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(Hansard)**

Monday 29 March 2010

Lundi 29 mars 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 March 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mars 2010

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce page Anthony Caliciuri's mother, Mary Beth Caliciuri, who is here in the members' west gallery; his grandmother Mary Adams; and his sister Katie, who are down to visit Anthony today. I'd like to welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Some of us woke up this morning to the sound of Cuban music to celebrate the 65th anniversary of bilateral relations between the Republic of Cuba and Canada. In the east gallery, we have some very important guests: the ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, Teresita Vicente, and the Consul General in Toronto, Mr. Jorge Soberón. Congratulations and bienvenidos.

Mrs. Julia Munro: It is my pleasure to introduce the parents of page George Philp: Paula Murphy and Andrew Philp. I'd ask that all members help welcome them here to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Our page Anthony Caliciuri has brought his fan club with him today. We've got his mom, Mary Beth Caliciuri, his sister Katie and his grandmother Mary Adams all here in the members' gallery. Welcome.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Emma Graham is a grade 12 student in St. Catharines, about to start her first year at Queen's University. Emma is the winner of the Youth in Motion Job Shadow a Minister Contest 2010. Her winning essay, selected from over 200 applicants, allows her the chance to spend the day learning about the role of a cabinet minister at Queen's Park. Please join me in welcoming Emma Graham to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to welcome today three Ottawa residents: Cathy Curry, who is the chair of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board; Pam Morse, who is my school board trustee in Nepean-Carleton; as well as the director of education, Lyall Thomson. They were here meeting the minister, and they will meet our critic later today. I'd just like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I'd like to welcome a very important delegation from Italy, in fact, from an area where the Minister of Economic Development and Trade

is from and where my mother is from, actually, the area of Friuli. The delegation consists of Daniele Gerolin, a member of the regional government of Friuli-Venezia Giulia of Italy; Ivo Chiarot, the mayor of Sesto Al Reghena; Dorino Papais, Mario Ellero, Cavalliere Gino Vatri, and Silverio and Orianna Gardin. Congratulations and welcome to the Parliament of Ontario.

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

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member for Oakville and page Alexander Bowie, to welcome his mother, Janette-Rose Bowie, his uncle Joseph-Angelo Santi, his aunt Judith-Anne Santi-Derubis, his great-aunt Mary Morelli, his great-aunt Phyllis Morelli, his great-aunt Alma Picone and his great-uncle John Picone, in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. On Thursday, Ontario families learned that your budget is on track to doubling the provincial debt by 2012, basically mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren. A good place to start in controlling your spending is at those unaccountable, anonymous bureaucracies that you call the local health integration networks, the LHINs.

Under the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, these LHINs were to be publicly reviewed by March 28, 2010. Today is March 29; no review is in sight. Premier, you're breaking your own law. What makes you above the law in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question and pleased to have an opportunity to speak about our budget. My colleague makes reference to a particular aspect to be found within the budget bill itself, but I would want him, of course, to take into account what we do at a higher level in terms of the budget.

A number of important things—fundamentally, the budget is about jobs and growth. In that budget, we are not only protecting, but enhancing public services for our families, which they are very concerned about. We continue to invest in a strong economy, and as part of that particular plan, we are balancing our budget in a prudent, thoughtful and responsible way. We're taking the appro-

priate amount of time; no more time than is necessary, but not so quickly that we compromise public services or dampen our economic recovery.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's sad how arrogant the Premier has become after six years in office. I asked a very simple, straightforward question about his legislation that would cause a review of these bloated regional health bureaucracies, the LHINs, by March 28, 2010. But buried deep within his own budget, on page 164, it says the McGuinty Liberals are going to arrogantly rewrite their own law and block the Legislature from holding that review, which should have begun as of yesterday.

Premier, I'm going to ask you again. What has happened to you after six years in office? Have you become so arrogant that you believe you're above the law in the province of Ontario? Why are you breaking your own legislation?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to speak more directly to my honourable colleague's question this time around. It is quite true that we had originally anticipated that we could and should conduct a review of our local health integration networks by the end of this month. But as it turns out, all of the responsibilities that we wanted the LHINs to take on, they have yet to take on. In particular, a big part of their new responsibilities would be long-term care. Our local health integration networks have not yet done that.

1040

But there are a number of things that we have been doing with a view to ensuring that we are reviewing the operations of our LHINs on an ongoing basis. We asked KPMG to conduct a review for us. They put forward 27 separate recommendations. All of those either have been implemented or are under way. We have an annual review of our accountability agreements to address new issues as LHINs take on additional responsibilities. We think the responsible thing to do is to allow them to take on the responsibilities.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier uses the term "originally anticipated." I remind you, Premier, that this is your own law. This is a law written by your health minister, passed by your own members, which called for that review to take place by March 28, 2010. You didn't have the courage to make any kind of announcement; you didn't meet with the opposition parties to look for a delay. You buried it in page 164 of your budget bill.

Sadly, this fits a pattern. When the Premier first received a draft report from the Ombudsman on the problems at his LHINs, what was the Premier's response? Well, he's trying to defang the Ombudsman by threatening to take his job away.

We take a different view altogether, Premier. What exactly are you trying to hide at your runaway regional bureaucracies, these so-called LHINs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I know my honourable colleague would want to be accurate in terms of his

presentation of the facts here. There will be a comprehensive review. We have deferred that for two years. We think the appropriate thing to do before we conduct a full-some review is to allow the LHINs to take on their full-some responsibilities, including long-term care. There have been a number of reviews conducted along the way. We take advantage of the results of those reviews and put into place the recommendations.

Before we had LHINs, there were seven regional offices and 16 district health councils. I gather my honourable colleague would prefer that we eliminate the LHINs and bring back seven regional offices and 16 district health councils. We have a fundamental difference of opinion. We believe that we can have confidence in the people in their communities when it comes to local decision-making; hence the LHINs.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: So the Premier is breaking his own law. He is trying to silence the Ombudsman, who has been looking into the problems with your regional health bureaucracies, and I think we have a good understanding of exactly what Premier McGuinty is trying to hide. This time last year, we brought forward revelations of runaway spending and sweetheart untendered contracts through his eHealth boondoggle. After months of denying and deflecting and stonewalling, the Premier was forced to finally end this frenzy for consultants through his untendered contracts.

Premier, on June 17, you said it had come to an end. Why did the central LHIN, within one week of your making that announcement, hand out an untendered contract to Beth Snyder Coaching and Consulting—one week after you said this would come to an end?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our government believes in the value of LHINs; we believe in the importance of integrating our health care system. As we move forward, improving the value for money in our health care system, we're going to need the LHINs to do their work. We have put in place tough new rules around tendering for contracts. As we moved to those new rules, there were some contracts that needed a bit more time to complete their job. So the contracts that the member opposite is referring to were all extensions of existing contracts. We thought the right thing to do was to let that work continue rather than starting over from scratch.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: So let's make sure we have the facts here. The Premier made an announcement on June 17, and then, a week later, your central LHIN gave out a sweetheart untendered contract.

You'd think the Premier or the health minister would show some anger. You'd think they would get to the bottom of this. You'd think there would be a price to pay for breaking the promise that the Premier made. But all we see is a shrug, and again, pass the buck.

Let's be clear: \$42,000 in a sweetheart contract was given out one week after the Premier promised there would be no more. So I ask the health minister, are you not in charge of your own government, or did you simply give a wink and a nod to the LHINs to let the sweetheart deals keep rolling?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Quite the contrary. We have put in place tough new rules. What we inherited in 2003 was not what we needed to do today. We put in place tough new rules—no more sole-source contracts, regardless of dollar value; and consultants will not be paid for hospitality, food or incidental expenses—and we are mandating that the LHINs report to us quarterly on how they are complying with these tough new rules.

I have every confidence that they have embraced the new rules. Let me give you one example: The Waterloo-Wellington LHIN did extend a contract after the new rules came into place. This is a contract to complete a rural health study—I'm sure the member opposite thinks we should make sure that rural health needs are fulfilled in the Waterloo-Wellington region, and I'm sure he would expect us to—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, Minister, tough new rules don't matter a whit if you don't have the backbone to stand up and enforce them and make sure the job gets done: \$42,000 handed out in a sweetheart deal after Dalton McGuinty said they would end; we found the LHINs have given out some \$7 million in untendered contracts. Just like we saw at the eHealth boondoggle, your LHINs, the sons of eHealth, are following the same procedure: sweetheart deals to well-connected consultants and then giving out money for contracts for little work or before the contract is even signed.

I ask the health minister: Surely you must be aware of this abuse. Surely you will do something about it. Can you stand in your place in the assembly and say this is the only exception to breaking the rules that you say are so-called tough?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure you that we are very serious about making sure the tough new rules are in fact adhered to. That is why we're mandating quarterly reports from the LHINs. We are doing random audits to ensure that these new rules are being adhered to.

The contract you're referring to—I believe you might want to double-check this—actually started before the new rules were put in place. It began on April 8, 2009, before the new rules came into place.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Last week, Ontario families were waiting for the McGuinty government to make their lives better, protect jobs, properly fund local hospitals and make life more affordable. Unfortunately, the vast majority are still waiting. How could this government leave everyday people

paying more and getting less but find more than half a billion dollars for this year's corporate tax giveaway?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question. Of course, I have a different perspective on the budget, in terms of both its content and its impact.

My colleague asked about help for families. We're pleased that, number one, our budget goes a long way toward providing the reassurance and comfort that our families are looking for. We will continue to increase funding for their schools. More than just protecting schools, we're going to move ahead with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. When it comes to health care, more than just protecting funding for health care, we're going to continue with our plan to get wait times down.

When it comes to child care, we've now found a way, notwithstanding our economic challenges, to put in place permanent funding for 8,500 child care spaces. That's 1,000 jobs in the child care sector. It helps all kinds of families who are concerned about where their kids are going to be during the course of the day.

Those are specific, concrete examples of how this budget speaks to the needs of Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff made a very interesting declaration. He said, "We have a clear choice: tackling the ... deficit and starting to invest in our future, or giving further tax cuts to corporations before when we can afford them."

Can the Premier tell us: Is his federal leader wrong, and if he's not, then why is the Premier barreling ahead with billions and billions of dollars in corporate tax cuts while we are deep in deficit and people's real priorities simply are not being addressed?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think I part company with my colleague in terms of exactly what we're doing.

Over the course of the next three years—and I stand to be corrected by the Minister of Finance—I think we're cutting taxes for businesses, to enhance their level of competitiveness and productivity, by about \$4.5 billion. For people—for individuals and families—we're cutting taxes by \$11.8 billion over the course of the next three years. That's going to go a long way toward making things just a little bit easier for our families who are struggling to get ahead.

