collective agreement that was in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: It's an interesting answer, because the Minister of Revenue has been going around for months saying that one of the benefits of the HST is that it will reduce the provincial payroll.

Let's get this straight: The HST tax-grab means tax collectors will be moved from the provincial to the federal government, but they are still being paid and given a hefty severance package. Could you explain to my constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills—many of whom are working two part-time jobs to make ends meet, many of whom dream of making \$45,000 a year but aren't—why

tax collectors are being handed that much when they aren't even missing a single day of work?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Yes, I can: The Conservative government introduced that clause in the collective agreement. It's an interesting position that he takes today, having had a Conservative government put that clause in the collective agreement and now saying that we shouldn't honour it.

We think it's important to work with our partners, particularly on something like that. I'm sorry the Conservative Party wouldn't stand up and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Lanark will withdraw the comment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This will result in savings. These are 1,251 employees being transferred. It will result in savings year after year. This is one of the important benefits. This is why so many groups have supported the plan. This is why Conservatives support the plan. I think it's important that we build on this and build a better future for Ontario.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Yesterday after question period, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing told reporters that the government decision to hand land over to Barrie was based on a facilitator's report, which he then refused to share with the reporters. When the legislative committee of which I was a member travelled up to the Simcoe county hearing, we heard deputations from affected communities, but the previous Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing refused to release that same report. Will the minister release that report if, in fact, the report was the basis for the decision you made?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The report the member makes reference to is a recommendation that was made by the facilitator. You have available to you the map the facilitator had, and that was how he reported to people. He said, "Here is what I would recommend, having heard both sides."

This is a long-standing dispute between the two municipalities, and it's a bitter dispute. It always is between municipalities. He made a recommendation, and you can look on the map and see what he recommended to the government of Ontario. Subsequent to that report, legislation was crafted, even with the previous minister trying hard to get the two municipalities themselves to resolve the matter.

I've had our staff check with the facilitator, and he has confirmed that's exactly what happened. I don't know what you're getting at. I really don't.

1100

Mr. Michael Prue: Perhaps the minister should read his file, then, because the facilitator was a man by the name of Allan Wells. According to news reports from the Barrie Examiner at the time, the facilitator proposed turn-

ing control of 2,500 acres over to Barrie, and a year later, the government proposed legislation granting Barrie 5,500 acres—more than twice as much. It sure seems a big discrepancy to me that if the legislation is based on the facilitator's decision, it went from 2,500 to 5,500.

Did the \$5,000-a-plate dinner play a part in the larger land transfer? That's what we want to know.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would caution the honourable member of imputing any sort of motive.

Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I repeat to the member and to all members of the New Democratic Party who are trying to fashion something here—and I understand; I was in opposition. I remember what you do in opposition. I am telling the member that the two sides were disputing this. There was a lot of discussion that took place at committee. They made their representations to committee—their local members who had an interest in this, who would not be happy with the results and others who might be happy with it, according to what municipality they reside in. I can tell you that our staff has talked to the facilitator, who said that what we proposed, and that became part of the legislation that this government proposed, was what he had recommended.

Now, we all recognize as well—and I think you do. You know the area well—that it's a huge growing area at the present time, with far less developable land than most municipalities in Ontario. And yet it's a growing—

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

JOB CREATION

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. The 2009 budget announced infrastructure investment of \$32.5 billion. The investment is for roads, schools, hospitals, recreation facilities and affordable housing. The investment means hundreds of thousands of jobs and huge economic growth, but some critics have been questioning the estimated job numbers. Minister, what evidence do you have to support the job estimates?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm happy to share with the member the Conference Board of Canada conclusions in their recent report released yesterday.

But first, I want to say that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was on TVOntario, said of this \$32.5-billion investment in infrastructure that the member was referring to, "I don't think that's the right approach. It's too much."

This report proves that he was wrong and we were right to invest these dollars. From 2006 to 2010, every dollar we spend on public infrastructure added \$1.11 to our GDP. We were right to invest this money in Ontario. The Leader of the Opposition was wrong.

Over the same period, 2006 to 2010, the report estimates a total of 822,335 person-years of employment. We were right; they were wrong. The job estimates that—

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

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, thank you for verifying the details supporting the estimates, but I need to know two further things: What progress are you actually making in getting the money to where it's needed to start the projects and create the jobs; and secondly, how can my constituents inform themselves where these projects are so they can take advantage of the job opportunities?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm pleased to let you and your constituents know that at ontario.ca/infrastructure they can track these projects going on right across the province. We're open—it's Open Ontario—so that we can watch these very important infrastructure projects that are creating jobs across this province develop.

We predicted that there would be 300,000 jobs created by this \$32.5-billion investment; the Conference Board of Canada yesterday confirmed there's more than that that's going to be created, that our estimates were indeed conservative.

This is good news for Ontario. The conference board suggests that there would have been 70,000 workers out of work today had we listened to the Leader of the Opposition and not invested these dollars. This was good news for Ontario—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Ontario families can't trust the McGuinty Liberals when they can't even make it through the week without breaking the promises made in their throne speech. On Monday, you said the question facing Ontarians is whether health care is going to be there for our children. Well, by Wednesday, families and patients in Brockville learned that the answer is no. The McGuinty Liberals are cutting 17 front-line staff and 15 beds from the Brockville General Hospital, yet you pumped \$15 million into Grace hospital the day before voting began in the Toronto Centre election. Are you punishing families in Brockville for how they voted?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me begin by just saying that the member opposite doesn't need to read the question she's given. She can actually put her own brain to work when it comes to question period. That question—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I would just remind all members that we are here to represent our constituents. Yes, we may bring forward views that may be at odds with one another, but at the same time we owe it to each other, as much as possible, to be considerate. Comments like that are not helpful.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I apologize, Speaker.

When it comes to Brockville—we've made tremendous investments in health care right across this province. We've got almost 900,000 more people attached to primary care. We've got family health teams—150 health

teams—up and running; 20 more are coming and another 30 beyond that. We've brought down wait times. We've tremendously improved the infrastructure of health care in this province.

We are asking hospitals to look very closely at where they are spending their money to ensure that we all get the very best value for the dollars we spend when it comes to health care. I know that the LHINs have been working very hard with the hospitals. The hospitals have come up with plans. Those are responsible plans. I encourage the member opposite to actually understand the work that—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm actually asking this question on behalf of Steve Clark, our newly elected member from Leeds–Grenville. He hasn't been sworn in yet, but I am asking this question on his behalf because he is already out at work asking his constituents about their concerns. They're very disturbed by the cynicism and arrogance that is being shown by this government. They want me to ask you how cutting front-line staff and reducing beds equate to health care. Why are you saying that you're committing to improving patient care when in Brockville you clearly are not?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very proud of the investments we've made in health care. We are committed to spending more next year than we spent this year, just as we have every year up till now.

I think it's important to remind the member opposite that her party platform calls for a freeze in spending. We know what a freeze in spending means. I don't think it's appropriate that in some hospitals, in some communities, it's okay to advocate for an increase, but across the province you want to say “freeze.” It doesn't make sense. It's irresponsible. I just would like to remind the member opposite that when her party has a platform of freezing spending, that means dramatic cuts across this province.

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On February 17, the Social Benefits Tribunal issued a ruling that was an indictment of the ministry guidelines that the McGuinty government is using to cut funding assistance for families of children with severe disabilities. The tribunal ruled that these arbitrary guidelines run contrary to the intent of the law. That was their ruling.

What is the minister's plan for bringing the guidelines for the assistance for children with severe disabilities program into step with the Ontario Disability Support Program Act?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: In the privileged role that I have, I spend every opportunity to talk with families across the province about how we can better help them help their children and ensure that children with disabilities are better cared for and looked after in our community.

In each instance, we look to a holistic package of services that exist. We certainly take into account the advice that we receive. We work across ministries, between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and ourselves at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. It is critically important that we look to always improve the service that we can deliver to kids in Ontario, and we do that every single day.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Talk does not pay the bills for these families that are extremely put out in terms of the costs of caring for their children.

John Wood was forced to appeal to the tribunal after the ministry used its guidelines last April to reduce his ACSD funding to \$25 from \$430 a month for his daughter's expensive life-and-death medical needs. The tribunal fully restored the funding retroactively, noting that the ministry's income ceiling chart is a self-imposed guideline and is not the law. The law says that to qualify for funding, the child must have a severe disability and live at home. The parents must have extraordinary expenses and be the primary caregivers.

What is this minister doing to ensure that parents who qualify can actually receive ACSD funding in accordance with the law, without being trapped by their phony guidelines?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I've been working, through my ministry, to set up a meeting with Mr. Wood to discuss his concerns specifically.

Hearing directly from parents about how we can move forward, in terms of ensuring our government's commitment to continue to improve the services and supports for children and youth with special needs, is of utmost importance. That's why we've increased spending in the program from \$63 million to \$90 million since we took office—a 42% increase.

Absolutely, there is more to do, and we look to continual improvement in the services that we provide children in this province. That's why there's a Ministry of Children and Youth Services. That's why I feel privileged to be able to continue to do this work.

I look forward to speaking with Mr. Wood and other parents across the country, as we do on a daily basis, to help improve the services that we provide to our most vulnerable children.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, I believe that improving the education of our young people is the most important priority for the future of Ontario. In the recent throne speech, the government announced that it will improve post-secondary education by increasing the percentage of students who are attending post-secondary institutions.

Minister, we made a similar commitment in the government's Reaching Higher plan. Can you update this

House as to the progress that has been made since that commitment was made?

Hon. John Milloy: I very much appreciate the question, because members may not realize it but we're actually at about the fifth anniversary right now of the Reaching Higher plan, one of the most significant investments in post-secondary education in over two generations.

There have been many successes through Reaching Higher. The biggest one is the fact that we have welcomed an additional 120,000 students into our colleges and universities, and an additional 60,000 apprentices. Just to put it in context, 120,000 new students is the equivalent of creating a new University of Toronto and a new Ryerson University together. That is what has been added to the system.

At the same time, our post-secondary education rate of participation is now 62%, one of the highest in the world. As we move forward, however, we know that we have to do even better, with experts—

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Minister, I'm happy to hear that increasing post-secondary attendance is a key goal of our government. However, in order to increase post-secondary attendance to 70%, it will require more resources. This is an important goal, but we are still addressing the effects of the global economic recession.

What is the government's plan to sustain this increase in enrolment, and how will we ensure that we maintain high standards at our post-secondary institutions?

Hon. John Milloy: As I was saying, 62% of Ontarians have some form of post-secondary educational credential right now. Our target is 70%, which is what most experts agree is what we need. I was very pleased that the speech from the throne committed us to welcoming an additional 20,000 new students to our colleges and universities this fall.

I'm pleased with the investments that we've made over the past number of years in terms of bricks and mortar, more support for students and more support for institutions. That's going to be an important platform to build on when we welcome another 20,000 this fall, through the commitment that we made in the speech from the throne, and details that will be made available in the coming weeks that we're looking forward to working with our colleges and universities and ensuring that we have one of the best post-secondary systems in the world.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is to the Acting Premier, I guess. Minister, as you may or may not be aware, there are some great concerns coming out of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Recently the MNR undertook a complete organizational restructuring, and before that, the MNR lost the forestry file. In fact, the new internal MNR structure no longer includes a fish and wildlife branch.

Anglers, hunters, trappers, outdoor groups and organizations are quite concerned about this. They see this as a continued erosion of the MNR away from its core responsibilities of fish and wildlife management. Minister, I must admit that I am just as concerned, as the ministry continues to lose the important traditional values that it has long identified with for the people in the province of Ontario.

Minister, can you and your government reassure the outdoors community that these major changes will not diminish the traditional fish and wildlife roles of the MNR?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have the opportunity to address the question. I know that the honourable member knows that, as a rural member and for other reasons, I am particularly interested in the operations of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

What I can say to the honourable member is that I am aware that there has been some administrative change in terms of the organization of the Ministry of Natural Resources. He has particularly identified the importance of the fish and wildlife branch, and I would agree with him that it is a very important function of government.

In terms of how the management of fish and wildlife resources is now ordered in the province with the Ministry of Natural Resources, I'm not particularly familiar with that. I am aware that the minister is certainly doing her very best to ensure that those functions of the ministry that—

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Acting Premier, here is what the executive director of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters had to say about the MNR structural changes:

"It is regrettable that the one branch anglers and hunters most identified with has been splintered. Obviously, we are concerned about the marginalization of fish and wildlife, and by extension, fishing and hunting, through the division of the fish and wildlife program."

Minister, because of the elimination of the fish and wildlife branch, there have also been concerns expressed relating to the accounting of the SPA, or the special purpose account, monies from fishing and hunting licence revenues being properly spent on fish and wildlife programs.

Will you and your government promise to uphold the MNR's traditional core functions of fish and wildlife management? Can you guarantee that the fish and wildlife SPA, special purpose account, revenues will be spent on fish and wildlife management, not on species at risk or your government's biodiversity agenda?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have the opportunity, on behalf of the minister, to stress today that the only thing that has changed at the ministry in terms of the services is the names of the branches that lead the work. In terms of the resources that are devoted and dedicated to protecting our natural resources, fish and wildlife particularly, they remain intact.

I'm surprised that the Federation of Anglers and Hunters perhaps wouldn't have that information. I'm delighted that you have provided the opportunity in the House today for me to make that clarification and also to state quite unequivocally that, as a government, we will continue to support the investments and the sound management of the fish and wildlife resources of the province of Ontario.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. A number of people in our constituency and across the north are concerned about the closure of the Xstrata smelter refinery in the city of Timmins. They have been writing you letters, and in those letters, they've been asking your government to intervene in some way in order to keep that facility open.

One of the suggestions is to follow the legislation that I put forward, which would make changes to section 91 of the act in order to ensure that we get value added to the resources that we extract from the ground. What's interesting is that in your response on page 2 of the letters that you've been sending back, you say, "It is important to note that no province in Canada has a law that dictates mandatory provincial processing." Minister, that's not true. The reality is, the province of Newfoundland has similar legislation to what I have put forward, and other provinces have varying measures in order to get to that particular point.

Are you prepared to clarify by rewriting letters to people to say that, in fact, those provisions do—

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

1120

Hon. Michael Gravelle: In fact, I think the member does know that indeed no province has legislation which requires processing, and that does include Newfoundland and Labrador. We know that there are minerals coming from Voisey's Bay that are being processed in Ontario at the Xstrata Falconbridge smelter. That is just a fact, and he does know that. We also know that a significant amount—in fact, three quarters—of the iron ore that comes into our steel plants in Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton comes from Labrador, Quebec, Minnesota and Michigan, I believe. So while there is, I think, a clause in their legislation that allows them to invoke that, there is no legislation that requires processing to be taking place in the province. I think the member understands that.

Let me just state once again that we are obviously incredibly concerned about the impact the Xstrata decision is having on the workers, and it's something that we want to continue to work closely with you—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What I understand is that you're trying to confuse the issue. It's quite simple: Other provinces want to add value to those minerals, and have

different mechanisms in order to do so. The province of Newfoundland has what I'm proposing in section 91: an ability to say to companies such as Xstrata, "You will not shut down your refinery and you will refine and smelt those materials here."

For you to write a letter to constituents across northern Ontario to say that is not the fact, that no other province does that, is false. So I ask you again: Are you prepared to retract what you have said by way of follow-up letters to these people so that they clearly understand the facts for what they are and not what you're making up?

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "Making up"? He made it up. It's a fact.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just say, "I withdraw."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I certainly understand very, very well, as does the Premier, what an incredibly difficult situation this is. The Premier met with Mick Davis, the global CEO of Xstrata, last week, and he asked some pretty tough questions. In fact, we made it clear that we would like nothing better than to have Xstrata change their mind on this decision.

But in terms of the situation in Newfoundland and Labrador, the fact is, it's a misconception that all materials from Voisey's Bay have to be processed in Newfoundland, when we know that various parts are being shipped to Ontario for processing. We cannot close our borders without having a massive impact potentially on thousands of other workers in Ontario.

As I pointed out, in Newfoundland they do have a clause that they can choose to invoke, but they don't invoke the clause in the case of iron ore—I mean, in the case of other minerals.

We're going to continue to work with you. I was in Timmins last week, as you know, and we were able to make an announcement—

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

SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, this past fall, Bill 177, the Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, passed third reading, and it recently received royal assent. My understanding of the bill is that it sets out to clarify the roles of school boards and trustees, because those roles were not well defined when significant structural changes in our educational system took place over a decade ago.

Further to discussions I've had with the two Peel region school boards representing my area, they seek assurances. We all know that much has changed in the

last decade in our public education system, and it is important that board governance also sees positive change. Minister, could you tell the House what will be the next steps of implementing Bill 177?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I'm happy to have the opportunity to address the question. I'm sure that members in this assembly are hearing from their local school board trustees with questions that have arisen around how this bill is going to be implemented and what the next steps are.