1050

One of the new things that we're investing in in this budget—I know my colleague will want to support this, of course—is a new energy credit for families who find themselves in northern Ontario and have to grapple with extraordinary costs when it comes to their energy costs. We thought we should give them extra help there, and that's what we've done.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Corporate tax cuts are good for CEOs' families. What I want to know about is the rest

of Ontario families. In this Premier's Ontario, families are going to continue to worry about jobs; they're going to continue to worry about community hospitals that are going to have to keep closing their emergency rooms. The cost of everything from tuition to home heating is going to continue to climb. That's what regular families in Ontario are going to be facing.

Does the Premier really believe that cutting corporate taxes is more important than the concerns that real people have each and every day in this province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We're continuing to bring a balanced approach to managing the people's finances. In addition to our tax reforms, we're also, for example, investing heavily in infrastructure to create some 300,000 jobs over the course of two years. That's important to families. Something else that's very important to families is to ensure that when the kids get to college and university age, there are going to be spaces available for them. In the budget, again notwithstanding our financial challenges, we've decided to fund 20,000 more spaces in our colleges and universities this September. If you take a look at the budget on the whole, it does include a plan for tax reform, but it also includes specific levels of support for our families, whether that's continuing to support health care, education, child care, spaces in colleges and universities, or energy supports for the north.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. For families who rely on front-line health care, this budget means more bed closures, longer waits, delayed surgeries and the loss of more front-line health care services. Ontario nurses have gone so far as to call it the "final nail in the coffin." Does the Premier think cutting corporate taxes is more important than health care for the people of this province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What we've managed to do, again, in our budget is to bring a balanced approach. In addition to our plan for tax reforms, which is all about enhancing our competitiveness and our ability to create good jobs and generate the wealth that we need to support our public services, we also this year are funding our hospitals, their base funding, by another 1.5%. Hospital funding overall is up 4.7% this year, just so we understand what we're talking about.

We've been sitting down, working hard with our partners in the health care sector, in particular our hospital partners, to make sure that they have the appropriate funding and to make sure that they can continue to deliver the quality of services that they've done in the past. I'm confident we have the goodwill and the determination to continue to work together to maintain good-quality health care services for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For people who are actually hoping for strategic investments in public transit, this budget means more time stuck in gridlock and less time with their families. The Premier has derailed Toronto

transit's plans and the good jobs that are going to go with them. Does the Premier think that cutting corporate taxes is more important than keeping the promise to create jobs and invest in the future by supporting public transit?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I'm going to do something which my honourable colleague is uncomfortable with: We're going to bring balance. In addition to our plan for tax reforms, which is about enhancing our competitiveness and our ability to create jobs and generate wealth that supports our schools and our health care, we're also investing heavily in infrastructure. When it comes to public transit in the city of Toronto and the greater Toronto area, all we have said is that we're going to go ahead with \$11 billion worth of investment in our public transit services.

We said, when it comes to some of the "out" years, that we think we have to slow some of that down just a little bit so that we don't compromise our schools and health care. It's about balance, about being prudent and about keeping in mind what our families are asking of us, and I think we have it just about right in this budget.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier's message to people who are facing tough times is simply, "tough luck." To people who want green jobs building Toronto's transit system, tough luck. To nurses who want to stay in Ontario to actually take care of Ontario patients, tough luck. With so many hard-working Ontarians out of luck, thanks to this Premier, why is he stubbornly refusing to scrap his decision to pull billions of dollars out of our revenue stream for tax cuts for corporations for the very lucky few?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I just see things differently in terms of our needs at this point in our history and of what our budget is going to accomplish on behalf of all Ontarians. In addition to our tax reforms, I'll repeat: We're finding ways to not only protect but to enhance our public services, we're finding ways to create jobs in an immediate sense by investing in infrastructure, and we're talking about enhancing the strength of our economy over the long run by creating 20,000 more spaces in our colleges and universities. We're helping families in the short term with some 8,500 child care spaces. It's about getting our priorities right in terms of what we need to do right now to help families and what we need to do over the long term to ensure that we've got a strong plan for jobs and growth. That's what this budget is all about.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. As the eHealth scandal was breaking, the Premier made a big show about taking charge. On June 17, he issued a media release and said "From now on, the government and all its agencies will no longer allow sole-sourced contracts for consulting services." But according to freedom-of-information records, the Waterloo-Wel-

lington LHIN handed out three untendered contracts between July 29 and November 9, 2009. Premier, why didn't you just say the new rules don't apply to the LHINs and the consultants to which they're handing out this sweetheart deal?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Make no mistake about it: These new rules do apply to the LHINs. The LHINs know it and are complying with it. There were some contracts that needed extensions after the new rules came in place, and that was the right thing to do. It would have been irresponsible to halt those contracts in the midst of their work. Did they continue to study rural health in Waterloo–Wellington? Yes, they did. Should they have done that? Absolutely, yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: This scandalous abuse of taxpayers and their money proves why the public's review of the LHINs simply can't wait; it needs to happen now. The Waterloo–Wellington LHIN handed out almost \$97,000 after the Premier led Ontario families to believe your rules wouldn't apply and put an end to the sweetheart deals. The untendered contract of November 9 shows that not even the resignation of the former health minister on October 6 slowed down the Premier from using this money as a personal slush fund.

Will Premier McGuinty stand in his place now and ensure Ontario families that no other untendered contracts were handed out after you told Ontario families that they had stopped?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The party opposite has made it very clear that their position is to shut down the LHINs and bring all of that power and decision-making ability back to Queen's Park. We have seen what has happened when that power is all here at Queen's Park.

I actually believe in the power of local decision-making. I believe that if we want to move forward to improve health care, we need to do it at the local level and the LHINs are the right organizations to be driving that integration.

Let me give you an example of what happened in Waterloo–Wellington that would not have happened without the LHINs. First Link is a program that provides recently diagnosed individuals with dementia and their caregivers with comprehensive and coordinated supports. They strengthen the linkages between the physicians, the specialists and the caregivers—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A question for the Premier: Affordable and efficient rapid transit is the lifeblood of all great cities. Almost all experts agree that if Toronto's Transit City plan is not implemented as quickly as possible, there will be real economic and social damage inflicted on Toronto.

Does the Premier agree with Toronto mayor David Miller that the budget announcement to delay half a

dozen key transit projects is beyond disappointing, that it's an astonishing betrayal of the commitments this government made to the people of the city of Toronto?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, we do not agree with that assessment. In fact, what we have said and what I have said to Mayor Miller personally is that we are not abandoning these projects. We are not walking away from these projects. We are slowing down the implementation of these projects.

What we've said is, over the next five years we need to find a savings of \$4 billion, but we will continue with an investment of more than that to keep these projects going. I've been very clear since I was appointed Minister of Transportation that it is our goal to continue to make investments, to continue to build public transit in Toronto. That's what we're going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Notwithstanding that statement, the Premier should recognize the facts. The announcement that you made places the Finch Avenue West LRT, the Scarborough rapid transit, the Eglinton Avenue cross-town line and the expansion of York region Viva service in jeopardy. These lines would have served many of Toronto's most transit-dependent residents—people who need good, reliable transit to get to work on time, to get their kids to daycare. It also threatens the bus replacement program and hundreds of jobs in Thunder Bay that will be lost if the new streetcar lines are never built.

Why is this Premier determined to take an axe to transit expansion in Toronto?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's interesting that there is subway tunnelling going on right now against which this party voted. The NDP voted against tunnelling that's happening right now. There is work under way on Shepard, on the Spadina subway, and on the Georgetown corridor, which your member for Parkdale–High Park has repeatedly opposed.

Those projects that the member for Toronto–Danforth has itemized are projects that are going to be in the discussion with Metrolinx. We're going to determine which of those we're going to be able to go ahead with and how quickly. So we're not walking away from them.

On bus replacement, we're opening up the gas tax rules so that municipalities can use that money for bus replacement.

We are committed to transit. We've already invested \$9.3 billion in public transit. Our record speaks for itself. We're going to continue these projects—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. David Zimmer: My question too is for the Minister of Transportation. Since the budget last Thursday, the media and the pundits have gotten themselves all worked up about the future of transit here in the city of

Toronto. These are important projects. They contribute to a greener city, a stronger economy and an easing of traffic gridlock, which costs us \$6 billion a year. The personal frustration of getting caught in gridlock is a whole other story.

Specifically, Minister, constituents in my riding of Willowdale are really concerned about some LRT projects previously announced. They are concerned that they will not be built. They've been calling me; they're upset. Minister, what's the reality here? What is the rhetoric here? Are you or are you not going ahead with the Transit City projects?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that my colleague from Willowdale wanted to ask me what the reality is—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's sort out the reality from the rhetoric. The reality is that we are continuing with these projects. I want to assure the member for Willowdale and, through him, his constituents, that we are indeed phasing in these projects. We recognize, given the economic global downturn, that we had to make some decisions that were responsible. We will continue to invest more than \$4 billion over the next five years but we have to slow down on some of these projects.

Since 2003, we've invested \$9.3 billion in public transit. We're going to continue to work on these projects.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Let me get very specific here. In Willowdale, there are four Transit City LRT projects that are important to my constituents. They are the Eglinton LRT, the Finch LRT, the Sheppard East LRT and the Scarborough RT line. There are all kinds of rumours and speculation out there floating around about which projects are going forward, which are going to be put on hold and which are going to be delayed. Minister, how are you going to decide which projects go ahead and which projects go on hold?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me first of all say that the Sheppard LRT—the Sheppard project—is already under way. That has already begun. As far as the Finch, Scarborough and Eglinton lines, that conversation is going to happen with Metrolinx. It's very important that we get the advice from the experts at Metrolinx to have that conversation about which ones will go forward.

I just want to emphasize that already in the city, there are projects under way. The Georgetown South corridor, which supports the Pearson-Union air-rail link, is already under way—\$874 million. As I said, there's already work begun on the Sheppard LRT and construction has begun on the Spadina subway project—another \$870 million.

There is a lot of work that has already been done. We're going to be talking about how to phase the rest of the work and continue on those projects.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Last year, you made a big show of telling Ontario families that you changed the rules to put an end to the

untendered contract feeding frenzy that saw eHealth hand out sweetheart deals to Courtyard and other Liberal-friendly consultants. But according to freedom-of-information records, the Erie St. Clair LHIN handed out two untendered contracts months after you said your new rules put an end to these sweetheart deals.

Will you finally admit that your LHIN bureaucracies are diverting health care dollars from patients and front-line care with no value in return?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The LHINs are providing tremendous value. They have embraced their new responsibility to integrate services with the patient in mind. The future of health care demands that we do everything we can to integrate health care. Patients know that. This morning, I spoke at a patients summit here in Toronto. They know that integration is the key to the future, and it is the LHINs that are best positioned to do that integration. That is very, very good work that they are performing.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: A year ago, the Premier said he put an end to these untendered contracts. Two weeks ago, the spokesperson at the Erie St. Clair LHIN said that the LHIN “no longer has untendered contracts and will continue to comply with all provincial procurement directives.” She must have been referring to a different set of rules because your unelected, unaccountable appointees handed out \$73,000 in untendered contracts that we know of.

The untendered contracts binge at eHealth cost you a minister, a deputy minister and the chair and CEO of eHealth. Who will be held accountable for the untendered contracts binge at the LHINs, Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know that the member opposite is looking for a story here, but I'm afraid there isn't one. The LHINs are doing very good work on the ground, they are adhering to the new rules that are in place, they are reporting quarterly on their adherence to the rules, and we are ensuring that that is in fact happening.

Let me tell you a little bit about something that the Erie St. Clair LHIN has done that I don't think could have been accomplished from here at Queen's Park. In December 2009, the Erie St. Clair LHIN had the lowest ALC days to discharge in the province, at 22 days. What that means is that people who are in hospitals are getting home or into the care they need more quickly than any other place in the province. They've improved wait times, they've got the best wait times in cancer, cataract, hip and CTs. This is good work—

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

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. It is difficult, if not impossible, to afford healthy food on the current social assistance rates; the Premier knows

that. The special diet allowance helped Ontarians with severe illnesses such as AIDS, cystic fibrosis and Crohn's disease to access nutritional food. Now, this government has cut the special diet allowance against the recommendation of its own social assistance review panel without any comprehensive evaluation of the program or of better alternatives.

Why is this government heartlessly cutting a program that helps the most vulnerable and the sickest people in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services will want to speak to this in the supplementary—but let me just say this on what motivates us in this particular regard: We have a program which is just not sustainable. In 2001, it was costing taxpayers \$6 million. This year it's up to \$225 million. We're quite confident that if we don't make some changes, it will be up to \$750 million in some five years' time.

The Auditor General has pointed out that there are some real issues here of concern to him which I don't think, in honesty, any of us can duck or avoid. So what we want to do is reform this program to make sure that the supports that we're putting in place—we certainly agree that there are some Ontarians who require special dietary support. We want to put a program in place that in fact does exactly what it's supposed to do.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: Cutting a program that many Ontarians rely on for basic survival is cruel and you know it's morally wrong. It is wrong because the deficit should not be reduced on the backs of some of Ontario's most vulnerable people. It is wrong because the increased health care costs will far outweigh any program cost savings. It is wrong because making cuts now undermines the social assistance review process that this government and all parties in this House have spent years developing.

At the very least, why won't the Premier leave the special diet allowance in place until the social assistance review findings are complete at the end of next month?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just so we put this in some context, so that Ontarians understand what we're fundamentally all about: Notwithstanding our financial challenges, we continue to move ahead with the Ontario child benefit. We're continuing to move ahead with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. We have found permanent funding for 8,500 child care spaces. We have gone ahead with an increase in the minimum wage.

Again, with respect to the special diet allowance, some legitimate concerns have been raised by the Ministry of Finance and by the auditor himself. We think we've got a responsibility to take a look at that, to see what we can do to reform the program to ensure that those who are in fact in need of special support—and there are undoubtedly Ontarians who are in need of special dietary support—are getting that support. We look forward to working with stakeholders and people in the sector to make sure we get this right.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, just this past Tuesday it was announced that the graduation rate in Ontario has increased once again. It's clear that this government has placed great emphasis and value on the education of our young people.

We are aware that it is success in education that makes Ontario more productive and will lead the way to a prosperous future. An educated workforce will provide us with the edge needed to compete in a global economy.

Minister, can you provide more information on this year's graduation rate and our progress since we came to office?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: A very important question indeed, because I think the people of Ontario do want to know that the students who are in our high schools are achieving success more than they were when we came to government.

It was very special that I had the opportunity to be with the Premier and announce that the graduation rate in Ontario's secondary schools has increased some 11 percentage points since we came to government. What that means is fully 52,500 more students are successful in their secondary school experience. We think that this is very good news, particularly because we are focused on building an economy with high-skilled workers. The students who graduate from secondary school will be able to move on to pursue those careers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Minister, there are some who believe that our increased graduation rate is a result of "no fail" in our education system. On this side of the House, we know that teachers work very hard and are dedicated to ensuring that our students are successful. I was disappointed to see the member for Kitchener-Waterloo quoted in her local paper, expressing this exact sentiment.

As a government, we have implemented a number of initiatives that produce positive results in students' achievement. In my own riding, London-Fanshawe, I know that several schools are provided specialized skills training and other student-success initiatives.

Minister, can you tell this House and the people of Ontario what we are doing in our schools to make sure our students are successful?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's very important that I have the opportunity to make very clear why students are being more successful at secondary schools. First of all, the students are working very hard. They are supported by their families. I can say that our teachers are committed to working with students to enable them to be successful. We have, in our learning to 18 strategy, implemented and invested \$1.5 billion since coming to government.

One of those investments is our specialist high skills major program. We now have some 20,000 students who are benefiting in 16 major programs. It's available in 430 secondary schools. The result of that is that it—

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier. In 2006, \$31 million of taxpayers' money was wasted in what has become known as the Collegate debacle. As part of this scandal, the Ontario Cricket Association was provided a grant of \$1 million, despite requesting only \$150,000.

Maple Leaf Cricket Club in King City received part of this \$1 million. Today, police are investigating over \$100,000 in missing funds and missing cheque stubs at Maple Leaf Cricket Club. Premier, can you assure the taxpayers of Ontario that the Maple Leaf Cricket Club won't become home to your next slush fund debacle?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not familiar with all the details of this police investigation, as I'm sure my honourable colleague would understand, but it sounds like a bit of a stretch, a bit of a reach here on the part of the opposition. I think the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances is to allow the investigation to unfold, and that whatever results are discovered in that then are brought forward in the light of day so that if there is any dimension that somehow relates to the provincial government, we can speak to it at that time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Premier, the Collegate debacle wasn't the first, or the last, of the Liberal scandals that wasted taxpayers' money. The eHealth scandal saw \$1 billion of taxpayers' money squandered. The HST tax collectors are receiving double pay, while hundreds of thousands of Ontarians remain unemployed. Sweetheart deals like those with Samsung, Windsor Energy Centre and the Courtyard Group continue.

As the financial scandal rips through the Maple Leaf Cricket Club, can you tell the people of Ontario what attempts were made to recover the \$1 million provided to the Ontario Cricket Association?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I can't speak to the details, but I can certainly undertake to provide my colleague with more information. What I can say is that an auditor took a look at this and he came up with specific recommendations. We've implemented those recommendations, because we think it's in keeping with the public interest. I think that settles the issue for the time being.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. On Friday, I was in Thunder Bay talking to people about the budget. They were highly skeptical about the Premier's budget, and for good reason. They quickly realized that the help they are being promised on high home heating bills won't even cover the hit that they're going to take as a result of this Premier's HST scheme. Given his sorry seven-year track record of ignoring northern

Ontarians, why should northerners have any faith at all in the Premier now?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Northern Development.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: By any measure, and the member needs to acknowledge this, this was a tremendous, tremendous budget for northern Ontario. A three-year northern industrial electricity rate program, \$450 million to reduce energy rates by 25% for major industrial users, is tremendous. A \$10-million increase in the northern Ontario heritage fund program that provides thousands of jobs to northerners: I'm sure the member heard about that when she was in Thunder Bay. The \$45 million for project-based skills development for the Ring of Fire opportunity that is going on up there is fantastic, as well as a Ring of Fire coordinator to help get that done. May I say we could go on and on: the highest northern highways budget in history, \$770 million for northern highway construction; we could not be looking for more than that—every year, increases.

This has been tremendous for northern Ontario—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I certainly did hear a great deal in northern Ontario, and I'd be happy to share with this member just how cynical the people are about your nasty budget and the fact that you've ignored them for seven years. Northern Ontario families have been hearing this same refrain from this government for years now.

1120

In 2005, the Premier promised \$500 million in forestry money but left half of it sitting in a bank account unused. In 2006, the Premier promised to help soaring pulp and paper electricity costs but has taken four long years to finally—finally—come up with a program, one that we championed for a while now.

While the Premier has been dragging his heels, 45,000 forestry workers lost their jobs, and entire communities have been decimated. That's what I heard in Thunder Bay when I was there on Friday. After so much neglect—

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The cynic is the member sitting over there. The fact is that we have flowed \$638 million in terms of forestry incentives in northern Ontario, and it has been well received. Although we are very excited to expand this northern industrial program to the mining sector and to Essar Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, the fact is that forestry, pulp and paper products receive over \$100 million as well, in terms of incentives to reduce their costs. The fact is the northern Ontario heritage fund has made a significant difference: 12,000 jobs created over the last five years by our government, or retained, and another increase with a commitment to go up there.

Four-laning of the highway between Thunder Bay and Nipigon is something we've worked on for a long time. That construction begins this summer with a commitment to keep going.

The fact is, this is a great budget for northern Ontario. Our Open Ontario plan supports the Ring of Fire development, and we could not be more excited. We look forward to moving forward with some—

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

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontarians recognize that a well-educated workforce is key to a prosperous society. Since 2005, we have seen a steady increase in enrolment at post-secondary institutions. More and more people are choosing a post-secondary education and recognizing that Ontario's institutions are among the best in the world. In my community, the University of Guelph is attracting students from across this province and from around the world. Recent capital investments in Guelph are ensuring they have room to accommodate new students.

How are we going to help the University of Guelph and other Ontario universities and colleges meet our goal of having the best-educated workforce in the world?

Hon. John Milloy: I think everyone should be very proud of the progress that we've made over the past six years in terms of enhancing Ontario's post-secondary education system. We now have 120,000 more students in Ontario's colleges and universities than when we took office. Last week's budget outlined funding for a further 20,000 students this fall, and we will be providing our colleges and universities with \$310 million to help them with the cost of welcoming these 20,000 students. At the same time, recognizing the pressure that our colleges and universities were under in 2009-10 with growing enrolment, we also provided them with \$155 million to deal with those immediate pressures. Together, a substantial investment in the future—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I want to tell the minister that the administration at the University of Guelph has related to me that they were extremely appreciative of those initiatives in last week's budget. There was a real focus in last week's budget on post-secondary education opening Ontario to new ideas and leading to new economic growth and jobs. We must do everything we can to prepare our young people with the skills and training they need to compete in our global market.