First of all, with respect to Bill 177, we brought these changes into place, and we did have a great deal of consultation before the bill was passed into law. We have engaged the school community significantly, but there still remain questions. I want the people of Ontario to know that ministry officials are currently working on a number of next steps.

We have recently consulted with a provincial-interest regulation to create a framework within the ministry that will be able to intervene—

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: Minister, I understand that there is a provincial-interest regulation as part of Bill 177. I've heard that there are some concerns that the provincial-interest regulation will allow you to intervene at the board level solely on the basis of EQAO results.

We all expect boards to be managed with the utmost integrity. Moreover, we depend on them to put the best interests of their students first.

Minister, can you tell the House, will the government be able to intervene at the board level solely on the basis of test scores? How will it affect accountability? How does it support struggling boards? What is involved, Minister, in the public-interest regulation?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: With respect to the regulation, we are highly sensitive to a range of issues that can impact student achievement. But it is a notice to boards that student achievement is something that we are paying very close attention to. Our government has made it clear that student success is a priority. We want to improve student test scores. We want to increase graduation rates. We want to continue to build confidence in the public education system.

I can say that, with respect to the provincial-interest regulation, test scores will be one part of the consideration but not the only part of the consideration that we make when we consider what we might do and what tools we might implement to assist and support school boards as they look to improve student success in their boards.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, I've heard from a personal support worker in my riding who was told that the local community care access centre ran out of money in February and has not accepted any new clients, and

will not accept any new clients until the new fiscal begins. Why are these workers being told that taking on new clients who need care simply isn't in the budget?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I tell you, the work that is done in the community by our community care access centres is tremendous work. We have made excellent progress. We've increased funding dramatically for CCACs. We know that providing supports for people in their own homes is what we need to do. We need to continue to support CCACs. As I say, we've seen tremendous increases in their funding, and we will continue to increase support for CCACs.

The member opposite represents a party who has a policy of freezing health care spending. Freezing health care spending will have a devastating effect on our community care access centres. We remain committed to improving health care in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The minister's words are not matching her actions. The CCAC workers have been told that no new clients can start until the new fiscal. These personal support workers have clients that need oxygen care, personal care, lift and wheelchair assistance, catheter care and much more. Without these workers, patients who are leaving hospitals will still suffer.

You know that providing post-hospital care for patients reduces the need for return trips to emergency rooms, meaning it is a preventive and cost-effective measure. Minister, where do you expect these patients to go?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think our record speaks for itself when it comes to supporting community care access centres. In this fiscal year, almost \$2 billion has been spent in community care access centres; that's an increase in funding of 56% since we took office.

Clearly, under the party opposite—they, in fact, cut home and community health care funding by \$22 million and decreased nursing visits by 22%. The cuts in that sector were pretty profound under the Tory government. In stark contrast, we have 220,000 more people receiving home care now than in 2003.

Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Are we committed to improving supports for people in their own homes? Absolutely. It's part of our plan to reduce wait times in emergency rooms, to decrease the levels of—

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Acting Premier. A year ago, AbitibiBowater asked the McGuinty Liberals to allow that company to sell off their power dams in northwestern and northeastern Ontario. New Democrats oppose any sell-off.

While other paper mills have closed because they cannot afford to pay the McGuinty government's inflated industrial hydro bills, Abitibi's power dams generate electricity at very low cost, which has helped sustain

three paper mills in Thunder Bay, in Fort Frances and Iroquois Falls, and over 2,000 jobs. AbitibiBowater is now at it again trying to sell those power dams.

My question is this: Are the McGuinty Liberals going to allow AbitibiBowater to sell off those power dams and put thousands of jobs at risk in Thunder Bay, Fort Frances and Iroquois Falls?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

1130

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the question from the member. I know he has been involved in these kinds of issues for a long time.

This government is investing big-time, through our agency partners, in expanding our grid to ensure that we can gain access to a lot of the huge economic development opportunities in the north, in particular in the energy sector.

We're very committed to moving forward on projects in the north with regard to water hydro projects. We recognize it is one of the most economical ways to provide energy supply. When we work through these transmission expansions, we know it's going to open doors for communities in the north, opportunities and jobs in the north, as we expand these hydro projects. Certainly, we will be keeping an eye on the issue the member is raising as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The supplementary question should be: Do you know where Iroquois Falls and Fort Frances are? Because the reality is, if you allow them to sell off those power dams, the cost of production will go up by \$50 to \$75 a tonne and that means the mill in Iroquois Falls, the mill in Fort Frances and the mill in Thunder Bay will be at risk of closure.

Our question is a very simple one: Are you going to block the sale of those dams? Because if you don't, they will not be able to compete with your hydro rates and those people will lose their jobs.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Again, I thank the member for the question. I say again that we're very committed to ensuring that all kinds of energy supply opportunities are opened up to the north that currently don't exist. We're in the process now of the single largest transmission expansion in the history of this province. That is going to open up doors to the north and in some cases even the Far North when it comes to hydro opportunities.

I'll certainly keep my eye on the issues that the member is raising. I'm pleased to do that. I appreciate the member raising that issue in this Legislature. We'll certainly be keeping our eye on it.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Early today, we heard an allegation that the report from the provincial facilitator on the Barrie-Innisfil boundaries contained one recommendation but that the legislation introduced contained

much more land. There seems to be a discrepancy or misunderstanding. Can you please clarify for the Legislature how much land the facilitator recommended to be added to Barrie and how much land the legislation added to the city of Barrie boundary?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I don't want to get anybody in NDP research in trouble. I think what has happened is, the NDP has made a mistake. They have mixed up hectares and acres: 2,200 hectares equals 5,600 acres. So what appears to have happened is that the NDP has mixed up acres and hectares, because to my total, 2,200 hectares equals 5,600 acres, and that is exactly what the facilitator recommended.

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He has it. They have it.

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Wellington-Halton Hills has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Finance concerning the transfer of staff from the Ontario Ministry of Revenue to the Canada Revenue Agency. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, March 23 at 6 p.m.

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

The House recessed from 1135 to 1300.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Margaret R. Best: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the Black History Month statement I made on February 17, 2010, my remark "including the late Leonard A. Braithwaite" should be read as "including Leonard A. Braithwaite." I would point out that Mr. Braithwaite is in fact alive and well and is in the east members' gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. That is a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Paul Miller: Today, I'd like to introduce a special guest, Alice Hazelton, who is in the members' gallery. Alice has worked for several years in the British Parliament. She's here to learn about our parliamentary system, and we're very happy to have her here.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence as I introduce a number of guests here today. These are women who supported the war effort for World War II in the Lakeview small arms complex, and they're here with us today. Please join me in welcoming and celebrating—now, Olga Cutmore and Irene Baker are not here, but we do have Olive Purdy, Bernice Glowe, Violet Driscoll, Alma McCrindel, Kay Waldner Rylko, Irene

Baker and Mary Hanson. Joining them are Eileen and Marilyn Stanley on behalf of their mother, Anne Benden Stanley, as well as Donna Carr, Sharon Sbrocchi, Leo Sbrocchi, Magan Sbrocchi, Richard Rylko, Susie Rylko, Lynn Judge and Marlene Briand; as well, Jim Tovey, Mississauga's man of the year and the founder of the Lakeview Foundation, and his wife, Lee Tovey. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Cambridge and page Quinton Lowe, I'd like to welcome his aunt Brenda Lowe to the galleries today.

I'd like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery two co-op students from St. Joseph's College: Samantha Reilly, who is working with the human resources branch, and Victoria Mendolia, who's working in my office. Thank you very much, and welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Hillier: Calls continue to come into my constituency office from people who have seen steep increases in their hydro bills since the installation of their smart meters. I'll share just a couple of examples that came to my attention recently.

Miss Bowes of Carleton Place had a monthly hydro bill averaging \$120, until their smart meter was installed. Now her monthly bill is \$317, although her usage has not changed.

Another family in Perth saw their bill go from \$160 per month before the smart meter to \$374 after the installation. Interestingly, she heats her house with oil, heats her water with propane, and her dryer is also propane.

I'm left to wonder: How is it that although people's usage has not changed, their hydro bills are doubling and tripling? The answer is simple: In this case, "smart" is a pejorative term as used by the Liberals, as in, "We are smarter than you, so pay up more."

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: This past Monday, we celebrated International Women's Day. The South London Community Centre held a special event to commemorate this auspicious day that included dancing, food and music from many different cultures and backgrounds. More importantly, this event also provided the opportunity for women to engage in a cross-cultural dialogue and conversation. The South London Community Centre holds this event every year in order to facilitate such an atmosphere and also cultivate lifelong friendship between women.

International Women's Day is meant to raise awareness about the plight, success and strength of women all over the world. It is also about fighting the discrimination

and sexism that women everywhere face on a daily basis. It is a day of solidarity and support for one half of the world's population.

It is the efforts of organizations such as the South London Community Centre that represent the spirit of International Women's Day. I commend them on their efforts and I wish them success in their future endeavours.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Just over a year ago, my riding of Oxford suffered a tragic loss with the passing of the Hawkins family: Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan. They were killed in their home by carbon monoxide poisoning due to a blocked fireplace vent. This deadly gas is odourless, tasteless and colourless, so the only way to ensure people are warned is to have a carbon monoxide detector.

To try and avoid more tragedies like this in our province, I introduced a private member's bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act, which would require functioning carbon monoxide detectors in every home in Ontario. Last April, the bill passed second reading unanimously, but then it got stuck in committee. The government refused to bring it forward. Sadly, Dalton McGuinty put public relations above the need to protect Ontarians. When he prorogued the Legislature last week, the Hawkins Gignac Act died on the order paper.

Today, I had the privilege of meeting with Laurie's uncle John Gignac, who has created the "end the silence" foundation to educate people on the importance of having a functioning carbon monoxide detector in their home. I want to commend him for his work to get this important message out. He had a message for me: Don't give up on making it a law that every house in Ontario is protected by a carbon monoxide detector.

I'm pleased to commit to the Legislature, the people of Oxford and the Hawkins and Gignac families that I will reintroduce the Hawkins Gignac Act. I will keep spreading the message that carbon monoxide detectors save lives and encouraging people to protect their families by installing one today.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: This Sunday, March 14, marks one year since the Nanticoke Steelworkers Local 8782 began to lose their livelihoods. Through to last August, nearly 1,000 US Steel employees were locked out. The ripple effect of those job losses is about 6,000 jobs lost across all sectors: hospitality, health, retail, transportation and others.

While these workers were locked out, Canadian raw materials were being taken out of our country and processed at US Steel plants south of the border. That's right: Our jobs were taken out of Ontario across the border, keeping workers there on the job while our workers' kids missed out on sports activities, food and clothing that their families could no longer afford.

The first fatal mistake was made back in August 2007 when US Steel was permitted to buy Stelco Canada. Stelco was a company with a long and proud history of Canadian ownership and management that the union made better with each round of negotiations.

US Steel is locking out good, long-term workers and thumbing its nose at the Canadian government, which has taken the company to court to force them to live up to their commitments under the Investment Canada Act.

That loss of jobs is difficult enough in a plant that is widely considered to be one of the best and most productive in North America, but that US Steel takes our raw materials and the related jobs from our country to ensure that fellow steelworkers in another country remain on the job is deliberately divisive.

I call on our federal colleagues to move quickly to get the court action completed to force this foreign owner to honour its legal commitment under Canadian legislation. I call on both the federal and the provincial governments to keep our raw materials in Ontario for processing.

I invite all MPPs to take part in a protest on March 14 from 1 to 3.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Today, March 11, marks the fifth annual World Kidney Day. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the month of March as Kidney Health Month in Canada.

Over 16,000 Ontarians struggle with end-stage kidney disease. These Ontarians often require dialysis therapy either in a hospital, independent clinic or at home, while others require a kidney transplant. These are all critical life-sustaining treatments but are not cures.

1310

World Kidney Day is a global reminder for all of us to pay attention to an organ that is too often overlooked. On this World Kidney Day, I wish to acknowledge the leadership of the Kidney Foundation of Canada and other partners in kidney care, including Mississauga's Baxter Canada. They have all played a leadership role in promoting kidney health and educating Ontarians on how to effectively manage chronic kidney disease.

On this World Kidney Day, I encourage all members of this House to raise awareness about the importance of our kidney health in our communities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: It's a concerning day. Having had the honour and privilege to serve as the Minister of Natural Resources, the very foundation that founded the MNR is being questioned. To many people across the great province, to northerners, rural Ontarians, anglers, hunters and trappers, when you'd say you worked for the ministry, they thought you worked in the Ministry of Natural Resources.

We are troubled by the Deputy Premier's response to my question about the elimination of the MNR's fish and

wildlife branch and the lack of awareness and concern from the McGuinty government. I'm also concerned with the MNR's changes and the impact it will have on hunting and fishing licence revenues going to the special purpose account and that the Deputy Premier failed to address that.

Also, there has been a lack of clarification from the McGuinty government over the effect of the new HST on hunting and fishing licences. We are still awaiting word on whether the price of hunting and fishing licences will go up by the value of the HST or not. Fishermen and hunters need to know, if this is indeed the case, that this extra revenue will go into the special purpose account to directly benefit the fish and wildlife programs and not simply be another tax grab.

The anglers, hunters and trappers of this province share a genuine passion for their traditional way of life and their commitment to conservation. As I look forward to meeting with, next week, the outdoor community, I am hopeful that this government will refocus its attention on these important aspects and retain core Ministry of Natural Resources functions and responsibilities.

PARLEMENT JEUNESSE FRANCOPHONE DE L'ONTARIO

M. Phil McNeely: Cette semaine, Queen's Park accueille la quatrième édition annuelle du Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario, PJFO. Chaque année, cet événement attire des élèves francophones des 11^e et 12^e années de partout en l'Ontario pour participer à une simulation parlementaire. Cette année, 60 étudiants s'y sont inscrits, dont trois de ma circonscription. Je suis fier de reconnaître Elisyan Rousseau-Beauchamp, Diego Elizondo et Loudjina Alexandre d'Ottawa-Orléans.

Hier, les étudiants ont eu l'occasion de rencontrer la ministre de l'Éducation, Leona Dombrowsky, et d'autres députés afin d'apprendre le processus parlementaire. Ils ont passé la journée hier—et ils vont le continuer aujourd'hui—à approfondir leur connaissance de notre démocratie parlementaire dans la Chambre.

Je crois qu'il est très important pour les jeunes de cultiver un esprit civique et de leur permettre de développer une appréciation de nos institutions démocratiques. Chaque décision prise par un politicien a un effet sur les membres de notre société. Nous devrions tous désirer devenir des citoyens plus informés. Ceci est précisément l'objectif du PJFO.

Je félicite le député Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gilles Morin, Melissa et Christine pour leur bon ouvrage.

WOMEN OF LAKEVIEW

Mr. Charles Sousa: In commemoration of International Women's Week, I am pleased to recognize the historic contribution by the women of Lakeview village in south Mississauga.

At the beginning of World War II, a major munitions complex was built in Lakeview to support our Canadian

troops. While the men were bravely fighting overseas, 40,000 women stepped up and became the primary force behind Canada's small arms munitions factory in Lakeview. They worked as welders, tool and die makers, riveters and carpenters. These outstanding women manufactured munitions and arms that helped the Allied forces win the war. Many became exceptionally skilled and retained high-value jobs after the war, helping to advance women's rights. Not only did their dedication and hard work support the war effort but their leadership still serves as an inspiration to both men and women today.

The Lakeview community is rich with history and is proud of the important role it played in Canada's heritage. Lakeview was home to Canada's first airport and aviation school, founded in 1915 to train Canadian pilots during World War I. Lakeview also powered our province's economic growth by hosting the largest coal-fired power plant in North America for over 50 years. The community celebrated the closure of that facility and our government's commitment to protect this precious waterfront for future generations.

The people of Lakeview have put forward an exciting plan to revitalize our waterfront. As part of that vision, the Lakeview Legacy Community Foundation has worked to preserve the memory and significance of the small-arms factory, which is now designated as a heritage building. The foundation seeks to convert the complex into a centre for the arts, culture, science and heritage in memory of the wartime effort by these outstanding women.

Mr. Speaker and fellow members of the Legislative Assembly, please join me in expressing our thanks to the people of Lakeview, and in particular our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the exceptional women of Lakeview for their tremendous contributions to our province and our country. Welcome, and thank you for your service to our country.

KEN EINBODEN

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to express, on behalf of my colleagues in this Legislature and on behalf of my community of York South-Weston, our very deep shock and sadness, and to grieve with the Einboden family for the loss of a father and his young daughter, but also to honour a father who acted as only a loving father would.

Ken Einboden, his 12-year-old daughter Britney and her baby sister, four-month-old Kendra, were all at home last Sunday, March 7, 2010, when at approximately 2:45 p.m., their house was engulfed in flames within minutes. Neighbours on Kemp Square, a quiet cul-de-sac in the Jane and Lawrence area, witnessed Mr. Einboden running out of the house holding four-month-old Kendra. He quickly handed her to a neighbour and ran back to save his daughter Britney.