But, Minister, I've also heard from workers in Guelph, who have been hit hard by the economic downturn, that they need new skills to find a different career path in our new knowledge-based economy. Although the increases to operating grants are important, I've heard from stakeholders that we need some policy changes to create more flexible pathways for student learning. Minister, what is our government doing to keep—

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

Hon. John Milloy: I thank the member for the question. I'd just like to highlight the Second Career program, which has welcomed close to 28,000 laid-off workers into the province's college and private career college system. The budget outlined funding and support to accept an additional 30,000 individuals into the system, bringing it close to 60,000 people who will benefit from these re-training opportunities.

At the same time, on the policy front the budget outlined ambitious plans in terms of international students coming to our area, in terms of online institutions and also our efforts to address the very important issue of credit transfer, the ability of students in our college and university system to move from one system to the other and receive credit for the learning that they've undertaken.

All of these are going to further enhance what is one of the best post-secondary—

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

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, when your government passed the Endangered Species Act under another minister, you promised you would use the Crown Forest Sustainability Act as the regulatory tool when establishing habitat protection zones. Your government broke that promise.

Will you, as the new minister, attempt to re-establish credibility with the forestry industry by demonstrating good faith and doing what you said you would do in the first place: use the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and stop taking orders from special interests in Toronto and Brampton?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: This is a very important issue and it's something that I have been working on in the first two months of my mandate. Certainly the Endangered Species Act is a cornerstone of our government's mandate in the next couple of years. It makes Ontario a North American leader, and part of being a North American leader is consulting.

We've worked very hard with the forestry sector and our environmentalists. We've consulted all of the people in the north, and we continue to consult with them. I intend to be visiting the north in the next couple of months to ask them again how the Endangered Species Act can work better with their communities and to make sure that we find a balance on the legislation and economic development that happens in the north. Certainly it's something I'm very seized with, and we'll try and do more consultation with the forestry sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: In fact, you haven't spoken very much with the industry. The permitting system that you have decided to work with is not working and will never work.

Forestry operators in my riding are among the most committed when it comes to protecting our natural resources. They have made it clear that your permitting system is just a fancy way of saying no. Your regulations are not based on science, rather political science. This industry is in crisis. Is it not time for you to stand up for what is right, not just for what you believe is in your best political interest? Please, stand up and do what is right for this industry and all of Ontario.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I am pleased to stand up to defend the Endangered Species Act. Certainly our government voted in favour of it. It's my understanding you did not, so it's ironic that you would come back to us to challenge our position.

I've met with the forestry sector. I've met with people who care about the caribou. I've met with, and certainly intend to meet more with First Nations. We have a lot of stakeholders. This is too important an issue. We need to get it right. It's important that we meet with the forestry sector, and they're actually a very good resource. The plan they put together in their forest management plan is so good that there are a lot of components to the forest management act now that will help the Endangered Species Act. We intend to continue to work with them. They're great partners and stewards of the land.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Thursday's budget revealed that, next year, Ontario hospitals are going to be receiving less than the rate of inflation. They will be receiving a 1.5% increase to their base funding, which is about half of what hospital inflation is. It averages about 3%. Can the Premier tell Ontarians how he expects hospitals to maintain services without adequate funding?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy to have an opportunity to reply to this question.

Hospital funding in Ontario has increased from \$10.9 billion in 2003-04 to \$16.3 billion. That's almost a 50% increase. We are increasing funding for hospitals again this year. There will be a base increase of 1.5% but, overall, our funding to hospitals will continue to increase at well above the rate of inflation. We have budgeted a 4.7% increase in hospital funding.

The difference between 1.5% and 4.7%—and I do understand that this takes a little thinking about. I'll be happy to talk about that in the supplementary.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: In the last month, I have heard from countless residents of rural and northern Ontario as I travelled with the Ontario Health Coalition on their rural and northern tour. Residents in Welland, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Cobourg, Picton, St. Joseph Island, Desbarats and Thessalon are all saying the same thing: They are losing their health care services locally. It

seems very clear how hospitals are balancing their books. They are doing it on the backs of smaller northern and rural hospitals.

Is the minister intent on balancing her books by gutting small northern and rural hospitals?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Like the member opposite, we're very committed to continuing to improve health care for people right across the province, and that includes in the rural and northern parts of this great province.

We have established a panel, the northern and rural panel. That report is close to being ready to be released. I'm very excited about some of the opportunities that are available to us, some of the new tools that we have, including tools like telehealth.

Our commitment to all Ontarians is as strong as could be.

TOURISM AND CULTURE

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Tourism generates \$23 billion of our GDP, while culture accounts for nearly \$20 billion. As such, bringing the two ministries together is an important step in recognizing the potential growth and prosperity they can provide to Ontario. We know that these two industries are significant economic drivers and that to support the economy we need to grow them and move forward. We need to extend our efforts in working together. As a result, we will see all of Ontario benefit.

Minister, how will these two industries strengthen their partnership to further support the growth of Ontario's cultural attractions?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from Toronto Centre for his question.

Tourism and culture are two vital industries in Ontario. They are the economic driver for our economy. They are complementary to each other and they are most effective when they function as one.

I'll give you an example. The tourism industry greatly benefits from the investments we have made in attractions such as the AGO and the ROM. We have increased annual funding for the ROM by \$9 million, and \$10 million for the AGO. Such investments are working. ROM's attendance is on the rise, and just last week it celebrated its one millionth visitor for the current fiscal year.

We will continue to move forward to strengthen our cultural and tourism industries.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer.

A strong partnership is vital for growth. To go further, the two industries also need to work together to include Ontario's greatest asset—our diversity. It is an inherent part of who we are in Ontario, and it is also an important market. It brings significant benefits to all of us here in Ontario. We have attractive world-class facilities, collections and programs, but we need to go further to deliver new and dynamic programming that will be attractive to our whole population.

Again, what steps will the minister take to ensure that these cultural attractions are maximizing the diversity that the greater Toronto area offers?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member again for the question.

Diversity is a piece of Ontario and it is evident in our cultural attractions, whether it be the South Asian art gallery, the terracotta warriors from China or the Dead Sea scrolls. Cultural attractions like the ROM embody diversity as much as Ontario does. For a bright, vibrant future, it's important to understand and reflect on the past. Such history strengthens our knowledge about one another and Ontario's diversity.

We are fortunate to have vibrant cultural attractions that bring so much of the world to Ontario. There is always more that we can do. I believe our cultural attractions have the right vision and dedication to move us forward.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Premier, a question for clarification. During the throne speech, it was stated by the Lieutenant Governor, "That's why, starting this fall, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds will begin at schools across our province. This is the first program of its kind in North America."

Then, in a response to a point of order last Thursday, your House leader stated, "A number of district school boards in Ontario already offer full-day kindergarten programs—a number of our French boards, in particular."

Premier, who made the error: the Lieutenant Governor or your House leader?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Our government is committed to implementing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. I know that is something the member opposite and his leader call a "frill."

We are committed to building on the investments that we've made in elementary school, in this particular case. It is, as our House leader has indicated, a reality in some of our elementary schools in the province of Ontario, where parents have the option of having their children enrolled for a full day, every day. The commitment of our government is to ensure that all children who are four and five years old have the opportunity for full-day learning when our program is fully implemented. That is the reality. We do have full-day kindergarten in place in some locations—

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The question is not so much of the program, it's the form in which it's moving forward. I'll quote again. According to the Lieutenant Governor, "That's why, starting this fall, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds will begin at schools across our province. This is the first program of its kind in North America."

The House leader said we had it already, and the Lieutenant Governor says we're going to bring this forward. Which is it, Minister? It's in place or it's not in

place. Nobody is questioning if there is a program or the contents of the program by which the statements were made.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think what people in the province of Ontario, particularly parents, want to know about is the commitment of this government to provide full-day learning for all students in the province of Ontario. That is, in fact, the commitment that we have made. We have said to the people that we believe in the value of investing in full-day learning for all students in the province. We are beginning that process this fall, and it will be fully implemented by 2015-16.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been asking for questions on the budget, and as soon as this government brings in a budget, we'll be asking questions—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you very much. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA-CUBA RELATIONS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I rise in the House today to recognize two Cuban representatives, Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolono, ambassador of Cuba in Canada, and Jorge Soberón, Cuban Consul General in Toronto, on the special occasion of the 65th anniversary of Canada-Cuban bilateral diplomatic relations.

Canada has always enjoyed consistently cordial relations with Cuba. Cuba was the first country in the Caribbean selected by Canada for a diplomatic mission, and together with Mexico we were the only ones to maintain continuous diplomatic relations following the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Our official diplomatic relations were established in 1945, but Canada-Cuba relations can actually be traced back to the 18th century when the Atlantic provinces began trading codfish for rum and sugar.

Today, the island continues to be one of the top travel destinations for Canadians. In fact, nearly 35% of all visitors to Cuba are Canadians.

Trade is always increasing and is now estimated at about \$1.66 billion.

One of the most successful Canadian-inspired events is the annual Terry Fox run in Cuba, now the largest in the world outside of Canada.

Knowledge of Canada's history, geography, policies and programs is also promoted through Canadian studies centres located in six universities across Cuba.

Canada supports a future for Cuba that fully embraces the fundamental values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

I'm sure all of you will join me in saying, "Viva Cuba," and may we enjoy many more years of prosperous relations with our Cuban friends.

OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I want to take us back about a month and a half or so to those great, outstanding 2010 Vancouver Olympics. I want to pay tribute, as many have, to participants in those Olympic Games.

One that you might not know of but one that was very important is a gentleman from Essex, Ontario, in my riding, by the name of Dan O'Halloran. Those who follow hockey will know that Dan O'Halloran is a 15-year veteran referee in the NHL. Dan was refereeing that game where we all stopped and our hearts stopped for 24 seconds, and then it went on and we won the game. Just recognizing the officials, I think, is important because Dan was instrumental in keeping that game to be one of the great games in history, I'm sure. Congratulations to Dan.

I also want to mention a young lady who played on the women's championship gold medal team for the second gold medal, Meghan Agosta. She comes from the little hamlet of Ruthven in the town of Kingsville in my riding. She scored nine goals and six assists during the Olympic Games, and she was the most valuable player. I want to send out personal congratulations and those from her friends in our riding of Essex on a great games, Meghan. Congratulations. We love you and we support you. You are a great athlete.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Mr. John O'Toole: Over a month ago, I was pleased to welcome constituent Roland Goreski to the Legislature, along with members of the Ontario Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association and the Ontario Private Campground Association. At that time, MPPs were briefed and advised that the RV industry needs the help of this government to resolve conflicting rules about towing recreational vehicles. These conflicts have to do with whether someone driving a vehicle with a trailer needs a G or an A licence.

The RV industry is also seeking a change in the way the vehicle identification number, VIN, on motorized vehicles is displayed and registered. They're often registered on the chassis versus the coach VIN. It's an interesting challenge.

The Ontario Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association has more than 225 members in Ontario. The RV industry contributes about half a billion dollars to the Ontario economy every year. Frankly, I'm disappointed to learn that the industry has been disappointed, as they have been waiting since 2005 to resolve these concerns. This is a delay of four years.

This government's inaction means a lack of sales because of consumers' hesitation in purchasing RVs, and I urge the Ministry of Transportation to end this delay immediately. Please remove these issues and help the industry build a stronger Ontario.

There are other issues with the campground association as well, and I'd urge the government to work with

them. Tourism is very important to Ontario; indeed, to my riding.

HOCKEY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: During hockey season, the scene is always the same in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex: lots of families supporting their youngsters at the local hockey arena; the walls of all the areas are adorned with banners of past victories and championships; all levels of hockey are represented, both boys and girls; and the boards around the ice pads are covered with ads from local businesses and service clubs, all financially supporting the great Canadian sport. So it was in Mount Brydges last Friday night, as the Mount Brydges Cougars skated out to meet the Port Colborne Sailors in the final game of the Novice A OMHA West B divisional championships.

The groups and the crowds in the bleachers had swelled to include not only parents but grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends. The game itself moved along quickly, and it was obvious that these young people had matured greatly since the beginning of the season. Great sportsmanship was the order of the evening, as evidenced by the supporters. All cheered enthusiastically for both sides. Coach Brian Griffiths commented on the hospitality that the Mount Brydges team had enjoyed while in Port Colborne.

I want to thank the coaches and trainers who, by their example, are teaching our children both the skills and the etiquette of this great sport. Along with Coach Griffiths is coach Terry Madill, trainers Roy Ireland and Peter Bauer. And yes, Peter's son also plays on the team, and his name is Johnny Bauer.

Mount Brydges' novice team are now the OMHA champs, but it would be fair to say that both sides are winners because of the great supporters and the coaches they have.

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: People in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke are angered and incensed that the Premier and the Liberal government would decide that they are going to show such disrespect for taxpayers' money—sticking to their DNA—that they would rather spend it than defend it and fork out \$25 million to HST tax collectors in a severance package for jobs they're not losing. It goes completely against the spirit of any belief of what severance is. Severance is something that is there to pad the difficulties faced in the transition between one source of employment and another. It is not a bonus.

I know that the Premier wants to talk about honouring agreements. This is the same Premier who stood up in front of television cameras and signed the taxpayers' protection pledge with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation before being elected Premier in 2003 and immediately broke that promise on being elected. So he cannot play that game with us.

People know that severance is there to protect people when they lose their jobs, not to be a bonus when they don't lose them. I'm going to say to the folks across the way that I'd like to see how you try to sell this piece of junk to your constituents in all your ridings, and try to convince them that \$25 million of their money being put into the HST tax collectors' pockets is good public policy. Shame on you, every one of you, if—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

1310

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Howard Hampton: Over the last couple of days, members of the government have been patting themselves on the back in northern Ontario because they believe that they are implementing a reduced industrial hydro rate. I'm here today to ensure that people know what is actually going on.

First, what the government announced is a temporary measure that will last for only three years. Anybody who operates a paper mill or a pulp mill, or, as Xstrata does, a metallurgical facility, knows that this is not going to help them. Three years from now, when this proposed industrial hydro rate ends, their hydro bills will be higher than ever. So temporary measures will not work.

Second, this is an issue which has been growing since 2005. When the government introduced Bill 100, which made it clear it was going to drive industrial hydro rates through the roof, paper mills and pulp mills came here and said, "Don't do this. This will force us to close."

If the government had implemented this in 2005 or 2006, it might have made a difference, but now it is too little, too late. Hydro bills have already gone up by 40% or 50%, and proposing to freeze them where they are now is simply not good enough. It will not restore mill jobs that have been lost and destroyed in communities—

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

The member from Don Valley East on a point of order.

Mr. David Caplan: Speaker, would it be a point of order if I asked the House to welcome the students from Victoria Park secondary school who are in the gallery here today?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, it's not a point of order, but we would like to welcome the students today.

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2010

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I rise today to extend my most sincere congratulations to the town of Dundas in my riding for qualifying for the top five in Kraft Canada and CBC's Hockeyville 2010 contest.

The latest hockey cut was this past Saturday, and I'm thrilled that Dundas sailed through and is now the only Ontario town heading for the big win. The top prize for the contest includes hosting an NHL pre-season game in

the local community, a CBC Hockey Night in Canada broadcast and \$100,000 in arena upgrades from Kraft.

There's nothing like hockey to bring out the community spirit in Canadians. The J.L. Grightmire Market Street Arena in Dundas is the perfect venue, and you'll find no greater hockey spirit than in the residents of Dundas.

Dundas is indeed Hockeyville, as exemplified by the Dundas Real McCoys, who last Friday evening were crowned major league hockey's senior AAA champions. Congratulations to Donnie Robertson and the entire team. Congratulations also to Barry Forth and his entire Gotta Be Dundas team.

Hockeyville voting is now on and will go to Wednesday. People can vote by email, text message or on a 1-866 number. That number is 1-866-533-8066, and I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to get behind this great Ontario town. I'll be sending a memo out with voting instructions later this afternoon.

CANADA-CUBA RELATIONS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This morning I woke up to the rhythm and sounds of Cuban music. I thought, "How appropriate," because today, as you all know, we are celebrating the 65th anniversary of Cuba-Canada bilateral and trade relations.

What a day it really is. As you know, the interest in Cuba is great, even in this Legislature. When I called the first meeting of the Canada-Cuba parliamentary association, there were 22 members of provincial Parliament who showed some interest in the country called Cuba. How tremendous. Did you know that this year, Cuba is expecting one million Canadians to visit that island?

As we celebrate the 65th anniversary today, we know that while these diplomatic relations were formally established in the year 1945, it is not a coincidence that on such an early date as 1903, a commercial office of the Republic of Cuba was established in Nova Scotia to diversify the existing trade of codfish for Cuban rum and sugar. In the course of the years, those initial exchanges were extended from the Maritimes all along the huge Canadian territory. Nowadays, the province of Ontario has become the venue of most of the companies and entrepreneurs currently involved in business in Cuba. So I say to Cuba and Canada: Viva Cuba and viva Canada.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm proud to support our government's innovative vision on the province that was outlined in last week's budget and previously the throne speech.

Our government is moving forward with its five-year plan to open Ontario to new jobs and growth while outlining measures to help eliminate the deficit caused by the global recession.

Expanding on initiatives announced recently, the budget is proposing investments that will help 20,000

more students to go to college and university this September—that will be helpful to my riding—and create jobs and boost economic growth in northern Ontario.

Open Ontario builds on progress made over the past six years to support job creation and enhance the programs and services, including education, health care and skills training, that Ontarians value.

The 2010 budget includes measures to manage expenditures, including compensation restraint and making government programs more efficient. It lays out a realistic and responsible plan to cut the deficit in half in five years and eliminate it in eight.

Our Open Ontario plan will create new opportunities for jobs and economic growth, especially in the Green Energy Act. The 2010 budget moves that plan forward and protects the progress Ontarians have made in our schools and hospitals as we eliminate the deficit caused by that global recession.

One of the other points that needs to be made clearly here is that most fair-minded people understand the difficulties that all of us have gone through through the global recession, and we have a plan to recover.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Bisson assumes ballot item 15, Ms. Horwath assumes ballot item 22, Ms. DiNovo assumes ballot item 25 and Mr. Kormos assumes ballot item 75.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 63(c), the supplementary estimates, 2009-10, of the Ministry of Finance before the Standing Committee on Estimates are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported and received by the House.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on the agency review of the Ontario Securities Commission from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, it is a pleasure to table this report on our review of an important agency of the province, the Ontario Securities Commission.

In the minds of most Ontarians, the commission is the public's guardian in the capital markets. In light of recent events, we believe it would be useful for the commission to reassess the way in which it exercises its public interest jurisdictions.

Among other subjects dealt with, our committee's recommendations include: creation of a dedicated capital markets crime unit; establishment by the Ministry of Finance of an industry-funded compensation fund; establishment by the OSC of an investor advisory body; creation of an investor representative on the OSC's board of directors; and launching of a formal review of democracy in corporate governance in Ontario.

Finally, we note that Ontario, as the Canadian jurisdiction with the largest capital market and the most influential securities regulator, has long supported the concept of a national regulator.

We recommend that the OSC and the province continue to work with other levels of government, regulators and stakeholders towards the implementation of a national securities regulator.

Our committee expresses great appreciation to the officials and staff of the Ontario Securities Commission and to all witnesses who appeared before us during our public hearings or who made written submissions.

I would like to thank all committee members for their contributions throughout the course of the review process, as well as legislative staff Douglas Arnott, the clerk of the committee, and Andrew McNaught, the research officer.

I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

1320

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SUPPLY ACT, 2010

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2010

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010/Projet de loi 17, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2010.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I have no statement at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT
(LOCAL DEMOCRACY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (DÉMOCRATIE
ET RESPONSABILISATION LOCALES)

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide for the election of the head and the members of upper-tier municipal councils / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités afin de prévoir l'élection du président et des membres du conseil des municipalités de palier supérieur.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. David Caplan: I have a very short statement. I was surprised to discover this—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Read the explanatory note, please.

Mr. David Caplan: Okay. The Municipal Act, 2001, shall be amended, if this bill is passed, to provide that the head of any upper-tier council and the members of any upper-tier council shall be elected. I hope to have the support of all members of this House.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the consideration of concurrence in supply.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, supplementaries only, and order G17, second reading of Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, shall be called concurrently; and

That, when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and

That two hours be allotted to the debate, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance and to dispose of all remaining stages of Bill 17; and

That any required divisions on the order for concurrence in supply or on the motion for second reading of Bill 17 shall be deferred to deferred votes, such votes to be taken in succession with one five-minute bell.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

AIDE FINANCIÈRE AUX ÉTUDIANTS

Hon. John Milloy: Ontario offers one of the most generous financial student assistance programs in Canada. Over the last five years, our government has invested \$1.5 billion in financial support for students. Today, the government is moving forward with a plan to expand student aid even further and to modernize the Ontario student assistance program to meet the needs of today's students.