Father and daughter were found by firefighters in the house when they arrived, and they were rushed to hospital. Ken Einboden and his daughter Britney, a grade 7 student at Amesbury public school, both lost their lives

in this tragic fire. Our deepest condolences go out to Jackie Einboden and the entire Einboden family.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As members are aware, I erred last week in that this is actually the last week for our pages. I would just ask all members to join me as we say thank you to the pages for the great work they have done with us. Thank you, and good luck to all of you.

Applause.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NUTRITION MONTH

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to mark March as Nutrition Month in Canada. Nutrition Month reinforces the importance of healthy eating and the fundamental role healthy foods play in good health. This month provides us with the opportunity to spotlight healthy food and nutrition and to encourage Ontarians to make healthy food choices, be more active, and improve our overall health and mental well-being.

The Dietitians of Canada have led the national Nutrition Month campaign for 30 years. This year's theme for national Nutrition Month is "From Field to Table," which is aligned with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and its very successful Foodland Ontario campaigns. Both serve to support local Ontario farmers and food producers, who strengthen our economy and provide nutritious seasonal offerings grown in Ontario.

1320

We want to increase awareness of the fact that eating healthy foods and making healthier food choices such as eating less prepackaged or fast-food meals, reducing salt intake and eating more fruits and vegetables can reduce the incidence of obesity as well as prevent strokes and diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.

My ministry is helping Ontarians make informed decisions about their most important asset: their health. Ontarians need access to credible information and advice on the benefits of healthy eating and how making small changes can have a significant impact on their overall health.

To support Ontarians in all regions, the Ministry of Health Promotion joined forces with the Dietitians of Canada to create EatRight Ontario. Launched in 2007, EatRight Ontario is a free government service that provides access to nutrition information from registered dietitians through both a telephone and a Web-based service. The telephone service has the capacity to help

callers in more than 110 languages, serving the multi-cultural communities that call our great province of Ontario their home. The people of Ontario are taking the time to call and to e-mail the registered dietitians at EatRight Ontario. EatRight Ontario also provides a menu planner, an interactive online tool that helps individuals prepare nutritious meals and snacks, achieve and maintain healthy weights, and eat the daily recommended servings of food groups as recommended by "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide."

To further encourage healthy eating and the development of good eating habits in our youngest Ontarians, the Ministry of Health Promotion's new after-school initiative is reaching more children in high-priority neighbourhoods. With this new \$10-million initiative, children and youth have access to healthy after-school snacks as well as nutrition education and other health-related programs in a variety of community settings such as schools and community and recreation centres.

Healthy eating is also a key element in the healthy communities fund. Through this fund, the minister provides funding to provincial and community organizations to plan and deliver health promotion initiatives that benefit the health of underserved Ontarians. This is yet another way in which we can encourage Ontarians in eating healthily.

Nutrition Month is a perfect time to get on the right track with healthy eating and active living. For more information, I encourage my colleagues in this House and all Ontarians to visit www.ontario.ca/eatright and to take the time to make nutritious, healthy food choices each and every day. Proper nutrition is an important investment in individual communities and the overall health of our great province. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, our health is our wealth.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to speak on behalf of the official opposition on the subject of March being Nutrition Month in Canada. This is something that does require our vital attention. I agree with the minister when she emphasizes the importance of this, both federally and provincially, because of the huge implications that the lack of a healthy lifestyle are having on our populations, both children and adults. It's vitally important, I agree, that we teach our children the importance of making healthy food choices and also embracing a healthy lifestyle, because the consequences of not doing that are huge.

I was shocked to find out recently from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario that obesity is the new tobacco. When you look at that in terms of the implications for our populations in terms of the chronic diseases that we are being faced with almost on an epidemic basis in Ontario, with diabetes, with heart disease, with strokes and with some kinds of cancer, it means that we really need to redouble our efforts to make sure all of our residents are educated about the need to make healthy food choices.

The good news is that there are a lot of great organizations that are already doing that. I would like to speak just briefly on a couple of organizations that I am aware of.

One is the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. I know that they had a day—two days ago, I believe—when they came to Queen's Park and spoke to members about some of the great work they are doing, particularly a program called Spark that they recently started, which allows community organizations to come together and figure out how they can help people in either embracing a healthier, active lifestyle in terms of sports and active living, or in teaching people about foods and nutrition. You can apply online. I would encourage people to take a look at their website, where you can make an application for a community grant of up to \$25,000. It doesn't help you to buy the food or to buy any of the ingredients, but it does help you to put the organization together for those community groups in order to be able to help people in the community.

The other group that I'm aware of—I knew generally about the good work they were doing, but now I know a bit more specifically—is a group called Girls Inc., which has many chapters across the province of Ontario. They are engaged in teaching primarily young women who are expecting about prenatal nutrition and the importance of that, and postnatal nutrition up until their child is six months of age. Of course, it shouldn't be stopping there—that's what they're funded for—but they do an excellent job in teaching young women who may not have had the opportunity to learn how to cook nutritious, healthy food to do that, what to shop for, and they often have food for them to be able to take home. That certainly supplements what they are doing. They also give them prenatal vitamins.

What we're doing in my community—I just attended a meeting last night about this—is, we are trying to put together a program to help people who are in need in our community by supplementing some of their income with food choices, by offering community cooking opportunities, and also supplementing some of their diets by introducing some fresh fruits and vegetables. Girls Inc. is certainly a large part of that process. We also have a number of churches and service organizations that are involved with this. We hope to put something together that is going to help our communities.

I commend the minister for bringing this important issue forward and encourage everyone in our community to do whatever they can to encourage healthy nutrition.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I would just use the minute left: Of course, part of healthy living is also getting exercise. I would note that the minister was in Parry Sound–Muskoka just last week to open the Ontario Winter Games. I would like to commend the organizers of the Ontario Winter Games, Scott Aitchison, Mike Malone and the committee, who did an excellent job. I know the minister was there on a beautiful starlit night on Thurs-

day evening down at Muskoka wharf in Gravenhurst to get those games off to a big success.

Yes, eating properly is important; getting exercise is also important. We need to take initiatives to encourage people to get more exercise. I have many ideas, but only 17 seconds to get them out, so I will finish with that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to rise today in response to Minister Best's statement on March being Nutrition Month in Canada. I also am really proud to acknowledge and applaud the hard work of dietitians in every community across this province.

I want to take a minute to talk to you about Cynthia Payne. Cynthia is a registered dietitian and she as well as over 200 other people yesterday attended a community hearing organized by the Ontario Health Coalition. She came and talked to us about her program, the diabetes clinic at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg.

Well, she and the entire team at the diabetes clinic are being laid off. Their last day at work will be the end of April, in a few weeks from now—herself, the five other dietitians, the registered nurse, the entire team that works at the diabetes clinic at Northumberland Hills Hospital. The clinic is closing. Those people are being laid off.

She talked to us about the 2,000 people with diabetes whom she had seen just the previous year. She talked to us about the 187 in-patients she had seen at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg. But this program will be no more. It is being closed because the hospital needs to save the \$150,000 that it needs to invest in order to maintain this program. I, like everybody else in the room, was very saddened to hear about dietitian Cynthia Payne and the diabetes clinic.

1330

The Dietitians of Canada want Ontarians to be aware of our food choices. They want to empower Ontarians to make the best possible choices for their food, whether they be diabetics or people like you and I. This is certainly an agenda that I'm happy to stand up for and support.

But as I said before on other occasions during Health Awareness Month, let us take a moment and consider whether our actions right here in this Legislature meet the challenge in front of us. Nutrition, or lack thereof, is an issue that is reaching epidemic proportions. The numbers are clear. You look at the number of diabetics increasing into the millions. You look at the obesity crisis: 25% of our kids are obese or overweight. Cancer, hypertension—all of them are skyrocketing. Today our children may be the first generation to have a shorter lifespan than their parents, and it could all be prevented with nutrition and exercise.

Let us make no mistake: We face a health crisis of immense severity, and our actions must be fitting of this reality. But are we up to the task? Are we doing everything we can to ensure our children live long and healthy lives? Are we doing enough to support adults in achieving the same things? The sad answer is no. The programs that the Minister of Health Promotion speaks of are good,

but let's be honest: These programs alone are not doing enough to address the crisis that we are facing.

This minister has allowed the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act to die with prorogation. By not bringing it forward, it means that trans fats will continue to be in the prepared foods that we eat. Health experts call trans fats the new tobacco because of the terrific health effects it has on all of us. If the same bill had been supported by this minister, Ontarians would have simple nutritional tools by knowing the calories of the food they order. When you go to a fast-food place, if you know that a sandwich is 1,700 calories, people won't buy it. But we don't have this information unless you search forever. If you post it on the menu board, one person out of two uses it, and now it is a law in 25 states. Why are we falling further and further behind?

Another point that is crucial to good nutrition is breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is the first food. It is the first step you take toward health promotion. Yet, again, the breastfeeding strategy is just a dream in Ontario while other provinces are moving ahead. I have asked the ministry repeatedly, even our Premier, and there has been no movement forward. To this day, 91% of women want to breastfeed and only 20% of them succeed.

PETITIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: This petition comes from Cairine Wilson high school in Ottawa–Orléans. Katie Bunting, Sam O'Neill, Corey Valois and 16 others have signed this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species'; and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

"Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

"Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

"Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I agree with this petition, put my signature on it and send it up with Jordan.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here, and it's signed by a great number of my constituents in and around Tillsonburg. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under conditions.... ; and

"Whereas by October 2009, insured PET scans" are being "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: "to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

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

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a petition here with an accompanying note that says that these petitions were signed by people in Barrie, Cambridge, Georgetown, Maple, Schomberg, Whitby, Mississauga, Bradford, Richmond Hill and Stouffville. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

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

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned,” therefore “strongly request and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2009, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful firearms in our communities.”

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

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have another petition here concerning the HST and the implementation of it. It’s signed primarily by the people of the town of Ingersoll, and it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition from Cairine Wilson high school. Trevor Leslie, Brianna Champagne, Madison Stewart and 16 others signed it. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species’; and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

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“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I will put my signature to this petition and send it up with Quinton.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with health care in Parry Sound–Muskoka, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has undertaken an operational audit to identify efficiencies and reduce costs; and

“Whereas we recognize that the status quo is not an option; and

“Whereas rehab services are of paramount concern to the residents of the region where income levels exclude them from accessing other alternatives; and

“Whereas the deficit recovery plan will not balance the budget;

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

“That the Minister of Health provide additional operational funding of 5% amounting to \$3.4 million to ensure the continuation of services as described in the deficit reduction plan submitted to the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN dated January 29, 2010.”

I support this petition.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition from St. Matthew Catholic High School in Ottawa–Orléans, and it’s signed by Kassandra Kaszas, Rebecca Sanford, Lindsay Kary and 16 others.

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species’; and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I'll send this up with Nevan.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here, the content of which would be somewhat irrelevant as the proroguing of the House has taken place and all the private members' bills have died on the order paper. But I will present it on behalf of my constituents nonetheless.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

RAILROAD BRIDGE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a local petition here that is addressed to the Minister of Transportation, and it reads as follows:

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

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

“Whereas items for beautification include:

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

“(2) Constructing new abutment walls;

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request in the strongest terms that our city government immediately reactivate the 2000 reconstruction plan and CNR immediately

proceed with improvements to the bridge” and that the provincial government support this plan.

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

Since I agree with this petition, I am delighted to sign my name to it as well.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

MENINGITIS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA MÉNINGITE

Ms. Pendergast moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day / Projet de loi 2, Loi proclamant le 24 avril de chaque année Jour de la sensibilisation à la méningite.

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure and honour and privilege today to rise and to speak about an act that proclaims April 24 Meningitis Awareness Day in Ontario.

The bill, Bill 2, looks at meningitis as a serious infection caused by inflammation of the lining around the brain and the spinal cord, and I will speak at length about the disease itself. As an overview, approximately 10% of those who contract the disease will die, and of those who survive, one in five will suffer permanent disabilities.

The Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada was established in 1998 to prevent death and disability from meningitis. April 24 of each year is World Meningitis Day. Today's act will proclaim April 24 as Meningitis Awareness Day in Ontario, and that will support the work of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada by heightening the awareness of meningitis, dedicating a day to sharing best practices, information and research, which are all crucial to ensure that no family loses a loved one to this terrible disease.

I have the distinct honour and privilege today of introducing to the House some guests. Kathryn Blain is here. She is the chair and founder of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada. She is accompanied by Dr. Ron Gold, who is the senior medical adviser for the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada. We also have with us Karen Mayfield, the director of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada. And we're pleased and honoured to be joined by Mary Clough, who is the parent of MacKenzie—or Macey—whom we lost

to meningitis; and her daughter and Macey's sister, Cassandra Clough. We welcome them here today to the Legislature.

This is a difficult one today. I want to tell you two stories, but I need to tell them to you in a brief and succinct manner because my focus here today is on a Meningitis Awareness Day in Ontario and continuing to raise awareness among the people of Ontario of the consequences and effects of this terrible disease.

As a mother of three—this is always tough, to talk about losing youth to a terrible disease, but I would be remiss if I didn't take a minute and point out that Kathryn, the chair of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada, has a story to tell about her son, Michael Longo. You can find the story online, and I'll refer it to you, but I just wanted to give you an overview.

Kathryn calls her story "Out of the Blue." First of all, she says that: "In the beginning, meningitis can be so easily overlooked." On a Thursday, her son Michael mentioned that his back was hurting. She explains that they didn't think much of it because he'd been helping with the garden cleanup the day before. On Friday, he was feeling a little bit off, not sick enough to stay home. She says in her testimonial, "Saturday morning, the tidal wave struck." We lost Michael to meningococcal septicemia that Monday. I would refer you to meningitis.ca to read the story and the testimonials on that site.

Michael was at high school while I was still a vice-principal in Waterloo. My brother John taught Michael. Anyone in the community can tell you about Michael and what a vibrant, wonderful young man Michael was. Of course, Michael's memory today continues to push us on.

My brother John tells us that Michael was just that kind of personality; he was so vibrant and exciting. He wanted to learn, and he was a leader. John says, "I didn't teach Michael; Michael taught me." He taught him video streaming. He would run assemblies for the teachers. So I truly encourage you to go on and read Michael's story.

1350

I want to quote Kathryn. I know my time is limited, but I want to leave you with her thought at the end of my comments. She says:

"They say a light burns brighter just before it burns out. Perhaps the light in Michael's life burned brighter because at some level, somewhere, somehow, he knew that it would not burn for as long as we all wanted. May 9, 1995, is a day that our family will never forget. Please do not let this happen to your child. Immunize and protect your loved ones. There is no getting over the loss of a child. It's a wound that never completely heals."

I also want to tell you MacKenzie's story. Perhaps what I will do is intersperse it with what the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada is and talk about a mother's grief. The two mothers who are here today with us are here to share that grief in the hopes that we can continue to raise awareness of this terrible disease and to look at prevention, obviously, as the key for all of us but, specifically, our children and youth.

The Meningitis Research Foundation began with a mother's grief over the loss of her son to meningitis, as

we just heard. During those sleepless nights and days, Michael's mother, Kathryn, who is here with us today, knew that her son had meningitis, but was shocked that there was so little information available. She walked away from the hospital after Michael's death and wanted to know why Michael had died, why so much medical attention could do so little, why meningitis could not be stopped, how it could be prevented—and she could find no answers.

She says, "I felt there was no support, no one to give me the help and information I wanted and needed. I had to go through this process by myself."

In announcing Michael's death, Kathryn had requested donations for meningitis research instead of flowers. What she discovered was that there was nowhere to direct these funds. So she put them in trust, believing that one day there would be somewhere for these funds to be directed.

Two years later, there was an outbreak of meningitis in our community in Kitchener-Waterloo where Michael had gone to school, so the reporters called Kathryn. She realized that the time was then, that the infrastructure needed to be put in place to create awareness and have a place for this to occur. So that was where the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada was born.

She says she met the most wonderful and generous people who had experience with meningitis. One gentleman had lost his daughter, and he had been continuing to raise funds, directing them at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Another gentleman lost his son just the week before Michael died.

Many people saw the need to raise awareness and have a national organization, so an executive core began and, in Kathryn's kitchen, the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada was formed.

Michael Redfearn taught Michael how to produce these videos at the high school, and he created a wonderful video for Michael's service.

Dr. Ronald Gold, who is here with us today, had just retired from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto as chief of infectious diseases, and he immediately became involved. He had also directed successful field trials of the meningococcal vaccine at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

This was the founding core of the organization. The Meningitis Research Foundation became an advocate for research, vaccination, a source of information, donations and funding and a place for people to go who are experiencing the same thing.

Through education, this group—so important and important to us here today in Ontario—sets the stage to provide support and education to patients and their families affected by meningitis. They strive to increase public awareness of meningitis and promote a better understanding of the disease among health care professionals.

They'll provide funds for research for improved diagnosis, treatment and prevention of meningitis. Currently, they're providing funds to the second fellow in

vaccinology at the Vaccine Evaluation Centre in Vancouver, BC, under the supervision of Dr. David Scheifele. The first fellow has become a faculty member at the department of pediatrics at the University of British Columbia. They are also providing funds for Dalhousie University in Halifax—Dr. Scott Halperin.

I do want to go back to MacKenzie's story. I'm running out of time. Very quickly, I wanted to tell you all about meningitis, but again, I would refer you to the website, meningitis.ca. MacKenzie Clough—the testimonial from her mother and sister, who join us here today in the gallery. The testimonial states:

"February 26, 2005, is the day that our lives changed forever. That's the day my husband and I lost our eldest daughter and our daughter Cassandra lost her older sister and her best friend to a devastating disease called bacterial meningitis.

"Macey, as we called her, called home early in the morning on February 25 and asked if we could pick her up from school because she wasn't feeling well enough to drive herself home." And so begins Macey's story. You can find that online as well.

In her testimonial, Macey's mom says, "We didn't know what meningitis was or that there was a vaccine that could have prevented our daughter's death. Since our Macey died, I have become a mom on a mission trying to do what I can to help raise awareness about this horrible disease with the help of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada. I do not want to see another family experience what we are going through. You never get over losing a child."

I wanted to very briefly touch on some of the great steps that this government has taken down this road, on this path, and is continuing to today with Bill 2. In 2005, the McGuinty government made an announcement protecting young people against this deadly disease, so that more than 180,000 young people have been vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis, thanks to the McGuinty government. Ontario is a leader in this area.

In 2006, we continued to protect children in health care and vaccinations, and beginning last September, parents are now able to choose to vaccinate their children against the strains of invasive meningococcal disease.

I'm running out of time. I'll follow up in my two-minute response, but I did want to thank our guests today for sharing their very personal stories to raise awareness of meningitis in Ontario.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to be able to speak to the motion that's been put forward by the member from Kitchener–Conestoga regarding the proclamation of April 24 as Meningitis Awareness Day in the province of Ontario. I thank her for bringing forward this motion in order that we can increase the awareness of this dreaded disease in our province and the impact that it has on young people.

I also have had the opportunity to learn first-hand about the devastating impact of this disease, because I do

know Kathryn Blain personally. I know that within our community, and certainly within our province and our country, Kathryn has, I would say to you, worked tirelessly in order to ensure that Michael's death was not in vain, but that other people would become aware of meningitis, how suddenly it can strike our young people, the need to be aware of it, and also the need to ensure that we provide our children with the vaccines in order that we can prevent meningitis from occurring in our population.

I want to pay tribute to Kathryn. Every time I see her, I am reminded of a mother who lost a son and who has done everything she possibly could in order to make sure that no other mother or father or sister or brother needs to suffer as she did. So I say, thank you.

I also want to thank MacKenzie's family. I know that you have a similar story to share with us. I appreciate your coming forward. I know it's always difficult to relive something, but we also extend our sympathy to you and we appreciate that you're here.

1400

We as legislators in this House have to do what is best for people, and so your coming forward and being here on a day such as today, when Leeanna has brought this motion forward, I will tell you, has a huge impact on us. It allows us to make sure we do what we can today by supporting the motion from the member for Kitchener–Conestoga and making sure that we do raise awareness.

I think Leeanna has done an outstanding job of telling us about the history, certainly of the foundation, and how Kathryn initially discovered there was no support out there, nobody to go to, to get answers about what had happened.

I just want to spend a few minutes talking about meningitis. Meningitis is a medical emergency. I don't know that people understand that. If it is not recognized and is left untreated, we've heard it can be fatal. Even those people who do survive can have some very severe consequences, including varying degrees of blindness, deafness, paralysis and mental retardation. If any parent or anyone suspects there is a case of meningitis, obviously you need to get to a hospital or get to the doctor as quickly as you can. Basically, it's an inflammation of the lining around the brain and the spinal cord. Different germs can cause it, usually bacteria or viruses and sometimes fungi.

Let's talk about how it spreads—and it does spread. It spreads through close contact, like a cold or the flu. Coughing, sneezing, sharing eating utensils, kissing and close physical contact can spread the germs from person to person. People can be carrying the germs that cause meningitis without realizing it. Because it is difficult, if not impossible, to stop the transmission of germs, especially among children, the key really does become prevention. Prevention is absolutely key, and that's why this motion to raise awareness is so important. Of course, the only people who can properly diagnose it are medical professionals.

We really need to take into consideration the fact that we have taken great strides. We have introduced vaccines

that will help to protect and prevent the disease from occurring in our young people. However, we need to keep current and we need to make sure that the new vaccines now available on the market are provided for our population, because the goal obviously is that we do everything we possibly can in order to end this disease. I guess that is the goal: to see an end to meningitis.

So today, although we in this House can't prevent it, we can raise the awareness of everybody in this province. Hopefully, by passing this today and setting aside April 24, we can make sure that people do what they can to share best practices, information and research. Ultimately, the goal, as Leeanna has said in her motion, is to make sure that no family loses a loved one to this disease.

We will be supporting this motion, and again I say thank you to you, Kathryn, and certainly to MacKenzie's family, and to Dr. Gold for the work you have done; you've had a huge impact. I know you serve on the international body as well.

I think that's important. These people here, through their dedication and determination to end this disease, have become involved at the global level and not just within the province of Ontario. We thank you for raising awareness on behalf of all people in the world.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to rise today to talk about Bill 2, An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day.

I, too, want to congratulate Leeanna, the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, for bringing this forward, and I thank all of our guests who are here today for their hard work in bringing this issue forward.

We won't repeat it enough times: Meningitis is a serious infection caused by inflammation of the lining around the brain and the spinal cord. It kills and it maims children, young people and adults the world over. We've been told that 10% of the individuals who contract meningitis will die. Of the ones who survive, 20% of them will be permanently disabled, often through neurological damage, including hearing loss.

In my previous life, I was a physiotherapist. I have had the opportunity to see first-hand too many young people come to the hospital because they had contracted meningitis. I followed some of them through the intensive rehab unit because of the extent of their neurological damage. I saw real troupers trying to put the pieces of their lives back together—learning to walk, learning to use their arms, learning to talk again.

There was one little boy that I had seen at the intensive rehab unit after he had contracted meningitis, and when I transferred to the children's treatment centre, I happened to see him again. To this day, he's still seriously disabled because he contracted meningitis as a kid. He's doing good. He has learned to cope with his disability, and he's happy-go-lucky, but life could have been a lot easier on him and on his family had prevention been there for him.

The Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada was established in 1998 to prevent death and disability from meningitis and other infections of the central nervous system, and I commend them for the good work that they do. People know more about meningitis than they did before, and this is because of their good work.

I want to talk a little bit about the symptoms of the disease: a sudden high fever; drowsiness and confusion; severe and unrelenting headaches, and they will say how terrible their headaches are; a stiff neck, which is something that doesn't happen in very many diseases; intolerance to bright lights or to sounds; there is often nausea and vomiting, they are feeling so terrible; sometimes you will see twitching, convulsions, delirium, especially if they're children; and there is sometimes a rash like little purple or red spots all over the body if it is meningococcal meningitis. If you see somebody with any of these symptoms, rush them to the closest emergency room. Every minute will count if you want to improve the outcome.

If your child is under 12 months of age, it becomes a little bit harder because they're non-verbal and they cannot tell you that their head hurts. It's hard to tell that they have a stiff neck and all the rest of it, but you can tell that your baby has a high fever. They will become kind of fretful and irritable, and whenever you try to handle them, they will fret lots, basically because they're feeling so terrible. You will also have difficulty waking them; they'll seem drowsy, and they won't want to eat. The same as with everybody else with meningitis, there's a chance they're going to start vomiting. If you're very observant, you'll sometimes see a little bit of a bulge on the top of their head—the fontanelle—and a stiff neck. If your baby is showing any of those symptoms, rush to the emergency room as fast as you can.

1410

I was just in Niagara on Tuesday, and I can't help but talk about the people in Fort Erie and Port Colborne who have lost their emergency room; and talk about the people in Wallace and Colborne and Winchester and Picton and St. Joe's and all through small, rural northern Ontario communities that are losing their emergency rooms. For all of those people, it will make access to those life-saving services a whole lot tougher.

But if you see those symptoms in any of you—it doesn't have to be children; it happens in adults and young adults; it happens to anybody—rush to the nearest emergency room as fast as you can, no matter where it is located.

I'm always a big champion of prevention. Health promotion, to me, is the way of the future. Prevention is also important when we talk about meningitis.

The number one prevention is vaccine. There are different vaccines out there to protect us from the main cause of meningitis. Not every vaccine does the same thing, and not every vaccine protects us the same way. I would encourage you to talk to your primary care provider—whether it's a nurse practitioner or a physician, or whoever happens to be your primary care provider—about getting the vaccine against meningitis.

Another key element of prevention is good health. A healthy immune system will protect most of us, most of the time. Although we can carry some of the germs that cause meningitis, they won't affect us; they won't make us ill. But people with compromised immune systems, whether through HIV, cancer treatment, organ transplants or other kinds of infection, are more susceptible.

There's also due diligence that you can do: Seek primary care attention, medical or otherwise, as soon as symptoms appear, and share with everybody your knowledge as to what kind of symptoms should send you rushing to the emergency room.

I would say to every parent and every new parent: Make sure you find out about how to tell if your infant or your child is showing signs of meningitis. You could save his or her life.

We should be particularly aware of symptoms in infants and young children, because with them, the symptoms often show mildly at first, and then they escalate in a matter of hours. You will see the little one who is just fine and a bundle of energy at lunchtime, and by supertime they are completely flat out.

Look for the other symptoms. Look for the big headache; look for the stiff neck. If you see any of them and you don't have transportation, dial 911 if it's available in your area. Otherwise, rush to the hospital as fast as you can.

There are many different organisms that give us meningitis. Viral meningitis is the most common. Thankfully, it tends to be a little less serious and is rarely life-threatening, but it is still a very serious disease. Viral meningitis infection occurs most often in the summer and fall, and there are no preventions for viral meningitis that we know of at this time. Thankfully, people usually recover in five to 10 days. There are new antiviral treatments that are being tried, but there is no vaccine to protect any of us against viral meningitis. So here again, prevention is the key.

Bacterial meningitis is a serious disease, and it too progresses very quickly. It will go from mild flu-like symptoms at the beginning, and within 48 hours, or sometimes less, you will be very, very sick. Suspected cases of bacterial meningitis require immediate medical attention.

I see that my time is running out here.

Ça me fait plaisir de célébrer la journée du 24 avril, qui deviendra la journée pour la méningite.

J'ai commencé ma carrière comme physiothérapeute, et comme physiothérapeute j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler avec plusieurs patients, surtout des enfants, qui avaient eu la méningite et qui se sont retrouvés avec des handicaps neurologiques sévères.

Il y a un petit garçon en particulier qui avait été hospitalisé là où je travaillais, au plancher de la pédiatrie, qui a eu la méningite. Je l'ai traité en soins actifs, et je l'ai revu plus tard lorsque je travaillais au centre de traitement pour enfants. J'aurais le goût de vous dire son nom parce qu'il a très bien réussi, mais il continue de vivre avec un handicap sévère. Il a appris à adapter sa vie

pour vivre une vie heureuse, complète et productive, mais la vie aurait pu être beaucoup plus facile pour ce jeune garçon et sa famille si un peu de prévention avait été là.

On parle ici de prévention avec les vaccins qui peuvent nous protéger—pas de toutes les formes de méningite, mais de plusieurs formes de méningite, et surtout celles qui sont les plus difficiles à gérer. Mais il y en a d'autres, comme les méningites virales, pour lesquelles il n'y a pas de vaccin; il faut vraiment garder un système immunitaire en santé.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: First, I want to thank my colleague the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for inviting me to speak on this bill about proclaiming April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day.

I'm not a doctor, I'm not a nurse, and I'm not a specialist in this area. So I accepted the invitation to speak, but in the back of my mind I was depending on my wife; she's a medical doctor. I took all the information to her, and she was so happy to feed me all the details about meningitis and the effect on the children and many people across the province of Ontario and across the world.

I learned a lot, and I want to congratulate the member for bringing such an important issue to this House to create awareness among the people of this province. It's very important to protect our children and young adults, because it's important to protect our future.

I learned about meningococcal disease. Meningitis bacteria sometimes hide in the nose and the throat. It's sometimes found in between 5% and 10% of healthy people and can be attracted by healthy people, which they call the carrier of the bacteria, and also by sick people through coughing, sneezing, using some materials together and giving it to another person. I think it's a dangerous bacteria. It will affect the life of many people.

From my studies, I found that this disease is very dangerous and very effective because it spreads fast and quick. Sometimes it hits the blood, and when it hits the blood, it's very difficult to cure. It causes death quick and fast. Also, if people trying to prevent it find it before the bacteria controls the whole body and has spread throughout the body or attacks the brain, sometimes we can cure it, but the result of that can cause damage to the person: limping, mental illness etc.

I think it's important to talk about this issue and bring it forward to this place, and talk about it especially from the experts in this room. I know my colleague who is going to speak after me is a doctor. Also the member from the north is a nurse, and she knows more than me on this disease—from Nickel Belt. Sorry. She knows more about it, and she spoke in detail of the effect of this disease and the symptoms, inviting all families, all parents, when they see those symptoms in their kids, to rush to the hospital or call 911, because it's very important, especially if the symptoms are very obvious, like a stiff neck, headache, vomiting, nausea and many different things.

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It happens that for persons who attract this bacteria, it is trying to control their bodies. The preventing way—that's the best way to prevent this from happening. Sometimes, as I mentioned, it comes from the person and they carry it for many different years, but it does not appear in the body unless something happens. Sometimes we cannot see it until contracted by the person for one or two days.

My wife told me a story. A client brought her daughter, and they thought at the beginning that she had a sore throat. They didn't treat her very well, and she went back home. The parents brought her back early in the morning, but the disease was in control of the body of that child, and also affected the blood of the child so they couldn't do anything, even though she'd been given the vaccinations, which she needed badly back then. They didn't help much, because I guess the bacteria was in control of the body and caused the death.

I want to thank the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for bringing this important issue to us, and educating us and the people of Ontario about the dangers of this disease. Of course, I'm going to vote in support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): With the members' indulgence, I would like to welcome the grade 5 class from Nottawasaga and Creemore Public School to Queen's Park today and to the legislative chamber. I ask for your indulgence because they're from my riding.

Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm honoured to speak today in support of Bill 2, An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day.

At the outset, I would like to commend the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for bringing this really important issue forward. I'm hopeful that, as a result of our discussion this afternoon in this Legislature, we're going to help foster a greater awareness of the symptoms of meningitis; dispel some of the misconceptions surrounding the use of the meningitis vaccine; and stress to all Ontarians the importance of having your child vaccinated against meningitis.

I'm grateful to Kathryn and to MacKenzie's family for being here, for sharing your stories about the losses of your children. I can only imagine how difficult it is, but please know that we greatly appreciate it, as members of the Legislature.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Gold for the tremendous work that you are doing. It's very important that we protect our children, and your ongoing research is going to be making that possible. Thank you for that.

I think that the members who have already spoken have raised some excellent points about how serious an illness meningitis is, and about some of the symptoms of meningitis. Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt.

We know that there are two primary kinds of meningitis, viral and bacterial. We can't do much other than just prevention with respect to viral, but with respect to bacterial, there is a vaccination, and we need to make sure our children are vaccinated. But unfortunately, there

is a lot of misinformation out in the public domain that I think needs to be corrected so that our children can receive the protection they need.

It started with a study that was published in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, in 1998 that suggested that parts of the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine were linked to autism spectrum disorders. That sort of spread to some of the other vaccines, including the meningitis vaccine. That has since been disproven, but there's still a lot of information out there on the Internet, on websites and so on. I think people need to clearly get the message that that has been retracted; that there is no causal link that has been demonstrated; that the meningitis vaccines are extremely safe; and that people should make sure that their children, once they hit the age of 11, should be vaccinated. I can't stress that enough.

The other part that I would like to just share briefly with you is my own family's experience, not with meningitis but with encephalitis. As many of you know, meningitis is an inflammation of the lining of the brain. Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain itself.

My son John contracted encephalitis when he was 16 months old. He went from being a happy child to being rushed into the Hospital for Sick Children in an ambulance with his pediatrician, who wasn't quite sure if he was going to make it or not. He was in status epilepticus all night, which is constant convulsions. He crashed twice and spent a month and a half in the Hospital for Sick Children. I can't tell you how grateful I am to both his pediatrician; the staff at Lakeridge Health, Oshawa; and the staff at the Hospital for Sick Children. Thankfully, John was saved.

I can only tell you as a parent and implore all of you—to all Ontarians who are watching today—how important it is. You don't want to have any family go through that, as Michael and MacKenzie's family did. This is an extremely important public service message that the member from Kitchener-Conestoga has brought forward. I hope you all take it to heart, and anybody who's listening, make sure you have your children vaccinated.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm really delighted to also lend my support to Bill 2, an act to inform the public essentially about the risks of meningococcal disease.