Cela fait partie de notre plan Ontario ouvert sur le monde, pour créer de nouvelles occasions d'emplois et de croissance. Nous voulons que les étudiants se concentrent sur leurs études et non pas sur la façon dont ils vont payer leurs provisions ou leur loyer.

So we're allowing students to keep more of the money they earn from part-time jobs while they are in school by boosting weekly loan maximums and doubling the student income exemption.

We're also going to provide students with more help in repaying their Ontario student loans by covering interest on those loans for the first six months after they graduate, and we will join the federal repayment assistance program.

Under our program, no graduate will be asked to pay more than 20% of their family income toward their loans, and after 15 years, any remaining student loan debt will be forgiven. To help married students, we are reducing by 10% the share of income that spouses are required to contribute to their partner's education

We are also doubling the OSAP vehicle exemption for students who are married or have dependent children. This means that vehicles worth up to \$10,000 will not affect students' OSAP assessments.

The improvements also include more financial assistance for books, supplies and equipment. We are also creating 1,000 new scholarships for graduate students and a new \$500 grant for part-time students.

When it comes to tuition, our government wants to do whatever it can to make sure it remains as affordable as possible for students. This is why we are going to continue to limit tuition fee increases to an average of 5% a year for the next two years, continuing the framework that has been in place for the past three years. We are also requiring colleges and universities to contribute 10% of the additional revenue from any tuition increases to

bursaries and other student assistance programs that provide financial aid to students most in need.

The changes we are making to OSAP are significant and will make a real difference in the lives of Ontario's students. The majority of these changes are taking place this fiscal year. We are improving student aid to help more students attend college and university.

Et comme un plus grand nombre d'Ontariens poursuivent des études postsecondaires, nous créons davantage d'occasions d'emploi et de croissance afin que nous soyons concurrentiels sur le marché mondial.

Grâce à des études supérieures, ils pourront atteindre leur plein potentiel et nous aider à ouvrir l'Ontario sur le monde et sur les marchés mondiaux, et à assurer notre prospérité future.

After all, today's students are the builders, dreamers and innovators who will lead Ontario into the future. They will help us build a stronger Ontario.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: In response to the minister's announcement today, I can't see how any student in this province could see today's announcement by the minister as good news.

The minister just said he is going to do two things for Ontario's students: He's allowing them to take on more debt, and he's hiking tuition fees by 10% over the next two years. How anyone can think this is good news, or a good-news story for students, is beyond me.

It's painful how obvious this scheme is—and I can't be clearer—to the students watching. The Liberals are going to raise student tuition, and they're going to allow students to mortgage their future even further to pay for the Liberal tuition hikes.

Ontario already has the highest tuition in Canada, and now the Liberals are announcing that they're going to hike it even higher, despite the fact that Premier McGuinty, in 2003 and 2007, said he would raise tuition so that we would be in the middle of the pack in Canada, and not continue to have the highest tuition in Canada.

Both the Canadian Federation of Students and the Ontario undergraduate student association have told me, and publicly said, that had we stuck to the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves tuition plan, tuitions would be significantly lower today than they are under the Liberal government. Since the start of the Reaching Higher plan, the Liberals have hiked tuition by 5% year after year, and now they're announcing that they're going to keep on raising it.

OSAP loans aren't free money. It's student debt that students have to repay with significant interest. Increasing weekly loan limits from \$140 to \$150 simply means that students are going to take on \$10 more debt each week. Doubling the exemption on in-study income from \$50 to \$103 per week just means that students are going to take on another \$53 in debt each week. Tying the maximum assessment for textbooks and supplies to the rate of inflation means that student debt for textbooks will rise again and again at the rate of inflation.

This isn't a generous plan for students. The Liberals have no option than to do this, because if they're going to raise your tuition by 10% over the next two years, they obviously have to adjust the rules and allow you to take on more debt, as announced today.

This isn't an announcement about lower tuition fees or lower student debt; it's exactly the opposite. And only a Liberal government would have the gall to say that it's good news for students. It's paying more to get less from the Ontario Liberals.

1330

Ontario class sizes, at the post-secondary level, are already the highest in Canada. Because of the quadruple cohort this year of students entering the system, class sizes are about to get even bigger. We've got the unemployed entering, we've got international students—an announcement by the Premier that he wants more international students—we've got people in the Second Career program and the regular high school grads. We haven't seen this sort of pressure on the system in over 30 years.

What do larger class sizes mean? Well, it brings the quality of education down. With this hike in tuition, do students get more student-faculty engagement? No. They're actually going to get less. The student-to-faculty ratio at comparable schools in the United States is 13.7 to one; in Ontario, it's 22.3 students to one faculty member. This affects quality.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement, when it comes to enriching educational experiences, active and collaborative learning, and student-to-faculty interactions, our students are less positive about their experiences. In these three factors, our students are in the bottom third of the ratings in North America. As Roger Martin's task force on competitiveness, productivity and economic progress said, "It is possible that in gradually increasing student-teacher ratio over time, we have failed to recognize the impact on the student experience. Parents of today's university students, who themselves attended an Ontario university a generation ago, probably would not recognize the crowded lecture halls experienced by their children."

I'll add one further point. To those students dismayed by today's announcements, let me tell you, it doesn't have to be this way. Through freedom of information, we know that the Higher Education Quality Council has been squandering about \$8 million. This is a council that the Liberals brought back into existence. There was no call for it in my 20 years. It's \$8 million. They've been spending wildly on hospitality: on meals, on eating their choice—rather than Kraft dinner or hot dogs, as students do. Their choice at the council seems to be to eat at the Westin Harbour Castle or the Fairmont Royal York hotel, rather than living in a basement apartment or a house with eight roommates like many students do. Just remember that we've discovered the Liberals' Higher Education Quality Council is staying at the Sutton Place and in luxury condominiums.

So I say to the students today, this isn't a good-news announcement. The Liberals promised a lot more, and

they're not delivering on the promises they made to the students of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to continue with the comments made by the member from Simcoe–Grey, and also to deflate the enthusiasm of the minister, because he's always so proud of the very little he does, but he continues with the tradition of helping Ontario students by giving with one hand and taking with the other. That's what he does and his government does on a regular basis.

A little history: Here's the problem of this government. We are number 10—last, dead last—in the country in per capita funding. We have been impoverished by this government and others before them in terms of what—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm going to leave the Tories alone for a while, because I've got so much time to waste with the Liberals—you're quite right. You're quite right. Why go back?

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Going back to the NDP, when students paid 23% of their own way for education—today, under the Liberals, it's 45% and rising every year. Let's go back to the NDP, Mr. Milloy, and see where we are at—the highest student debt in the country, literally. The average debt is \$23,000 a year. This is if you're in the humanities program. If you're in law, medicine or engineering, you're paying anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000 on tuition fees alone, let alone having to go from one city to another and having to pay rent; let alone having to pay for the books that Mr. Milloy is going to help out with, with a couple of extra bucks, he claims. You have impoverished students unlike never before. What are you proud of? I don't get it.

Hon. John Milloy: One hundred and forty thousand more.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: One hundred and forty thousand more what? One hundred and forty thousand more what, Milloy? There is no record here to be proud of. That's my point. The quality of our post-secondary education system has been on the decline for a long time.

We are hiring in our colleges and universities, Mr. Milloy, and you know—you must know—we're hiring more and more part-time professors than ever before. We used to have full-time professors who had the time to be able to talk to students. They no longer have the time. Do you know why, Milloy? Because most of your hires are part-time contract workers. They go from one job to the other. They're not there to be able to work with students anymore. Colleges and universities keep hiring on a part-time basis to make ends meet. Universities used to invest a couple of dollars, and they've gone bust in the last year. They've got no more money to spare, assuming they had some money to spare. But there's none left. The cupboards are dry.

We are dead last in per capita funding—dead last. Student debt load is increasing by the year. Tuition fees under his watch have been going up for the last four years, 5% every year—cumulative, like 5% one year, and

you add another 5% on top. Do you get my point? It's 20% accumulated on itself. Then the government says, "Oh, but"—wait for this—"we're capping tuition fees"—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, at 5%.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —“at 5%.” Thanks a lot, Minister Milloy. How does that help students, with a 5% cap at a time when the economy has gone bust and students haven't been working? They're not looking forward to great jobs because so many are unemployed; 12% of students are unemployed. What do they have to look forward to except paying more and more debt from now to the end of their lives? That's what you're leaving them; that's the legacy you're leaving them.

And by the way, thank you, Mr. Milloy, for the few extra dollars you're giving to the part-time students. Part-time students have access to nothing. Part-time students who take three courses have, under his watch, been paying the full load of tuition fees, and now he says, "But we're going to give them a few extra dollars." What does it say here? "Introducing a new grant for part-time students." Thanks a lot, Minister Milloy, for the little help. They've got no money. They get what? Part-time students get whacked by paying full-time fees, and lo and behold, he's going to help them by introducing a new grant so they'll be able to get a few pennies to help them out a little bit. Thank you very much.

There is very little that is good or positive in this announcement. You have become the poor province of Canada, a province that used to be so wealthy and so proud. You have nothing any longer to be able to leave—

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

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: "Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Snigdha—I don’t think I got the name right.

1340

OSTOMY SUPPLIES

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

“Whereas there are thousands of citizens, young and old, living with an ostomy across Ontario, many of whom are on a fixed income; and

“Whereas an ostomy ... always improves the quality of life for the patient by correcting the previous serious or debilitating condition; and

“Whereas the assistive devices program currently only provides a \$600 grant annually for ostomy supplies for each ostomy a patient has, which in most cases is merely a third of the annual costs; and

“Whereas the assistive devices program currently will not cover supplies for persons with a temporary ostomy;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to increase funding to those on a fixed income who must purchase ostomy supplies in order to survive.”

There are 3,246 signatures, and I affix my signature as well.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Michael Prue: I’ve received a petition from the good people of Beaches–East York that reads as follows:

“Whereas, in the 2006 budget, the McGuinty government allocated \$63.5 million for child care for each of the

next four years. Each year since, \$63.5 million went to support our vital child care services;

“Whereas, if the province does not continue this funding in the 2010 provincial budget, municipalities will have no option but to make dramatic cuts to child care subsidies, destabilizing the entire system;

“Therefore, be it resolved that in the 2010 budget we call on Premier McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan to:

“(1) Ensure the province provides sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of child care service, and recognize cost-of-living and other legitimate increases in operating costs; and

“(2) Provide all necessary tools to support the transition to an early learning program, including base funding for child care programs to support operations and wages comparable to the full-day learning program, in order to ensure the child care system remains stable and sustainable.”