I learned about the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease long before I became a physician because one of the stories I wanted my mother to tell me over and over was about the time that she, in fact, contracted meningococcal meningitis. This was during the Second World War. She had volunteered for the Women's Royal Naval Service, and as a WREN she was deployed to Belfast, Northern Ireland. She was living in a dormitory with some 20 other young ladies. One morning, she awoke with the most terrible headache. She had a rash all over her body—I remember her describing it to me: "Little broken blood vessels" is what she said it looked like—a high fever. She was lucky enough to receive immediate medical attention and was treated, I think in

those days, probably with sulphur drugs and survived. She always finished her story with a great flourish and of course, "If I had died, you would not have been born." I think it is that sense of lost opportunity that touches us so with the stories of the families who are here.

I certainly remember, as medical officer of health for York region, in the early 1990s we were seeing a number of outbreaks of meningitis. I remember extremely well the story of a vibrant 17-year-old young lady who was a dancer, who had unfortunately been turned away from the hospital—"Just the flu"—and, in fact, was found dead in her bed the next morning.

The type of panic, of course, that ensued led many medical officers of health in those days to go against some of the recommendations of the Ministry of Health of the day and, in fact, to conduct very large vaccination programs for potential contacts of those who had had the disease.

We have seen real progress in terms of vaccination programs. In fact, under the NDP—on Thursday afternoons we try to be less partisan—I remember that the hemophilus influenza B vaccine became universally available and was widely disseminated. Our government, more recently, has expanded to cover meningitis from *Neisseria meningitidis*, and we're now covering four strains of that particular disease.

But the irony is that as we have successful vaccination programs, perhaps the index of suspicion on the part of parents and even medical personnel is not as high; in other words, they don't expect to see this type of disease. I'm sure Dr. Gold well remembers that when we had a resurgence of measles some 20 years ago, again, many cases went undiagnosed in our emergency departments.

Again, I'd like to commend the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for bringing this bill forward to increase our awareness—all of us, individuals, parents and, of course, those caring for those who are sick, and all the health care professions as well.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm going to take a little bit of a different tack in the discussion this afternoon for this bill, and that is to indicate to you that I've got a file about an inch and a half thick that I did some research on in terms of meningitis. I want to personalize this a little bit and, first off, compliment my colleague and friend from Kitchener-Conestoga, Ms. Pendergast, for bringing this to the House's attention, for her passion—that's first and foremost. As an educator, I know that she feels it's important to educate, and that's part of this whole process. The member from Kitchener, Ms. Witmer, is of the same ilk and uses that as an opportunity to educate people. This is a day that, if declared, will be used as a springboard to continue educating, which is an important aspect of what we're talking about.

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But the piece that I want to talk about to Ms. Blain is a personal story that I hope she takes to heart. In my riding, a gentleman by the name of Doug Summerhayes and his

wife, Donna Summerhayes, lost two children to cystic fibrosis. They too became champions, because there was no organization at that time, to explain to people what it means to lose a loved one. Because of their work and determination, they eventually became Orders of Canada, because of their grassroots participation and the tenacity that they had that turned a disaster, a crisis, a heart-wrenching story into a positive. To the family members of Ms. Clough and Ms. Blain and to all of those who have had to suffer losing a child and losing a loved one, I say to you, there's hope, and having hope is what holds us together. So I want to compliment you and thank you. I know that the members here would do the same, to say to you that you deserve the accolades we are giving you today and the support that you're asking for in terms of the province of Ontario and, indeed, I would respectfully suggest, the country.

My hope is that we can take what is being talked about today and the work that you've done from the beginning to now—and I know that it will never end for you—to continue to turn this into a positive, which is exactly what you are attempting to do. To you and the family members, rest assured that your path will still be taken, now with the Legislature in mind, and that people like the Summerhayeses and yourselves can rely on us to make the connect as human beings to understand what we can do together.

Now, I do laud my colleagues for bringing to the attention of the House the severity of the ailment. When they hear "meningitis," people know that there's something wrong and that there's something going on with this, but the human connect is what I wanted to talk about today, and I wanted to thank you for sharing that. It's a very difficult thing to take from your heart what you have to carry with you from day to day and make it public, so I wanted to take the time to say thank you. In comparison to what we do here every day, you've lived more than one life. Thank you for what you're doing for us today.

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I wanted to thank my colleagues and just say, wow, what quality of debate. There are a lot of tears in the House today, and rightly so, and hence why we are all here today to talk about the awareness and to continue to work on that awareness in Ontario.

I wanted to thank the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, who talked about the importance to our community and Ontarians and the global efforts, and thank her for her efforts. I look forward to continuing to work with her to support Kathryn and her group.

I thank the member from Nickel Belt for her work in health promotion and her comments here today.

I want to thank the member from London-Fanshawe for his awareness, and thank his wife as well for her contribution, for her education on the details you provided us today.

I want to thank the member from Whitby–Oshawa for the awareness piece that you spoke of, and of course for your personal story, for sharing your son's story with us here today. Thank you so much.

I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for talking about risks and giving some insights and background from her medical background, and her personal stories of her mother.

To the member from Brant, always, thank you so much for your personal stories, your insight, your guidance, your parallels that you've drawn.

And we'll look to work with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo in our community and continue to support the Meningitis Research Foundation.

I truly wanted to thank Kathryn Blain, mother of Michael Longo, for being here today, and her husband, Don Blain, a retired platoon chief from the Kitchener fire department, for his support.

I want to thank Mary Clough and Cassandra Clough for being with us today and for sharing your story with all of Ontario about MacKenzie.

I want to thank Dr. Ron Gold and Karen Mayfield also for being with us here today to honour the memory and to look forward to where we're going.

I do want to leave you with two thoughts from the two mothers. "I don't want to see another family experience what we're going through. You never get over losing a child," says Mary Clough. Kathryn Blain says to us, "Please do not let this happen to your child. Immunize and protect your loved ones. There is no getting over the loss of a child. It's a wound that never completely heals."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. For those guests with us in the gallery here today and those watching at home, we will vote on this ballot item in about 100 minutes.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Bob Delaney: I move that in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Transportation, shall publish by June 30, 2010, an updated project schedule for the Metrolinx regional transportation plan, reviewing the priorities set out in 2007 by that date to place the highest priorities for capacity expansion of inter-regional rail capacity on those regions with the greatest population growth.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: As members of this Legislature, we can't directly command the agencies, the boards, the ministries and the crown corporations of Ontario to actually do something, but you can start a discussion about an important topic, and what we say before you, Speaker, matters. What we think here in this Legislature carries the weight of the consensus of many of the 13 million Ontarians for whom our province is home. And while we cannot actually command the agencies, ministries and

crown corporations, we can frequently shine a light upon them bright enough to cause them to do the right things.

This resolution reminds those who shape the policies of Metrolinx, which is an agency that coordinates how we knit together the bodies that deliver public transit, of the need for an ongoing dialogue with, and the trust of, those of us who either put money in the fare box or represent the citizens who have sent us here to speak on their behalf.

Where this process works well, we build a consensus that allows us to serve our riders. It allows us to get people out of one-occupant cars, it allows us to build facilities on time and within budget, and it allows us to reduce the greenhouse gases that we pump into the atmosphere.

Where and when our dialogue fails, we end up with frustrated riders who feel that they are being forced back into their cars—riders who look upon a group of business suits with disdain because sometimes it seems that they're simply afraid to talk to us. That's the crux of this resolution in a nutshell.

What it asks our government to accomplish with Metrolinx is basically this: Talk with our riders, listen to their elected representatives, tell us what you're going to do, tell us when your process is going to start and tell us by when it should be complete.

Those who are going to present here today each serve different regions, and they're going to bring a unique perspective to this debate. We've each been sent to the Legislature by more than 100,000 people. We've each learned their problems and their needs, and that for every one of us speaking today, at least another four or five could stand and make an equally valuable contribution.

I guess the message to Metrolinx is to listen carefully and work with us, because we truly are all in this together.

Personally, I'd like to talk about some of the challenges facing Mississauga and, by extension, the towns of Halton Hills and Milton. Those sleepy farm fields of the mid-1990s are now bustling housing communities, and I speak particularly of the area west of Winston Churchill, north of Highway 403, and the area now encompassed by the towns of Halton Hills and Milton.

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In many cases, these were communities with decades of unbroken history and tradition that, after nearly a century of a way of life that evolved at a gracious—indeed, glacial—pace, suddenly exploded with growth. People who lived there had to get to where they needed to work, where they needed to study or where they needed to find recreation.

Here are a few figures—and the mid-1990s are well within much of our living memories. Back then, speaking strictly of the Milton line, some 5,300 people each day rode GO trains—I'm speaking just about the trains—into Toronto in the morning and out in the evening, because one of the constraints we have with Canadian Pacific, which owns the line, is that they only have the capacity, using it as they do at nearly 100% of capacity for freight, to have a window of time going into Toronto in the

morning and from Toronto back home, for those of us who ride it—and I'm one of them—in the evening. It is not all-day service. Still, 5,300 people each day could get out of their cars 15 years ago. By 10 years ago, it was double that. Today, it's nearly triple that and growing.

I want to start with some of the areas in which we've made some progress. In September 2007, some nine weeks ahead of schedule and substantially under budget, GO opened a new train station at Lisgar in western Mississauga. Why was it under budget? Why was it ahead of schedule? Because GO—Metrolinx didn't exist at that point—did it right. They talked to the people of the community of Lisgar. They listened very carefully to their concerns. People had a chance to go to the public meetings, usually in the sweltering heat—although most of the events around Lisgar occurred in the freezing cold—and all of our objections, our issues and our needs were answered fully. The consensus was, “Get on with it,” and there was no opposition. We had that project finished.

I especially have to acknowledge the unique and valuable contribution of Mississauga ward 9 Councillor Pat Saito. She watched it from the city end, I watched it from the provincial end, and we made sure that nothing of any consequence went wrong. We got our GO train station. We got it ahead of schedule. We got it under budget.

In June 2008, at the Streetsville GO station, then-Minister of Transportation Jim Bradley and I announced the streamlined environmental assessment process for GO. They have the tools to do capital expansion.

In September 2008, there were 12-car trains on all Milton trips, which increased the capacity on each train by 20%. If we only had a narrow window of time, at least we were able to get more people on the trains. And in specific terms, if you got on that train at Erindale, Cooksville, Dixie or Kipling, chances are you could now get a seat.

In November 2008, platform expansions and improvements to the Streetsville station were finally finished, and now you no longer have to trudge all the way up the parking lot in order to get on the train; you can take the little shortcut underneath the tracks and get straight onto the platform. It was something we had talked about as a community for a long time. We finally got it done. It was a great step forward. We also had a major fix-up to that station. There was a new snowmelt system installed and new accessibility improvements made at Meadowvale.

In March 2009, the eco-friendly Streetsville bus facility was opened. It means that buses no longer have to deadhead to a repair facility; they can now come straight in and be serviced for their morning trip right at Streetsville.

By 2009, we had 19 new GO bus trips on the Milton line, and in April of last year, we had the installation of a wind turbine for power generation at the Lisgar GO station. There were no problems with the local people, because GO Transit listened very carefully, understood the neighbours' needs and issues, and answered every

one of them. To this day, we have no issues whatsoever with the capital expansion, which has been aggressive on the Milton line.

But there's a project we need on the Milton line that is very important, and it is all-day service. What we need to have in order to do that is another track on the Milton line. The line's owner, CP Rail, does recognize that. Indeed, CP Rail has said, “Okay, we'll see your ante and raise you. You're talking about one extra track on the Milton line in order to have all-day, two-way GO service, much as they do on the Lakeshore line.”

This is really critical in those fast-growing communities, because in the city of Mississauga we have a daily labour shortage of 50,000 people; that many more people each day commute into the city of Mississauga than commute out of it, and the same is true in those growing cities through Halton and York region. Many more people than before are commuting from Toronto into those fast-growing cities. We've got to have the facilities in order to get them from where they live to where they work, both ways, and that's one of the key areas that we need to have on the Milton line. CP Rail has proposed not just one track, but two tracks. Those two tracks would enable us to have that all-day, two-way GO train service. That's what it truly does take to get people out of their cars.

In my own case, I'm now actually able to take transit in to come here to Queen's Park. To give you an idea of some of the challenges that we have to work through, when I walk out of my home in the morning, I walk up a short distance to get on the Mississauga transit bus at the corner of Churchill Meadows Boulevard and Tacc, and then I have to drop 60 cents into the fare box and show them my GO train pass, because that fare is partially subsidized by GO. I've taken one mode of transit, operated by one independent company, and paid for it in cash, one way.

I am then taken to the Streetsville GO station, where I get on the GO train. Then I put my 10-ride pass in, cancel it, and I get on to the GO train, which in 40 minutes takes me to Union Station. So I have now ridden on my second mode of transit operated by an independent company, and paid for it in a second, different way.

At Union Station, I go through what is hopefully going to be a work in progress that will finally give us a world-class hub where people can properly connect and get to where their ultimate destination is. At the moment, when you compare that with any other world-class city that you've been in, if you're commuting in and out of Union Station, you think, “Gosh, I'm a little embarrassed.”

Then I ride the TTC, a third independent company, in to Queen's Park, which I've paid for in a third different way—with a token. This is the thing that we need Metrolinx to finish doing with the Presto fare card, which should begin service later this year. This is something that we need to knit together a great deal better than we do today.

The capacity expansion on the Milton GO line is a project which is vitally important to the citizens of

Mississauga, Halton Hills, Milton and beyond, where we can get people to park their cars, leave them there and take a clean, fast, efficient, non-polluting train that gets them downtown. More importantly, in the future it's going to get all the people in the Metro Toronto area who are going to be commuting out to work in some of the big bank buildings that are being built in western Mississauga, and enable them to commute out from Toronto and ride transit all day, both ways.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: This debate is indeed timely, and I want to thank my colleague for bringing forward his resolution.

On Tuesday evening of this past week, I hosted a public meeting for my constituents, for the purpose of ensuring that they have factual information concerning the announced cancellation of two GO bus services along Yonge Street: from Newmarket through to York Mills, and from Newmarket with a terminus at York University.

The information about the cancellation of those routes began to trickle out to riders of those two services over a period of time, and it was very soon that that trickle became a torrent of emails and calls to my office. The reason for that is that my constituents who use that bus route, that Yonge Street line, on a daily basis to make their way to work or, for many students and faculty, to York University, began to do the calculation of what the impact of the cancellation of those two bus routes would mean to them. The calculation is that for most of those riders it means an increase of some \$85 and more per month. On a daily basis, it translates into additional time of travel of an hour, and up to two hours in some cases. So we wanted to ensure that there was factual information available.

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I invited representatives from GO Transit as well as YRT/Viva to participate in that public meeting. Unfortunately, it was confirmed by both GO representatives, as well as YRT, that the calculation of the additional cost of some \$85-plus and additional travel time of an hour to two hours for many of these constituents was, in fact, accurate. At the end of the evening, it became apparent to me that we were taking a step back as opposed to a step forward in making public transit in York region more attractive and encouraging more people to use public transit. I have a serious concern that in this particular case, this decision on the part of GO Transit is wrong, and it is unacceptable. I am calling on Metrolinx and GO Transit as well as YRT/Viva to rethink this decision; to stop in their tracks and ensure that these two very important transit lines are continued.

I'm glad to see the Minister of Transportation here today. I have copied her on a letter that is going out to all mayors and councils in York region this afternoon. It is also copied to Mr. Bill Fisch, the York region chair, as well as Mr. Robert Prichard, CEO of Metrolinx. I want to read this letter into the record, because I believe it summarizes the issue. I am also hoping that I have the

support of the Minister of Transportation. I'm confident that, as Metrolinx as well as YRT/Viva consider the implications of this decision, we will have their co-operation. The letter reads as follows:

"GO Transit has announced that it plans to cancel two GO bus routes serving York region, effective next month.

"The two routes affected are the 62 Newmarket 'B' GO bus that provides services along Yonge Street from Newmarket to York Mills, and GO route 64, providing service through York region to York University.

"At a public meeting on March 9, 2010, attended by more than 300 York region residents, representatives from GO Transit and YRT/Viva confirmed that the proposed cancellation would result in increased costs of as much as \$85 per month, and increased travel times of as much as one to two hours per day, depending on the alternative Viva service that would be available. In addition, there are numerous unintended consequences that would result if the cancellations are allowed to proceed. Those consequences range from safety implications for young people who rely on these routes to get them to school, and scheduling issues for students and faculty at York University, to working parents who will be unable to manage already difficult daycare schedules.

"I have expressed my concerns on behalf of my constituents to Mr. Robert Prichard, the CEO of Metrolinx, and to York region chair Bill Fisch and am asking for your support to ensure that both of these GO bus services are continued.