I am in agreement and will affix my signature thereto.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax”—otherwise known as the HST—“represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“This new tax, which we are calling the DST ... will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including”—but not excepting—“electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; newspapers, magazines; Internet and cable; home renovations; heating; air-conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales;” also, rent may go up—“minor hockey registration fees will increase; and green fees and gym fees...;

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

“That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I agree with this and I affix my signature.

CHILD CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Toronto, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas, in the 2006 budget, the McGuinty government allocated \$63.5 million for child care for each of the next four years. Each year since, \$63.5 million went to support our vital child care services;

“Whereas, if the province” of Ontario “does not continue this funding in the 2010 provincial budget, municipalities will have no option but to make dramatic cuts to child care subsidies, destabilizing the entire system....”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) Ensure the province provides sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of child care service, and recognize cost-of-living and other legitimate increases in operating costs; and

“(2) Provide all necessary tools to support the transition to an early learning program, including base funding for child care programs to support operations and wages comparable to the full-day learning program, in order to ensure the child care system remains stable and sustainable.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks' table with page George.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: I table this petition on behalf of my colleague from Simcoe–Grey, although it could apply to everywhere across this great province.

“Whereas the hard-working residents in Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day;” and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air-conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

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

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

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

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it to the table with Erin.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

“Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we’re not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn’t found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

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

“That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area.”

I want to thank Marian Curry from Elmvale for sending this petition to me, and I will sign it.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition that I would like to read to the Legislature. It concerns an issue that my colleague the member for Halton has raised in the House on many occasions. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

“Whereas the Oakville-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

“Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

“Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

“Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current planned location on lands owned by the Ford Motor Co. on Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas.”

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“This new tax, which we are calling the DST ... will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including: electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; magazines; Internet; home renovations; heating; air-conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales ...; minor hockey registration fees ...; and green fees and gym fees will also be taxed;

1350

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

“That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I certainly agree with it, will affix my signature and give it to page Snigdha.

TAXATION

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: “Whereas the hard-working residents of Carleton–Mississippi Mills do not want a harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air-conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning....;”

It goes on and on, so I’ll cut it short, Mr. Speaker. There’s a lot of HST on a lot of things that will affect the province’s “seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

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

I agree with that.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from HOOPP and OPTrust to OMERS, meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of continuous service; and

“Whereas when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

“Whereas the government’s own Expert Commission on Pensions has recommended that the government move swiftly to address this issue; and

“Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

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

“That Premier McGuinty support Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately and ensure that any legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the 1990s and beyond to transfer their pensions from HOOPP and OPTrust to OMERS.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2010, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I would like to move the following: That the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 22, 2010, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following:

“Supports the principle that if you do not lose your job, you do not get severance; and

“Cannot support Premier Dalton McGuinty’s decision to pay six-month severance packages, worth as much as \$45,000 each, to more than 1,250 HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

“Strongly opposes this government for failing to address any uncertainty in the provisions the McGuinty Liberals negotiated and ratified in the collective bargaining agreements it concluded in 2006 and 2009; the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement; the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009; and the human resource agreement for the transfer of staff from the province of Ontario to the Canada Revenue Agency, resulting in severance payments to HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

“Failing to enact measures in the budget that amend the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009, including schedule R, section 50 and the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement, including part XI and Annex C, ratified and confirmed thereto;

“Concludes that if the McGuinty Liberal government is incapable of protecting the interests of Ontario families

when it comes to so-called severance payments to HST tax collectors, then it cannot be trusted with the stewardship of the provincial finances.”

Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Hudak has moved:

“That the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 22, 2010, ‘that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,’ be amended by deleting the words following ‘that this House’ and adding thereto the following:

“Supports the principle that if you do not lose your job, you do not get severance; and

“Cannot support Premier Dalton McGuinty’s decision to pay six-month severance packages, worth as much as \$45,000 each, to more than 1,250 HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

“Strongly opposes this government for failing to address any uncertainty in the provisions the McGuinty Liberals negotiated and ratified in the collective bargaining agreements it concluded in 2006 and 2009; the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement; the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009; and the human resource agreement for the transfer of staff from the province of Ontario to the Canada Revenue Agency, resulting in severance payments to HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

“Failing to enact measures in the budget that amend the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009, including schedule R, section 50 and the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement, including part XI and Annex C, ratified and confirmed thereto;

“Concludes that if the McGuinty Liberal government is incapable of protecting the interests of Ontario families when it comes to so-called severance payments to HST tax collectors, then it cannot be trusted with the stewardship of the provincial finances.”

“Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House.”

Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to begin the Ontario PC caucus’s official response to the 2010 budget. Our amendment to the budget motion that you just read in is in keeping with our commitment to use all of the legislative tools at our disposal to put a stop to the inexcusable payout of \$25 million in severance to HST tax collectors who will not miss a single day on the job. We will also table an amendment to the budget bill itself, where we hope that all parties will join us in addressing this problem.

Let me put this very clearly: It is the position of the Ontario PC caucus, plainly for everybody across the aisle and watching at home, that if you don’t lose your job, you don’t get severance from the taxpayers. It is as simple as that. The \$25 million in severance to HST tax collectors is a symbolic payout, part of a larger problem

we see in the approach of this budget and the approach of the McGuinty government as a whole. It is symbolic of an approach to government where there is one rule for Liberal friends and insiders and one rule for everybody else, and it is symbolic of an approach to government where promises of action to rein in spending just cannot be taken seriously.

With that said, let me say this: On at least one point, I am in fact in agreement with the Minister of Finance. We agree that Ontario is not alone. The entire world has indeed been hit by a significant recession, and the problems of rising job losses and mounting deficits did not just hit Ontario. But that’s where the consensus ends. This entire budget, and indeed every single word out of the finance minister’s mouth to date, seems to be, in so many words, “It’s not my fault.”

1400

But that’s typical of the style of leadership we’ve come to expect from the McGuinty government. They will point fingers at everyone else every time, blame everyone else every time they can, but they never take responsibilities themselves. That invites some very serious questions and some very serious comparisons.

The recession hit everybody hard, but it hit Ontario harder still. While every jurisdiction in Canada lost some jobs, Ontario lost over half of the entire country’s. Over half of the jobs lost in this great nation fell upon families here in the province of Ontario.

Every province outside of Saskatchewan went into deficit, but sadly, Ontario’s deficit is now greater than all of the other provinces’ combined.

While every province took an economic hit during the recession, only the McGuinty government took Ontario from have to have-not status. In fact, Ontario has a lower standard of living than floundering Michigan; we have higher unemployment than bankrupt Greece.

The comparisons: Ontario fell harder, we fell faster and we fell sooner than other provinces during the recession.

We learned on Thursday, in the finance minister’s speech, that it will take us at least eight years to dig us out of the deficit supposedly brought on—

Mrs. Christine Elliott: If we’re lucky.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —by a two-year slump—as my colleague says, if we’re lucky.

Before we have a serious conversation about how to pull ourselves into a recovery, we first have to ask ourselves: Why is this the case, that Ontario has fallen so far under the McGuinty government? As my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton put it, how did we get here?

Well, the facts are clear. Not very long ago, Ontario offered opportunity for all and security for all: a province we all knew had the best schools, the best hospitals, the best roads, the best jobs in all of Canada. Young people from other provinces, from St. John’s, Newfoundland, to Victoria, BC, came to Ontario to find a good job, to build a family, to prepare for the future. Immigrants from around the world, like my own family, chose to immigrate to Ontario because they believed, if they worked hard and

played by the rules, they would provide a better future for their children and their grandchildren.

Ontario was always Canada's manufacturing hub, its agricultural heartland, its cultural centre, and its financial capital. Ontario contributed to Canada, Ontario defined Canada, and Ontario led Canada.

But for Ontario to fall so far and so fast, for Ontario to sink to have-not status under one single Premier, simply cannot be blamed on a recession.

Just look to other places, other provinces, other states, other leaders, and ask a very simple question: Just how does Ontario now compare on taxes, on spending, on deficits, on red tape and regulations, and, most of all, on jobs?

What we see is that well before this recession hit, Ontario was already falling behind, and other jurisdictions were looking and planning ahead. They were making better decisions that looked to the future. They were doing more, and now they're doing better.

Jurisdictions like British Columbia acted to aggressively lower their regulatory burden on families and on small businesses. But in Ontario, the McGuinty government imposed burdensome regulation after burdensome regulation, one red tape initiative after another. They want to regulate what we put on our lawns, the kinds of dogs we're allowed to own, the kinds of bags that a grocery store can use. You wonder where their priorities are.

The federal government acted to encourage trade and investment from all sources. But under Dalton McGuinty, the favourite approach has been one-offs and massive corporate subsidies to foreign multinationals such as Korea-based Samsung or France-based Ubisoft.

Sometimes you hear people who know the Premier say he's is a well-meaning man. They say, "He does his best." They say that Premier McGuinty shows up for work every day. But I am the son of two teachers, and I learned from them that "A" does not stand for attendance. Showing up is not good enough. You need to make the right decisions and set the right priorities, because we believe that Ontario can lead again. So I will say to the Premier and I will say to his finance minister that no, you didn't cause the flood but you did nothing to waterproof the basement, and today Ontario families are paying the price of six years of squandered opportunities.

That brings us to the 2010 budget. Last week, in his budget, Dalton McGuinty had the singular and golden opportunity to learn from the past, to change direction and provide the bold leadership that Ontario families desperately need. Sadly, he failed to deliver. That budget was a rare window of opportunity to provide a real plan that will once again make our province the best place in the world to invest, to start a business, to start a family, to create jobs again.

Last Thursday, we did not see that plan. And while we see economies in North America and right around the world recovering and adding jobs, Ontario is being left farther and farther behind. Just as we were ill-prepared to weather the storm of the economic crisis, this budget

revealed that there is no plan to capitalize on opportunities as the global economy recovers.

Let me share a couple of numbers that help prove this point from the recent Ontario budget. It is symbolic and fitting that it is only in the very last chapter of its thick budget that the McGuinty government finally gets around to talking about deficit and the debt. On the second-last page of that final chapter, on the second-last page of the entire provincial budget, we find the shocking admission that Dalton McGuinty is on course to double Ontario's debt by 2012-13. In one term alone, Dalton McGuinty will add as much provincial debt as all of the other Premiers from Confederation forward combined.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Hard to imagine.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague says that it's hard to imagine. So how did it come to this? Frankly, only a Dalton McGuinty Liberal would say that a \$21-billion deficit, a deficit 60% larger than expected, a deficit larger than all the other provinces combined, is some kind of accomplishment. Quite the opposite: This government is mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren, and the Ontario PC caucus will fight that every step of the way.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I invite my colleague across the way to look to page 71, where the Ontario government even tries to take credit for a smaller-than-expected number of H1N1 cases as part of their deficit reduction plan; that's about what it amounted to.

We're certainly pleased that the pandemic ended up not being as bad as originally feared, but it is sad that the best this government can come up with for savings, the best idea they had to control their runaway spending, is hoping that fewer people would come up with the flu.

1410

The deficit and debt should gravely concern every Ontario family who cares about better hospitals, who cares about better classroom education, who cares about our police or better roads and better jobs in Ontario, because the single biggest threat to the services that parents rely on every day is Dalton McGuinty's massive debt, and the debt interest will take money away from crucial front-line services.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague said that it's going from \$10 billion in debt interest payments to \$16 billion, money that could have gone to hire more nurses, money that could have gone to bringing more doctors to the province of Ontario, money to help our students achieve, particularly special-needs children who can't get the help, and money to move towards a balanced budget. This is the failure of the McGuinty government, to take that money out of priority front-line services and sock it away to increasing interest on the debt.

We all know that as interest rates go up, as they inevitably will, this burden will get heavier and heavier still. As we've shown, this deficit and debt cannot simply be shrugged off and blamed on the recession. While other provinces pull themselves into a recovery, Ontario's

unfortunate plunge into have-not status has accelerated. Remember November 2008. November 2008 was the month that Newfoundland pushed itself into have status while Ontario, for the first time in Confederation, became a have-not province with its hand out to the federal government for equalization payments. Where once Ontario was proud to lend a hand to our friends on the east coast, today Newfoundland is actually financing and supporting spending in the province of Ontario.

One of the original purposes of equalization was to have the richer provinces share their wealth with the rest of the country. As a leader in Confederation, Ontario had always played that role. How is it that not only is Ontario a have-not province, we are actually sinking deeper and falling further behind? The amount of money Ontario receives in equalization handouts from other provinces now will nearly triple to almost \$1 billion in all. If we stay on this course, pretty soon Newfoundland and the other have provinces will be so far ahead that Ontario will only see them in the distance. It's shocking: Despite this occurring in November 2008, we have yet to see any schedule, any plan, any timetable to get Ontario off of Canada's welfare rolls.

To Dalton McGuinty, I say your government's performance and your budget are just not good enough, given the critical state of Ontario's economy. While families fight to make ends meet, taxes and fees, including the HST, continue to erode the household budget. While Ontario businesses struggle, corporate subsidies are shipping Ontario jobs and investment to Korea and to France. And while health care costs continue to escalate, we continue to see precious dollars squandered on Liberal insiders and consultants at eHealth and the LHINs at a time when that money is desperately in need for front-line care. This is not acceptable to me; it's not acceptable to Ontario families; it's not acceptable to the Ontario PC caucus. We need a change in direction and we need it now. Instead of the Liberal plan of doubling the debt and runaway spending, the Ontario PC caucus puts a top priority on jobs and the economy so Ontario can lead again.

Towards that end, the Ontario PC caucus put out 10 good ideas to take Ontario down an entirely different path than the one we're on today. We've asked Dalton McGuinty to implement our affordable, realistic plan to help stimulate the economy and to help create jobs in our province today. These ideas can be found at our website, 10for2010.ca

Let me give the Premier some examples. We need to make it more affordable for Ontario businesses, particularly small business owners, to hire that extra employee, to create that extra job, and that's why we've called for a payroll tax holiday to encourage new hires and eliminate job-killing red tape and regulation, to help our businesses do what they do best: to hire, to invest, to grow their businesses and create jobs in Ontario once again.

We want to put that Canadian dream of home ownership in the reach of more young Ontario families, and along that way, to create more jobs in the construction

sector, which will be so important in the months and years ahead. That's why we're calling for the one-year suspension of the land transfer tax: to kick-start jobs in construction again and help young families afford that first home.

We want to send a message to our young, skilled workers, young women and men who want to get involved in the trades, that the best place to build your career is right here in Ontario. That's why we want to change our apprenticeship ratio, to bring our apprenticeship system into the 21st century so more young tradespeople can pursue their career, build their businesses, build their families, right here in their home province of Ontario.

We want to say to northern Ontario families that this is the time when we should open up northern Ontario to its full resource potential, and on the condition that it's families and communities in the north who are the primary beneficiaries. That's why we've called to replace an arbitrary ban on northern development with an approach that includes smart new developments today and a share of the resources for the host communities to reinvest and help create jobs in northern Ontario today and well into the future.

We want every Ontario business to know that they are competing on a fair and level playing field. We want every potential investor to know that Ontario will be a reliable partner for years and years to come. That's why we want to get the government out of the business of corporate welfare subsidies and help all businesses to succeed, and make sure we work with the public sector to bring down the size of the deficit and encourage investment and job creation in Ontario once again.

We want every single family in Ontario to know that their government will respect each and every tax dollar they send to Queen's Park and not let pet projects stand in the way of creating more private sector jobs today. That's why we are proposing a sunset review of all agencies, boards and commissions of the province, to control the creep in size and costs of government and identify wasteful spending, starting with those massive regional bureaucracies, the LHINs, that have diverted hundreds of millions of dollars out of front-line care into a bloated health bureaucracy. The LHINs are a great place to start.

Finally, that is why we have proposed a red tape commission that will put every obstacle to a tough test. Any burden on job creation will go through that exacting test, and if that red tape cannot justify itself, it goes, to free up entrepreneurs to create jobs and grow their businesses in our great province once again.

I encourage all families; I encourage all investors, all business owners, to join the Ontario PC caucus at 10for2010.ca to share in the PC ideas to create jobs, to share in a new direction for our province, a new vision, to ensure Ontario is restored to its rightful place as the economic powerhouse of Confederation.

Ontario families and businesses have all had to make tough choices. We've all had to scale back our spending

during the last few years, and we believe the government should as well.

Here's a great place to start: We are challenging all members of the Legislature to join with us and amend the budget bill to cancel the \$25-million severance payout that the McGuinty government is handing out to HST tax collectors who don't miss a single day on the job.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Do the right thing.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I encourage colleagues from all parties, as my colleague from Sarnia says, to do the right thing. This is a straightforward challenge based on a simple principle shared by all Ontario families: If you do not lose your job, you do not get paid severance from the taxpayer. Like the motion says: If you can't get this right, you just cannot be trusted with the finances in the province of Ontario.

We look forward to support from government members and members of the third party. Our caucus will continue to put forward ideas because we believe that Ontario has the vast and valuable natural resources, the dedicated entrepreneurs, the skilled workforce and the proximity to the American market necessary to return Ontario to its rightful place as the economic engine of this great country. Ontario can lead again, but success is not guaranteed, especially after Thursday's budget. To

create jobs and ensure an economic recovery, Ontario needs to take a very different direction than the one we're on today. We look forward to leading that because we believe that Ontario will lead again.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

The motion is carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1422.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, 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
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	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)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, 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)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	

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Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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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**

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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

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

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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
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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

Continued from back cover

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	350
Debate adjourned	350

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Supply Act, 2010, Bill 17, Mr. Duncan / Loi de
crédits de 2010, projet de loi 17, M. Duncan**

First reading agreed to.....	350
------------------------------	-----

**Municipal Amendment Act (Local Democracy and
Accountability), 2010, Bill 18, Mr. Caplan / Loi de
2010 modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités
(démocratie et responsabilisation locales), projet de
loi 18, M. Caplan**

First reading agreed to.....	351
Mr. David Caplan.....	351

MOTIONS

Order of business

Hon. Monique M. Smith	351
Motion agreed to	351

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Student assistance / Aide financière aux étudiants

Hon. John Milloy	351
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	352
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	353

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Taxation

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	353
---------------------	-----

Diagnostic services

Mme France Gélinas	354
--------------------------	-----

Ostomy supplies

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	354
------------------------	-----

Child care

Mr. Michael Prue	354
------------------------	-----

Taxation

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	354
------------------------	-----

Child care

Mme France Gélinas	354
--------------------------	-----

Taxation

Mr. John Yakabuski	355
--------------------------	-----

Elmvale District High School

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	355
---------------------	-----

Power plant

Mr. Ted Arnott	355
----------------------	-----

Taxation

Mr. Steve Clark	355
-----------------------	-----

Taxation

Mr. Norman W. Sterling	356
------------------------------	-----

Pension plans

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	356
---------------------	-----

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

2010 Ontario budget

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	356
Debate adjourned	360

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 29 March 2010 / Lundi 29 mars 2010

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Norm Miller	337
Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	337
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	337
Hon. Monique M. Smith	337
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	337
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	337
Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	337
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	337

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Local health integration networks

Mr. Tim Hudak	337
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	337

Local health integration networks

Mr. Tim Hudak	338
Hon. Deborah Matthews	338

Ontario budget

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	339
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	339

Ontario budget

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	340
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	340

Local health integration networks

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	340
Hon. Deborah Matthews	341

Public transit

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	341
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	341

Public transit

Mr. David Zimmer	341
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	342

Local health integration networks

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	342
Hon. Deborah Matthews	342

Social assistance

Mr. Michael Prue	342
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	343

Student achievement

Mr. Khalil Ramal	343
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky	343

Government spending

Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	344
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	344

Northern Ontario

Ms. Andrea Horwath	344
Hon. Michael Gravelle	344

Post-secondary education

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	345
Hon. John Milloy	345

Endangered species

Mr. John Yakabuski	345
Hon. Linda Jeffrey	345

Hospital funding

Mme France Gélinas	346
Hon. Deborah Matthews	346

Tourism and culture

Mr. Glen R. Murray.....	346
Hon. Michael Chan	346

Full-day kindergarten

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	347
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky	347

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Canada-Cuba relations

Mr. Bill Murdoch	347
------------------------	-----

Olympic Games

Mr. Bruce Crozier	348
-------------------------	-----

Recreational vehicles

Mr. John O'Toole.....	348
-----------------------	-----

Hockey

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel	348
-----------------------------	-----

Severance payments

Mr. John Yakabuski	348
--------------------------	-----

Hydro rates

Mr. Howard Hampton	349
--------------------------	-----

Kraft Hockeyville 2010

Mr. Ted McMeekin	349
------------------------	-----

Canada-Cuba relations

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	349
------------------------	-----

Ontario budget

Mr. Dave Levac.....	349
---------------------	-----

Private members' public business

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	350
--------------------------------------	-----

Supplementary estimates

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	350
--------------------------------------	-----

Continued on inside back cover