"It is clear that YRT/Viva is not in a position to assume responsibility for the services GO Transit is planning to cancel. YRT/Viva is a regional service and is not equipped to provide ... the equipment, nor the scheduling capacity to accept this download of service responsibility.

"It is unacceptable that at a time when governments at all levels are investing billions in public transit with a view to encouraging transit use, we allow this proposed cancellation to take place. Not only will the increased costs and travel times discourage transit use; this contradicts and is in conflict with the very goals and objectives of the Metrolinx regional transportation plan" mandated by this government. That plan "is intended to guide transportation decision-making and planning" of transportation "at all levels.

"Those objectives are clearly stated to provide: 'Improved transportation experience and travel time reliability; faster, more frequent and less crowded transit; improved connections on services within the GTHA....'

"I trust that you will agree with me that the proposed cancellations are not only inconsistent with the Metrolinx mandate; they run counter to our concerted efforts to encourage York region residents to choose public transit as a more convenient and affordable way to travel.

"I am therefore asking you and your council to register with Metrolinx and GO Transit your opposition to the planned cancellation of these essential GO bus services."

That letter will be received by all mayors and council within York region this afternoon. As I say, it has been

copied to the Minister of Transportation, to Mr. Prichard at Metrolinx, as well as to Chair Fisch at York region.

I understand the rationale that GO has put forward to cancel these routes because, in their words, their intention was to integrate and to avoid duplication—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And you supported it when you were Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Frank Klees: What I did, as Minister of Transportation—I encouraged any action possible amongst regions and the province to avoid duplication. And what was intended was that, in fact, services would be adopted by regional transit services that would be equivalent to and provide the same level of service and efficiency at the same cost. What is happening here is not what I intended as minister. It not what this minister should endorse. It is wrong.

What should be happening here is that we put the commuters first, that we ensure that if there are any changes made to the delivery of service, efficiency is increased, accessibility is increased, affordability is made more accessible. That is not what is happening here.

So I say to those who are in a position of responsibility: This decision cannot be allowed to be implemented. I will do everything possible to reason with those in a position of responsibility to ensure that we enhance public transit throughout York region, that we do not take a step backwards.

I would expect that we would have the support of all of my colleagues who represent the region of York. I would expect that the Minister of Transportation would take the time rationally and reasonably to assess what I am asking, and that she also would support my call for a reasonable approach to this issue.

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

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Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate and speak to the motion put forward by the member from Mississauga—Streetsville. I think the resolution that he brings forward is well crafted and wise.

I can say that from the perspective of a person who represented a growth community as it grew from a sleepy little town of between 40,000 and 60,000 people to approaching 200,000 people today. That's over a period of about 20 to 25 years. That, of course, is the community of Oakville.

What people may not know about Oakville and its train service is that the GO station in Oakville—we have two; we have the Bronte station and we have the Oakville station—after Union Station in downtown Toronto, is the busiest of all the other stations on the line. Certainly, that is because of the important role that it plays in ensuring that the city of Toronto has the skilled workers to perform some of the economic tasks that need to be performed on a daily basis. Many of those skilled workers and employees choose to reside in the town of Oakville, so the service is really important to the economic lifeblood of my own community and certainly to the economic lifeblood of Mayor Miller's community.

The transportation issue, I think, is one that mirrors a lot of the growth issues that communities such as Oakville and the region of Halton have had to face over the years. Most of that growth, obviously, is as a result of population, of people who choose to move to the areas as new plans of subdivision are approved and as official plans are amended to allow for that growth to take place.

What had happened in the past is often the people, by a long shot, preceded the services. People would be moving into the communities with an expectation that they would have arenas; that they would have libraries; that, should they need to use social services, those services would be available; that the transportation system that was envisioned for the community would be one that would be at such capacity that they'd be able to move around the town freely and move in between towns freely—to move, for example, to my neighbour Mississauga—Streetsville, for economic reasons or simply for reasons of social travel or for pleasure.

What happened, though, is that the people came, and for the most part, the services didn't. Frustration started to emerge. People were finding they were in gridlock. People were finding that the train service, perhaps, that was servicing Toronto on a daily basis was not adequate, that the bus services that were being provided were not adequate. If ever a problem called for a solution such as Metrolinx, the transportation issues certainly did on an inter-regional basis.

I'm describing problems that took place in my own community of Oakville. I think you could also translate those same issues, those same problems, into Durham, to York region and to Peel region, those areas in the 905 that grew at the same type of rates that we're still experiencing in the region of Halton.

We've seen some improvements over the years. The QEW is being widened through Oakville, following on some of the great work of the Ministry of Transportation. We're starting to see the libraries and the sports fields being built. As a result of the initiative of this government to share the gas tax, we're starting to see investments being made in transit. That goes back to a time of when there was really no forward planning to a point where we've started to do the forward planning that should have been done in the past.

It's interesting to note that a lot of our work is still based on old census figures, rather than on the current population figures.

For the most part, GO Transit provides a wonderful service to the community of Oakville. In the winter, we often have problems with switch gear freezing. I know that GO Transit is working hard to try to remedy that. Some days they're successful at it; some days they find it challenging, and the frustrations of my constituents certainly grow.

But transportation from Toronto and to Toronto on a daily basis is a major priority for both Oakville and Toronto. We've seen increased parking. We've seen increased train service. We've seen the length of trains increase. Engines have increased in power. We have been able to improve the capacity.

What the resolution does, in my opinion, is it calls for us to do a bit of an update to the figures that are being done to allocate the funding that is necessary to the projects that are going to be performed by Metrolinx. I think as you expand, we need to take into account that growth communities need that special attention to deal with the problems that come with that sudden population growth.

Growth communities like Oakville and Milton, for example, don't grow gradually. They grow very, very suddenly. A subdivision opens, and the homes are sold in a matter of weeks or months, and those services need to be there.

I would hope that all members would support this resolution. Certainly it has my support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The honourable member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's where I'm going. How did you know that's what I was going to ask for? You're clairvoyant, I must say.

First of all, upfront I just want to say that we'll support this resolution. Its intent, I guess, is not harmful. There are other things I would have added to it if it was my motion. But perfection was not built in a day, as they say, so we'll support the motion in its current form.

I just want to make a couple of comments, though, in regard to Metrolinx and also specifically to this motion. I guess the first thing I would say is that if one of the attempts of this motion is to get Metrolinx to become—how would you say?—a little bit more democratic in the ability to consult with people, to make sure that the riders and the communities they service are more well informed and that decisions that are made are done in such a way that there's a dialogue between the communities that utilize Metrolinx services and Metrolinx themselves, that would be a great thing. I don't think it's going to get to that in this particular motion, and that's a little bit of a shame because I think what I know—I shouldn't say “I think.” What I know is an issue is that every member of this assembly who has to deal with Metrolinx has somewhat the same concern, and that is that Metrolinx may not be as user-friendly when it comes to consultation and when it comes to supporting the need to do public consultation as they need to be.

I've participated in meetings in York-Weston and a few other places in regard to the Blue 22 issue, and I can tell you, in the meetings that I've been to, that came across in spades. People were really upset and felt as if they were not being listened to, to the degree they thought they should have been. They were not able to engage in the dialogue and affect the decisions of Metrolinx because of that failure to have that two-way dialogue with Metrolinx and the people who utilize those services.

So if the stated goal of this motion is to democratize, let us say, the process by which Metrolinx makes its

decisions, this motion doesn't do that, and I think that's one of the failures. That's one of the things I would have added in there, because there are all kinds of examples. We just heard from a couple of members who spoke about the services in the communities that they represent as members. I would say that, generally, there's support for Metrolinx, but they can do a much better job of hearing concerns and then responding to those concerns and finding solutions to those concerns that are raised not only by members of this assembly but also by people from municipal councils, but, more importantly, the public, the very people who use them.

I want to say as well, in regard to Metrolinx: Could we be doing a better job of moving people from point A to point B within the Metrolinx system? Absolutely. I think it's a bit nuts that we have a system set up the way it is now. Mr. Delaney, I think, made the point, and I agree with him, that it is a little bit ludicrous that you have to pay a fare at one end when you get on to the GO train, wherever it might be, let's say in Oakville, and then have to pay a transit fee in the city of Toronto and probably have to pay a transit fee in the municipality that you come from. There should be, certainly to God, in this day and age a way to bring those three tokens into one.

I've had the opportunity to travel the world on a number of occasions to see different cities at my own expense, and sometimes as a member of this assembly, and I've got to say that that is the case in most jurisdictions. If you go to Hong Kong, Paris, London or many cities of the world—if you go to Tokyo, that's the way it's done. You buy a token on the basis of where you're going. For example, if you're in Hong Kong, you get on at the airport and you want to go to Kowloon, or Central city, it's called, you pay a fare commensurate with where you're going. If I go further, I pay a little bit more, but it's one fare. If I get off and have to get on a bus, a streetcar or whatever it might be to get to where I'm going, I pay that fare. You pay it once and you have the ticket with you and it brings you from point A to point B. You don't have to go to three different ticket agents to get a ticket to get on the bus at first that brings you to the GO train, that brings you to the subway, the bus or the streetcar. There is one fare that brings you across the system.

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I would say, for the budget deliberations of the city of Toronto, what a favour we'd be doing them if we could upload the transit system of the city of Toronto to a more regional style of governance, where it was off of their books, because clearly a big part of the costs of the city of Toronto—I recognize that—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't know if your brothers at the city would be happy with that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, yeah. I'm just saying—to the Minister of Transportation, you're probably right, but can you imagine the relief that would do for the city's ability to plan and budget?

But where do you draw the line? I recognize there's difficulty in doing that. What about the city of Timmins?

What about Thunder Bay? What about Ottawa, Sudbury, Hamilton and other municipalities across Ontario that have transit systems? Is it only the city of Toronto that should be treated in that way? I think those are legitimate concerns, and I would imagine that's part of the reason why we haven't done it. But my point is, there should at least be one fare. Why we're not at that point yet, I think, is a little bit odd, to say the least.

The other point I would like to make is the issue of this new coalition that was put together, which was the Clean Train Coalition. I think we need to mention the work that they're trying to do. I think it speaks exactly to the point that I made earlier about the democratization of the process by which citizens can be heard by Metrolinx. They've been working with GO Transit and Metrolinx for some time now in order to start working on reducing, if not eliminating, the use of diesel trains and moving to electric trains in order to diminish the amount of pollution and diesel emissions that are coming from the trains as they run through those communities, and also the noise pollution as a result of the diesel engines being loud. The response that Metrolinx and GO Transit have given these people is, "Don't worry. We'll make a decision to go to tier 4 diesels as a way of being able to make it cleaner." But the issue is, tier 4—the point I'm trying to make—doesn't even exist yet.

The point I go back to is, people want to know that they can have an effect on the ultimate decisions made by Metrolinx, so that at the end of the day the system more closely reflects the values of the riders in the society, and at the same time the service is done in such a way that it meets those goals.

I have to say, I agree with some of the comments made earlier, where there is a call in a number of areas to increase the amount of frequency on schedule for many of the communities that are served by GO Transit. If you're trying to travel in the middle of the afternoon, or late morning, it's pretty hard to use GO Transit because of the schedule. You're more or less forced to get into your car. If our objective is to move people from cars to trains and to try to eliminate and reduce the amount of pollution going into our atmosphere, that is a key component, and I think it's something we need to deal with. Is it easy to be able to do that? Absolutely not. Are there real issues preventing them from doing it? Of course: the issue of extra trackage, the issue of being able to have the dollars to do it. But again, I think we need to be much more aggressive in getting us to that point.

The other point I want to make—I've only got a few minutes left, and I really want to make this point. Mr. Delaney makes a point in his motion that says—I'll just paraphrase here; boy, it's fun to do this when you don't have your glasses—"to place the highest priorities for capacity expansion of inter-regional rail capacity on those regions with the greatest population growth."

I would make two points on that one. The first point is, do we reward those communities that properly plan and try to prevent urban sprawl? Because the effect of that could be, in fact, that you bonus those communities

that encourage urban sprawl. I think we need to think about what that really means.

The other point is, there's an argument to be made that you don't want to necessarily put all of your investments in those places of greatest need all the time. I understand the logic. Where there's greatest need, we should be trying to respond to the need. I get the argument; don't get me wrong. But there are many places in Ontario where services are required, and it may not necessarily be because of the amount of people who ride the train.

I use as an example the Ontario Northland. The Ontario Northland is a provincial asset; it's owned by the province of Ontario. If you were to deal with only being able to provide services as a result of the amount of people who take that train, I think we'd be in pretty big trouble, because there isn't the population base by which to do that. But if you were to eliminate that train—and I'm not saying they're going to—it means to say that many people, for example, on the James Bay coast would have absolutely no other way of getting out of the community of Moosonee other than coming out by plane, because there are no roads. For other people living along Highway 11, who live in communities from Cochrane South down to Toronto, there are a number of people who would not have any other option to get to Toronto or other cities or communities along Highway 11 on the ONR if it was strictly based on frequency and the amount of people who actually use the train.

I think we need to make some key investments, recognizing that it is a service that we provide communities in order to get access to transportation. Transportation is one of the key issues when it comes to economic development. If you can't get to the communities and if you can't leave the communities in a way that's easy, economical and makes some sense, it's pretty hard to do economic development in those communities.

I would argue that we probably need to do some pretty serious investment in railway systems like the Ontario Northland and the ACR—the Algoma Central Railway—looking at restoring some form of service along Highway 17 and up through Thunder Bay. I think there are some services—I'm sure there are other places around Ontario where we really need to rethink our policy when it comes to transportation via rail, both for freight and for people, beyond what it is now. Because certainly, we're missing the boat when it comes to providing those services that are so needed within those communities.

Again, I say, we will support the motion because we think the motion is a step forward. Does it do what I would like to see when it comes to the democratization of the process? No, it doesn't speak to that. But as I said at the beginning of the debate, I think it's important that you look at this as one step forward in a walk of many steps.

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

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to stand in my place in support of my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville cer-

tainly has many strengths. One is his excruciatingly incredible attention to detail, and that's certainly reflected in his motion today. It's with that in mind that I'm very supportive of what he's done. I agree with the previous speaker: It is indeed timely.

Our government has embarked on what can only be described as an ambitious and much-needed strategy to improve public transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. The scale of the projects and the investments being made require that we keep a close eye on the natural demographic changes that occur in the province and ensure that the plans are planned, in large part, accordingly. This resolution, therefore, is important in re-evaluating the situation based on economic changes as we move forward and, of course, our Places to Grow document. It's helpful to stop every once in a while, I think the member from Brant would agree, to kind of revisit where we're at and rethink our priorities.

Mr. Dave Levac: Absolutely.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Thousands of Ontarians in these regions rely every day on public transit to get them to and from work, families, friends and other priorities. Many people live in a different city than they work in. They count on dependable service that would get them where they need to go. That's what the MoveOntario 2020 initiative is, a step forward in keeping up with growing populations and changing population patterns. It includes some 52 rapid-transit improvements and expansion projects, projected over a 12-year period, that would add some 902 kilometres of new public transit links within the GTA. That's incredible. In fact, our government is rapidly approaching the stage where we're almost investing as much in public transit as we are in roads. Hopefully, that day will come soon, and that will be historic.

I'm particularly pleased that part of the initiative will include my riding of Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale. Already, we've seen improvements in GO services, including:

- daily bus service to Niagara Falls since 2009;
- a Hamilton train layover facility, which helps provide more reliable service to the Hamilton region, also created in 2009;
- an additional train from the Hamilton GO Centre every morning since 2009;
- a 20% increase in capacity of the Lakeshore West line since 2008; and,
- the new GO bus transit terminal at McMaster University, which now contains five bus bays, heated shelters, and provides services to more than 2,000 riders per day.

I've often said that good public transit prevails when it can be made convenient for people. People won't take transit unless it's convenient—all the more reason to revisit just how all the pieces fit together.

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I also know that an environmental assessment is currently under way to ensure that we can safely expand rail service to the Niagara peninsula with responsible infrastructure upgrades.

Also, the possibility of light-rail transit for the Hamilton area: There are three options currently on the table that are being reviewed. I happen to favour—and I don't favour it just because it's the most expensive; I favour it because it's the most interesting, most useful and the one that will bring the most added value to our city—the full light-rail transit system.

Under the MoveOntario 2020 project, my riding will benefit from east-west rapid transit on King and Main Streets from Eastgate Mall to McMaster, as well as north-south rapid transit on James and Upper James from Rymal Road to King Street. Further, bus rapid transit and light-rail transit are being considered, as I just mentioned.

The recent economic situation in Ontario and all around the world has forced us from time to time to rethink and revisit projects, to do them more economically and to make sure that there are economies of value and economies of scale there. An important consideration there, of course, is population growth and patterns. I believe that this resolution will help us to determine priorities in light of certain changes that are taking place across Ontario.

I want to thank my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville for his initiative today. I think it sends a clear message to all supporters of GO Transit and to our valuable partners at Metrolinx as well.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to all of my colleagues in the House, and I deeply appreciate this opportunity to support the member from Mississauga–Streetsville's resolution.

What we are talking about here is a very simple resolution that basically says, "Show me what you got." Quite frankly, I want to thank him for bringing that forward because it's always good to take a step back and take a look at what it is we've got, where we are headed, and to allow the members who are affected by this particular project to have a grasp and an understanding of where they are headed and what they are planning to do so they can have some input. To the member, thank you.

The second person I thank is the Minister of Transportation, who has been listening carefully to the debate and digesting what is being said. Her presence indicates a deep concern and a consideration of the debate that has been put forward by all members of the House, and they made some good points right across the board.

Finally, I wanted to make sure there is an understanding that GO service is something that my community has been working on. The chamber of commerce in a committee, with their subcommittee, and with the city committee in the city of Brantford, the county of Brant, myself—we've been working with officials to see if we can expand the service to help us with public transit.

Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity and I wish the member—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further debate? Seeing none, the honourable member for

Mississauga–Streetsville has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I acknowledge the contributions of those who spoke to my resolution.

To the member for Newmarket–Aurora, I certainly take his point that our relationship as decision-makers and as riders should be a cooperative and productive one with our local transit providers. In fact, we in Mississauga have enjoyed a professional and cordial relationship with GO Transit. Wherever Metrolinx similarly looks upon us as allies and as partners, we will be far more productive than a relationship in any other way based.

To the member for Oakville, he notes that our GTA communities, nearly two dozen of them in total, are stitched together by the people who need to live and to work in them. He also notes that people tend to move in before the facilities are available and we really need Metrolinx to get out in front of growth rather than to run after it and catch up.

I really enjoyed the comments from my colleague from Timmins–James Bay. We all know that if we didn't have an entity like Metrolinx we'd probably have to create something that does what it does. You mention a number of points that I thought were particularly good.

I also want to note that, to those of us who live in those high-growth communities, whether it be diesel or electric, the point to us is capacity, not the fuel that the train runs on. Indeed, GO's new MP40 locomotives are clean, quiet and fuel efficient.

The member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale noted what is obvious: Commuters will get out of their cars as long as they've got a good transit system. In fact, commuting is very stressful. I, like many other GO riders, tend to get a nice, quiet snooze on the train and I arrive refreshed for it.

I especially want to acknowledge my colleague from Brant, and I want to thank the four Ministers of Transportation that I've worked with and acknowledge our ongoing productive relationship with GO.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. We'll vote on Mr. Delaney's ballot item in just a little over 50 minutes' time.

SPORTS FUNDING

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario believes the government of Ontario should develop a strategy, along with local and national sports organizations, to ensure Ontario athletes win and succeed, and compete in the finest and most honourable traditions of Canadian sport, when Ontario hosts the 2015 Pan Am Games.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I want to start off by thanking two ministers who are present and who are

going to speak to this resolution as well: Minister Best, the Minister of Health Promotion, and Minister Fonseca, the Minister of Labour. They will have some comments to make later on in this hour or so that we have.

I think we'll start by going back to that day not too long ago when—I think it was on a Sunday a few weeks ago—Sidney Crosby manoeuvred and scored a goal that everyone in Canada will remember forever. That feeling and that memory are seared into the Canadian consciousness for many, many years, perhaps for all of our lifetimes.

Those are very rare moments, when something like that can happen. A lot of it happened because Canada had decided, prior to the Olympics, to put special emphasis on working with the athletes so that they would have the opportunity to train and use the best coaching and the best facilities, so that we would win as many medals as possible. I don't think anybody in Canada, any person, would be upset with the results of how Canada performed in the last Winter Olympics.

We won more gold medals than any other country that has hosted the Olympic Games. In most other countries in the world where they list the medal standings—for example, in Great Britain—Canada came in first because the gold medal count counts for more than the entire medal count. So even though the United States did get more medals than Canada, we were seen—Canada was seen—as having achieved first place in the Olympics by winning the most gold medals.

Interjection.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: That magic number—15, I'm reminded by one of my colleagues here—is something that no other host country has ever achieved—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It was 14.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm sorry; it was 14. That was the most that was ever achieved.

Interjection: Next time.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Perhaps next time, it will be more than 14; 15, or maybe even more.

I think that the same sense of happiness and joy occurred on November 6, 2009, when Toronto was successful in winning the bid to host the 17th Pan Am Games. Canadians erupted in joy in Mexico, where the announcement was made, as well as here, when we were named—Toronto was named—as the host city for these upcoming Pan Am Games. Premier McGuinty said in Mexico, "Our commitment, our pledge, our undertaking, our promise is to provide you with the best Pan Am Games ever." I believe he meant every word he said, then and now.

The 17th Pan American Games will take place in Ontario from July 10, 2015 until July 26th, 2015. Hosting these games is a huge undertaking for any country, much less a province. We are up to the challenge because we will deliver as we promised. You see, we will be hosting some 40-plus countries from the hemisphere, with athletes from three North American nations, seven Central American nations, 12 South American nations and 20 Caribbean nations. Our province is already home to thousands who have their roots in those regions.

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The McGuinty government is committed to excellence in sports for all Ontarians. This resolution beckons our government to develop a strategy in concert with local and national sports organizations to ensure that Ontario athletes win and succeed in the finest traditions of Canadian sports at the 2015 Pan Am Games. Our government's commitment manifests itself in the investments already made and investments yet to come.

Let me state for the record that the McGuinty government's support for amateur sports increased by a whopping 156% between 2003 and 2009, and since 2006, investments in programs totalled some \$42 million. Our government has provided some \$23.1 million in 2009-10 to provincial sports and multi-sport organizations and other partners which promote participation and excellence in sports throughout our province. In 2009-10, the McGuinty government's renewed commitment to the Quest for Gold program was to the tune of \$10 million.

Very briefly, I want to speak about Quest for Gold. The Quest for Gold program was established to provide additional support to athletes from Ontario and to increase the performance and number of Ontario athletes competing at the highest levels nationally and internationally, thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions such as the upcoming Pan Am Games. The objective of the program is to help athletes continue to pursue athletic excellence at the very highest levels; to encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to train and also to go to school; to provide compensation for earnings lost while they are training to enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sports; and to increase access to high-performance coaching as well as to facilities that are available. The more you have access to good coaching and good facilities, the more likely you are to compete and perhaps win a medal or finish near the top of the list in whatever sport you participate in.

Our Minister of Health Promotion, the Honourable Margaret Best, underscored the importance of amateur sports when she stated, "The McGuinty government is committed to supporting Ontario athletes—our role models. Our athletes' commitment to excellence inspires all of us to lead healthy, active lives. Ontario's Quest for Gold program ensures that our athletes have every opportunity to reach their full potential." I hope that I quoted her correctly there.

Let me share what a couple of our 2010 Olympians said about the Quest for Gold program. Vanessa Crone and Paul Poirier said, "Thanks to Quest for Gold, we are able to focus on training and improving our abilities, and ultimately, achieving our best at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics." This is from the athletes themselves; no political grandstanding was required here. This is what investing in our athletes means to the athletes, to the image of our province and to our country. Athletes recognize that with huge investments in sports, there is greater opportunity to compete, to train, to perform and, yes, opportunity for high performance to showcase our

province. That is what the Quest for Gold means to our athletes. They are the new role models, and the younger athletes emulate them in our own communities. We all know younger children, nephews, nieces, cousins and others who look up to these athletes and consider them to be their heroes.

Quest for Gold has so far benefited some 8,000 Ontario athletes. The McGuinty government has had a remarkable record of funding amateur sports in this province.

In the Road to Excellence program, the government invested an additional \$701,000 that helped Canada's summer athletes to finish in the top 14 in total standings in the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

Let me state for the record that 85% of eligible Ontario athletes who compete in the Olympics are Quest for Gold recipients. We have seen the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics; 131 of the 180 athletes on Team Canada, again, were Quest for Gold recipients, and 23 of those athletes won medals. That calls for celebration and for recognition.

If we do not invest in our athletes, then we have no reason to celebrate or be joyous. But because our government is committed to funding amateur sport, we are on the road to making history once again at the 2015 Pan Am Games.

The success of our government's funding also hinges on its willingness to partner with the federal and municipal levels of government and the private sector. This inclusive approach is what defines the McGuinty government and strengthens our democracy.

Let me speak a little bit about what hosting the Pan Am Games means to Toronto. The benefits are enormous, for they will:

- bring over 10,000 athletes and officials to the city;
- bring more than 250,000 tourists, who will occupy hotels, eat at restaurants, shop and visit places of attraction;
- generate about 15,000 jobs;
- showcase Ontario and Canada to the world;
- have a ripple effect by stimulating other projects;

and

- create a legacy of affordable housing and sports infrastructure, with \$700 million in investment in upgrading existing facilities and building new ones, including an aquatics centre, an athletic stadium and a velodrome.

For those that don't know, a velodrome—I only see them during the Olympics and during certain competitions—is an indoor arena where bike racers compete. In Canada, there presently is not a velodrome. This will be the first one built.

I'm sure that by having one here in Ontario, our athletes will be able to train and compete at the very highest level. The ripple-down effect is that young people, instead of spending time doing other things—perhaps saying, "I'm going to the mall," or "I'm going to go out with my friends"—will be able to say, "You know what? I'm spending the next few hours with my coach at the velodrome trying to be a better cyclist, so that when I

compete in a future competition, I have a chance of achieving a medal.”

There is so much that happens when we decide to participate in something of this nature. I think it's important to note that not only Toronto will benefit; a lot of these activities will take place in different venues outside Toronto. They're spread all over to the Golden Horseshoe area as well as in some areas east of Toronto.

At the community level, the economic impact and job creation benefit will be phenomenal. We're looking at 15,000 new jobs in the province, mainly in the construction, tourism and event support sectors. As I said, the games will bring approximately 10,000 athletes and officials and about 250,000 tourists.

In concluding my opening remarks, I simply want to say that I think that hosting these games is a tremendous opportunity for Ontario, for Toronto, for the GTA and for all Canadians to really showcase what we are able to do, not only for ourselves but for our athletes, and to show the rest of the world how Toronto and Ontario can put on the best Pan Am Games that have ever been seen.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to join the debate today on this private member's resolution. Basically, the resolution states that Ontario should develop a strategy, along with local and national sports organizations, to ensure Ontario athletes win and succeed, and compete in the finest and most honourable traditions of Canadian sport, when Ontario hosts the 2015 Pan Am Games. I certainly support the resolution.

I think this has probably come about, in part, from the recent Olympics. I think the great majority of Canadians felt a great amount of pride at the way the Olympics were carried on and the success of our athletes. We heard a lot, watching the commentary—I certainly watched most evenings when I had an opportunity—about the Own the Podium program, and it seems to me that it was a great success. We had a record number of gold medals, and more gold medals than any other country. It's quite an accomplishment for a country with a population the size of Canada's.

Of course, there were a lot of volunteers involved with the Olympics as well. In fact, I know at least a couple of people—I'm sure there were more—from the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka who went out for a month or so to help out. Ted Yard, from Bracebridge, a former downhill ski racer himself, went out and helped with the downhill ski racing.

Kristy Mulligan, also of Bracebridge, was, I believe, also helping out on the slide rides, the luge and that sort of thing. Volunteers are critical for a big event like that. They'll be critical for the Pan Am Games.

1540

Just recently, we had our own Olympics in the Parry Sound–Muskoka area that we hosted, the Ontario Winter Games. As I mentioned previously when I had a chance to, the committee was very successful: Scott Aitchison, Myke Malone, their committee, all the volunteers—some

1,000 volunteers—involved in making that successful. Of course, I would like to highlight the athletes from Parry Sound–Muskoka that were participating in those games. We had Natalia Hawthorn of Bracebridge, who got two silver medals in those Ontario Winter Games. She's a cross-country skier and she competed in the 700-metre free sprint and the juvenile girls' 7.5-kilometre classic cross-country ski race. That was held in beautiful Arrowhead Provincial Park in Huntsville. But also from the Arrowhead Nordic Ski Club were Monique Derbyshire, Cam Raynor, Ben Osorio, Brady Irving, Ryan Atwood and Robyn Klinkman, who all competed.

We also had other Parry Sound–Muskoka athletes, residents of Port Sydney: Elora Austrup, who's 11, in gymnastics; Jacob Cryderman, 17, in figure skating; boxers Bryan Black, 15, of Bracebridge, Bala's own Caleb Luksa, 15, and Lee Tombs, 16, competing; and also the Bracebridge Knight Hawks badminton club: McLean Brownlee, Mara Goodyear, Adam Ager and Bruce Burdett. From the Huntsville Judo Club, there was Sarah Malcolm, who's 14, of Burk's Falls, competing. So, lots of local athletes competing.

Of course, also from the area we recently had Bryce Davison, who's from Huntsville, and his partner Jessica Dubé of Drummondville, Quebec, who were the Canadian pairs champions three out of the last four years, and they competed in the Olympics and came sixth.

I'm always pleased to highlight some local athletes, but really the bigger question, I say, is: What is the greater benefit of athletics and of really elite athletics? The benefit is that it encourages us average folks to lead more active lifestyles and to get involved in sports. That is the greater good, because I think it's fair to say that we have health problems in Canada, in Ontario and North America. We have a problem with obesity with young people not being active enough. If they see some people doing very well in athletics, hopefully that encourages them to get involved.

I would like to point out that government has had some recent policies which work against getting people involved in athletics. Specifically, they exempted the HST—the new tax is coming into effect July 1—on meals under \$4. That tends to be convenience food, fast food, which in many cases is junk food, which tends to be not the most healthy food in many cases. They have not exempted the HST on gym memberships, on sports club memberships, on many of the fees for sports, so they are adding costs, making it more difficult for families to afford to participate in sports.

What else can be done? I think mandatory gym classes in public school, high school, is a positive way, especially if you have some really leading phys-ed teachers who encourage you and get you involved. I know in my case, I had Lanny McQuain and others, who were very encouraging.

Interjection.

Mr. Norm Miller: They worked with what they had.

I think there are also other things that the provincial government should be doing to make it easier for people

who want to get exercise to be able to get exercise. I know in our area, Parry Sound–Muskoka, which is a tourism area, everybody wants to get riding their bicycle, especially in the rural areas, or walking. In many cases the secondary highway has just got the paved part and the gravel shoulder—no place for a bicycle. I would love to see the government make it a policy that whenever they pave a secondary highway, like 118, for example, they add a three- or four-foot strip, which is there in some cases. That allows people to more safely cycle along those secondary highways, which are not super-busy highways. I've seen around my riding, in places where the shoulder is paved they are used tremendously, and I know that people are wanting to get out and make use of that. So those are a few simple things that can be done.

I know we have a couple of other members who would like to speak to this, so I will wrap up and just say that I will be supporting it. I believe that we need to do whatever we can to encourage people of all ages to be as active as possible to improve their quality of life and make them healthier. Of course, there are big benefits in terms of costs to the health system, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Applause.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Please. It's okay.

I'm happy to speak to this motion. I support the comments made by the member from Scarborough Southwest. In fact, I agree with everything that he said. Then I want to get to the motion, because I thought you were going to speak about what the motion entails by way of what you want the government to do in addition to what you expressed, which I agree with. But I don't think you articulated that, and you might want to do that in your two minutes.

I'm a big fan of the Olympic Games; I really am. The only game I play is soccer. I'm not exceptional, but I am a big fan of soccer, and every time the World Cup comes, I'm there. I watch as many games as I can, because I just love the game. I played some hockey when I was a young man. I'm not great at it. My son is much better than I am. I love to see it every now and then, but I have to admit, I'm not going to spend a couple of hours watching hockey. I'm not going to do it. But it's a great game. I play tennis, and I realize when I play—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You can fake taking a dive better than anybody.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I don't fake dives too well, because I don't know how to swim—so diving is a very difficult thing for me. I'm not into that one, no. So I couldn't fake a dive in the water, because I stay away from it.

I love a whole lot of games, including tennis, which I played. Only in playing tennis did I realize how difficult the game is. The only game I haven't gotten into is golf, because I just can't get my heart into that. I just could never get it. I swung that—what do you call it, Frank?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's called a club.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A club—once. That was it. I swung it once, and then I dropped the club. I said, "This

is for somebody else, not for me." I just couldn't do it. But every sport has its complexity. I realize that, and I appreciate it. It's just that I like some games more than others. But when the Olympic Games are on, I watch as much as I can, because I marvel at the skills people have to be able to do what they do. I find a whole lot of those sports dangerous—I just don't know how they do it—and when they succeed at doing what they do, I say, "God bless."

I think about the sacrifices families make to be able to get their children at the stage they are when they get to the Olympics, because it takes a great deal of sacrifice, usually from two parents—sometimes just one, but usually it takes two parents, and the sacrifices are immense. God bless their commitment.

I also believe in the magic of sports, I really do, and the transformative power of sports. I believe in it absolutely, because I really do believe it changes a whole lot of young people in terms of what they want to do.

I marvel at the corporate world that jumps into the Olympic Games with a great deal of enthusiasm, because there's a whole lot of pecunia to be made in the Olympic Games, and the corporate world is right there every time the Olympic Games are on. I wish the corporate world would jump into other areas of human interest, such as worry about the health care system; worry about the little things, like education; worry about the little things, like child care; worry about the little things, the supports we give to our seniors who really can't afford to look after their own—if only the corporate world could jump in with both feet to support these other great, transformative things that we do in society. I wish they could be there for that, as well. Alas, they're not. I felt compelled to say that, because they don't jump in with enthusiasm in these other areas. In fact, they're the first in line saying, "Cut, cut some more." And when we talk about the Olympics, they say, "Yeah, spend some more, and we're there with you." I just wanted to say that.

1550

I know that the member from Scarborough Southwest talked about the Ontario Quest for Gold, which is a good thing. He explained what it does, how it helps the athletes, encourages them to stay in Ontario, compensates athletes for earnings lost while training, and all that is good.

I think he talked about other things as well. I don't remember whether he mentioned the fact that the Ontario-card athletes are selected and nominated by the provincial/multi-sport organization, which is a good thing. Clearly, the Quest for Gold received \$10 million from the government; the member from Scarborough Southwest mentioned that. That's good. That increases the number to \$40 million. That's fine. There is enhanced coaching funding that is provided, which I'm not sure you mentioned, but that's part of the deal, and all of that is good. So I was reflecting: Is the member from Scarborough Southwest saying that's not enough? Is he suggesting we might want to spend a little more in order to achieve the kinds of things you were talking about? If

that's what it is that he wants to say in his two minutes, I want to support it, because I think he's on the right track.

I suspect that in order to get success at the Pan/Parapan American Games, we're going to have to invest a few dollars. I wish the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health Promotion would invest a little more in physical education in our classrooms. The former minister knows that only 34% of our classrooms have physical education teachers. Maybe the member from Scarborough Southwest might say, "There's an idea. I might talk to the Minister of Education"—the current one—"and say to her that we should invest a little on physical education teachers." We want to be able to deal not just with obesity, which is a huge, huge problem, but we also want to engage young people and get them involved in sports, because of the transformative power that it has.

I know that our sports critic, Paul Miller, has met with True Sport, which is a social movement powered by people who believe that sports can transform lives and communities, if it's done right. True Sport members across Canada are committed to community sports that are healthy, fair, inclusive and fun. This group stands together against cheating, bullying, aggressive parental behaviour and win-at-all-costs kind of thinking. That is an interesting group that I suspect the Minister of Health Promotion works with on a regular basis. I suspect the member from Scarborough Southwest supports the activities of this group, and he might want to talk about that.

I want to say that some money has been given for infrastructure. We've got to be able to give money for infrastructure in order to be sure that the Pan/Parapan American Games work, and work effectively. If you don't invest in that infrastructure, it's going to be a little problemo.

Money has to go into infrastructure. I hope that the infrastructure dollars can spread, not just in terms of where the Pan/Parapan American Games are going to be, but all over Ontario. A lot of our recreation centres are in dire need of financial support. If we want to be able to help young people wherever they may be in Ontario, they need to have recreation centres that are well equipped, not crumbling, and are as up-to-date as they possibly can be. While the Minister of Health Promotion is likely to say, "We've invested a couple of million dollars," my suspicion is—yes, you began doing that last year. I suspect it's not enough in some of those local communities in Ontario that desperately are looking for that kind of support.

If we do provide enough support in those areas where there is an improvement to the current infrastructure, we then have to worry about whether those municipalities have the staff and the resources to make sure they're running. There's no point in putting and investing money in some building that was crumbling, only to discover that the municipalities simply don't have the money to make sure the buildings run efficiently and that they have the staff to provide the programming.

I say to ministers listening and to the member from Scarborough Southwest that I do not disagree with anything that he has proposed. There's certainly a lot more that we could do in terms of health promotion and in terms of what sports can do to transform lives and communities. We can do more, and we need to look at how much more needs to be done.

But, back to the motion, which reads, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario, through the Minister of Transportation shall"—oops, sorry. That's not the motion; it's a different motion. Mr. Berardinetti's motion: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario believes the government of Ontario should develop a strategy, along with local and national sports organizations, to ensure Ontario athletes win and succeed, and compete in the finest and most honourable traditions of Canadian sport, when Ontario hosts the 2015 Pan Am Games." I think we should say "Pan/Parapan American Games."

I look at the motion and I say, is there more that you're recommending? If so, what is it? Is what the government doing sufficient based on what you described from the very beginning about the Ontario Quest for Gold? Is there something lacking there or not? Do you agree with what's already there, or how do we improve it and how do we enhance it? I think that's what's missing in the motion. Otherwise, if we don't have anything new, I'm not sure what we're dealing with other than to say, I agree with what you said. It's a good thing. Let's get on with it.

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

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It certainly is my pleasure to rise in this House this afternoon to speak about the Pan American Games and sport in general. As Minister of Health Promotion, I am also responsible for sport.

Of course, we have seen that there have been some great times for sport in Canada. With the recent winter Olympics, it certainly has galvanized many of us—just about everyone, in fact—behind sports, and really has got us to look at how important athletes are and what an important role they play in our lives generally.

I've listened to my colleagues around the room in this Legislature today, and I certainly thank them for the very kind words they have said about sport and for their generous support, which is much appreciated. I have also heard of and am very intimately aware of the many different investments that our government has made in sport in the province. I've heard many people talk about the Quest for Gold, and there have been various other investments.

I hear the member across the aisle from Trinity—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Trinity–Spadina.

Hon. Margaret R. Best:—Trinity–Spadina. I am well aware of where you're from, sir.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good to say.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Yes, and I heard you. You certainly are right when you say sport has the power to transform.

Interjection.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I'm listening; I've been listening to all of you. Certainly, as I've heard you say, there is more to be done. There's always more to be done. We certainly acknowledge that, but we continue to work to improve the facilities, the resources and the foundation for sport in the province of Ontario.

We are very pleased with the result that we have had with respect to the Pan/Parapan American Games. We have been very successful in bringing those games to Ontario. We look, as we move from now into 2015, to leverage the Pan/Parapan American Games to the benefit of Ontario—not just the athletes, but to whole communities across the province, because these games, as you have heard, will leave us with a great legacy of new sport and recreation infrastructure across the greater Golden Horseshoe. This certainly is going to benefit not just our high-performance athletes, but it's also going to benefit our coaches and our communities across this great province. It will also act as a catalyst for other infrastructure regeneration and new build as we move forward into 2015 and get prepared, because we are expecting that we are going to host the best games that we'll ever see anywhere. They're absolutely going to be the best Pan/Parapan American Games ever. We are prepared to host those games and we're ready to move forward to get all our partners aboard. As you have said, I've heard here as well today that we have support from federal, provincial and also from our municipal partners. We expect to engage them and to engage as many people and all the corporate world as we move forward to bring these games and to bring the best games ever.

1600

We have heard about the infrastructure. The Canadian Sports Institute of Ontario, which is going to be right in Scarborough, an area of our province that is really—this is going to be a great addition, because this is a place in Scarborough that has people from all over the world. Our residents make their homes in this very diverse part of this province, so it's fabulous to have that going there. It's going to attract so much economic activity and so much interest, and it will be there long after for many of the young people in that area and all around Ontario to come there to be able to access those resources that will be there for them.

But the Pan/Parapan American Games are not just about the infrastructure; they're also about the athletes, and we're so proud of the results our athletes have achieved on both the national and international stage. It's also about the coaches. I have talked about the athletes so much, and, of course, I have every right to be proud of our athletes because 33 Ontario Olympic athletes for the Winter Games received support from Ontario's Quest for Gold program. This is a program that saw many athletes, actually, who were gold medal winners, like Christine Nesbitt, Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue, Heather Moyse and so many more. We also saw Jennifer Botterill, who I talked about before. Of course, I proudly carry around the picture that she sent me that was autographed by her.

She's all dressed up in her hockey gear. It's wonderful to have young people like that who are such great role models for us. Kristina Groves and Shelley-Ann Brown—it's wonderful to talk about them this week, right after we just celebrated International Women's Day, because a lot of these are our young women who are such great role models for us in this province. It's just a pleasure for me to talk about them.

Also, the coaches: I not only get letters from the athletes, I get letters from the coaches. I have a letter right here on my BlackBerry from Mr. Ken Oda, who says, "I want to thank you again for the opportunity to attend the National Coaching Institute—Ontario through the Quest for Gold program."

There are so many coaches and athletes. It's such a great pleasure. I think it's wonderful that everybody is here to talk about sport today in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It's Thursday afternoon, so we are kind of lenient from the chair, but you're not allowed to read from your BlackBerry. Sorry, Minister.

Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very grateful to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak in favour of the resolution being brought forward by the member from Scarborough Southwest: that the government develop a strategy to help Ontario athletes succeed and win when the Pan American Games come to Toronto and the GTA in 2015. It's particularly important to be speaking about this right now in view of the tremendous success that's been achieved with the Winter Olympics in Vancouver—we're very, very proud of that—and the success achieved by our individual athletes. The Minister of Health Promotion was just speaking about some of the athletes who competed and won. To those who just competed and won and to those who just competed, we're incredibly proud of all of you and we're looking forward to 2015, when we have the opportunity to replicate that success.

I am a big supporter of the games coming to our area, particularly because—I'd like to take just a moment to speak about something that's going on in my riding. We are going to be a venue, actually, for some of the Parapan Games, for both basketball and tennis. They're going to be held at a facility that is about to be built in Whitby called the Abilities Centre. I know the member from Trinity-Spadina mentioned his concern about the infrastructure being built. This is a project that was started as the result of a group of volunteers coming together about eight years ago to talk about building a facility for all people with special needs, but a facility that is accessible to everybody. If you have a member in your family who has a physical special need, you can buy a health club membership so that all of your family members can attend. It will be fitted with special equipment. It's a place where everyone can go.

Over and above being a regional centre for sports, recreation and performing arts for people with special needs, it's also meant to mirror the societal inclusion we want to see happening in Ontario as we go forward. I

know that we have the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which has certain measures that are going to be implemented by 2025. That's a long way off. I know we're making some progress, but I wish we could speed that up a bit, because there are people out there who really need to have these facilities. People have been trying to respond to a lot of the community needs.

I'm pleased to say that this facility is one that has been supported by all four levels of government. We've received federal support, provincial support, support from the region of Durham and also from the town of Whitby in terms of cash and granting a long-term land lease for us to build this building. I've been involved as a volunteer director for a number of years, and we're finally coming to the point where we're going to be putting the shovel in the ground this summer. We'll have the facility built in time to be a venue for those games in 2015.

I also want to say—I'm happy to say—that there are some corporations that are big supporters of the Abilities Centre because they recognize the importance of this to the members of our community as a regional centre. We hope that this will serve as a model to be used across the province, because it's not just people in my riding who need this; it's people across the province of Ontario. We really want this to be a wonderful place for everybody to be able to come to. Being host of some of the Parapan Games in 2015 is a great way that we can do that.

At the end of the day, the other good part of this is that this facility is going to be self-sufficient, which I think is probably music to all our ears as legislators. We have a business plan that has been worked out that is going to involve donations from the public. It's also going to be, hopefully, hosting international conferences on inclusion and best practices. We don't have it exactly right in Ontario yet, I will readily admit, and we have lots of work yet to do, but I think, compared to many other countries in the world, we are really doing a very good job. We hope to be able to use some of the great technical expertise that we have here in Ontario and take that to other countries in the world.

Certainly, being one of the venues for the Parapan Games in 2015 is a really good way for us to get out and talk about the Abilities Centre and all of the services it has to offer. As we can teach other people from other countries, we can learn from the many other organizations that are already operating in Ontario, doing good work on behalf of all the people with special needs.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak about that. I know I've diverted a little bit from what the member was talking about, but I think it is a very good idea, and very good for all of the people of Ontario.

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

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I am very proud and pleased to be able to support this resolution that's been put forward by my colleague Lorenzo Berardinetti, the MPP for Scarborough Southwest, a champion of sport, somebody who understands the importance of sport in our com-

munities. I know that we are all thrilled—we are so thrilled in this chamber and across Ontario—that we have won the Pan Am Games for 2015.

I know how excited we are because I know how excited we got watching our Olympic athletes compete in Vancouver. They did an absolutely amazing job. Those athletes did us proud. They gave us the opportunity to unleash our pride as a country, as a province, in our local communities. It was amazing. I saw kids walking down my neighbourhood high-fiving each other, singing O Canada—things that I had never seen before walking around my neighbourhood. I think we all experienced that, and we want to experience that again.

I know also, as an athlete, as somebody who had the proud privilege and opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games in 1996 for Canada, to proudly wear the maple leaf and the red and white of our country, what a feeling it is as an athlete to walk into a stadium that is multinational and to represent your country. I say that, but all those athletes who walked in, who were so proud and who received all those medals and competed to the best of their abilities, they all know, and I know, that they did not get there alone. It took family members. It took friends. It took coaches. It took managers. It took a community. It took a province. It took a country. It takes so much support. It is teamwork that gets them there.

1610

Now, this spirit that we talk about, that we all have right now, we have to capture it, hold it and take it all the way to 2015. But until we get there, there's a lot of work to do. We've heard a number of members here speak about that work. Some of that work is in supporting our athletes, and we're doing that. We're doing that through programs like Quest for Gold. We're also doing that through instilling values of sport education, of physical education, in our schools and getting those young athletes, providing them the opportunity to get to the podium, to be able to experience many of these different sports.

I understand that many athletes will never get to the level of the Pan Am Games or the Olympic Games or some of these high-performance levels in sports, but it inspires everybody to get out, to walk, to bicycle, to go play some soccer, to go for a swim, to get their kids maybe now involved in more recreational activities. I think this is so important for our province.

To do this, we do need facilities, we need infrastructure. That's why I'm delighted that in this plan, the Pan American Games, there is a great deal of infrastructure that is coming to the Golden Horseshoe from, as we heard, Whitby to Scarborough, Mississauga, St. Catharines, Hamilton, Toronto—they're all getting facilities that will be there, that will be a legacy for our kids long after 2015, but they will provide those opportunities that, for a long time, Ontario has not had.

We have a huge sport infrastructure deficit in this province. It has been talked about over and over again, but everybody coming together as a team—municipalities, provincial government, federal government, local

sport organizations, provincial and national sport organizations and corporate sponsors—we were able to come together and win these games with a common vision, a vision that we want to build an Ontario that is friendly to sport, and that we'll be able to invite the world here in 2015. All those countries that are coming from Latin America, South America, Mexico and the United States, many of the citizens that were from those countries are now living here, in the Golden Horseshoe, in the province of Ontario, and to be able to welcome them, 250,000 tourists, is just amazing for our province.

I am so glad that everybody has spoken in favour of this resolution. I want to commend MPP Berardinetti for his work, and again for being a champion for sport, for our kids and for the Pan Am Games in 2015.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I want to thank all today who spoke, but I want to, just quickly, in my short two minutes say that the key in answering the question earlier is that we want to develop a strategy. It's a call to arms, it's a call to involve the corporate sector, it's a call to involve others.

Look at the passion that's generated in this chamber simply by talking about the Olympics that recently occurred. Think about the passion that will happen in 2015 when athletes get involved. There's an old saying that goes as follows: "Tell me, and I forget. Show me, and I remember. Involve me, and I understand." I think everyone in this room and everyone in Canada now understands what it means to be a gold medal winner. We were all involved. We were all part of that in some way. We're all part of that winning goal of that very last moment of the Olympics when Sidney Crosby scored that goal.

The Americans were looking at us and even David Letterman, of all people, spent a great portion of his program the following night speaking about the Canadian Olympics and the fact that, secretly, he cheered for Canada because he liked the way we presented ourselves and he wanted to see Canada win gold.

I want to see, and I think everyone in this room wants to see, the same thing happen in 2015, and that involves a strategy. It can't just be done by some group or organization out there somewhere.

This resolution calls for all of us to be involved, from people who are in this chamber to organizations that are out there working with athletes, to coaches, to parents and others. Even the young pages that are here today can look forward to one day perhaps participating in games of this nature.

The Olympics are over 2,000 years old. They go back to the ancient Greek times. They were there for a reason, and they still are here for a reason. Hopefully in 2015, we'll again understand what it means to be Canadian.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MENINGITIS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA MÉNINGITE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 1, standing in the name of Ms. Pendergast.

Ms. Pendergast has moved second reading of Bill 2, An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Pendergast?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'd like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be referred? So ordered.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with private members' notice of motion number 2, standing in name of Mr. Delaney. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

SPORTS FUNDING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with private members' notice of motion number 3, standing in name of Mr. Berardinetti. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, and just before I call orders of the day, why don't we thank our pages one more time as this is their last day.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 22, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1618.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Leeds–Grenville	
Vacant	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziatti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Helena Jaczek, Kuldeep Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, Reza Moridi
David Oraziatti, Joyce Savoline
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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