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**Wednesday 31 March 2010**

**Mercredi 31 mars 2010**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

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*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

**VISITOR**

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, which you may rule out of order: This morning we will have joining us in the members' gallery President Barb Taylor, who's the president of Canadore College and is retiring in eight days after 32 years of service to our college communities, 18 at George Brown and 12 and a half at Canadore College in North Bay. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank her for her great service to the province and to northern Ontario. That's my point of order.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY**

**SUPPLY ACT, 2010**

**LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2010**

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 30, 2010, on the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance; resuming the debate adjourned on March 30, 2010, on the motion for second reading of 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):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very satisfied that I have the opportunity to speak this morning. I was worried that perhaps there would be others trying to get to the microphone before me. However, I gather we're speaking on the supply motion, which gives me rather free rein on a cross-section of issues.

First of all, I think after the budget we have to realize, too, that the government hasn't said much that is exciting or revealing. In fact, they have a large, large deficit and there's not much in here about jobs, technically. I think the important part of the supply motion is that we all agree on that kind of motion. We have to pay our bills.

We have responsibilities to the staff, both in the Legislature and other partners, who make the province of Ontario the great place it is. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear that we would be supportive of the theory of completing our obligations to the public civil servants who make this place function, as well as, you might say, make the province function. If there's any credit to be taken in the statement around the economy, or by the Premier, for its successes, it should also take credit for its failures.

I think that substantially the point I'm making is that the direction, the policy, the plan—or lack of it—come from the government. Premier McGuinty has the privilege of representing the people of Ontario in this august chamber, and he sets the agenda, he sets the table, he sets the goals and he sets the plan and the priorities. I think you have to leave the evaluation of his success, or lack of it, to the people of Ontario.

I want to repeat this, because it's very important: If you're going to take credit for the successes of green energy, the Oak Ridges moraine, the greenbelt and the improvements in education and health care, you should also take the other side of that if there's a failure in the system.

You could, to some extent, blame the other partners—the municipal leadership. I guess right now he's telling them to cut the pay for employees—firemen, police and ambulance—and stuff like that. It's a rather peculiar dilemma. He could blame Stephen Harper for much of it, which I think he has some room to do. But if you look at Ontario in relation to other provinces, we're in worse shape.

I'd like to be optimistic here, and I want Ontario to be better. But I think there are rules, regulations and red tape that are making it more and more difficult. Yesterday, we had two or three groups that were here; one, the professors of our universities, were here. Their association was asking for smaller class sizes. Yet in the last two days Minister Milloy has made two statements, one on student support and the other, basically, on trying to put some more money into the system. The Premier takes full credit for putting \$300-million-plus into post-secondary under Second Career and the college and university system. I talked to both Don Lovisa and Ronald Bordessa just recently, actually at the tour of ACE, the Automotive Centre of Excellence, the largest wind turbine and weather simulator, etc., in North America, and they were complimentary of that thing.

What I heard from the professors yesterday was that the highest tuition in Canada is right here in Ontario. The

young pages here, who will be going to university some day, will be paying the highest tuition in Canada.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Already, the members are blaming previous governments. Well, they've been here seven years, going on eight—it seems like a century, but time seems bad when things aren't going well. Here's the point: If they say they're going to change, they haven't changed a thing.

The second thing the professors were saying was that we have the highest student debt, but also the largest class sizes in the country. You can't have it both ways. If you are the leader—it's like the Toronto Maple Leafs. They were knocked out of the playoffs yesterday by losing a game near the end. I think that's what has happened here: They've kind of lost track of the goal, the vision.

The best place in the world to live, raise your family and do business used to be here in Ontario, and I think that even for the first couple of years it went fairly well for them. In the first couple of years, it went quite well for them. In fact, at that time they blamed then-Premier Ernie Eves, who lost the election, for pretty well everything.

But here's the issue: There probably was a small deficit at the time, but now we have a huge deficit. In fact, the deficit is a huge debt, and the most troubling part of it is that we're spending about \$120 billion annually, spending has increased by about 63%, and you have to ask, is it any better in health care? We're hearing about hospital emergencies closing and the lack of long-term care for our aging population. We're hearing about large class sizes.

**0910**

Here's the real issue: The deficit right now is \$21-billion-plus. That represents about 20% of all spending, and the debt is future taxes. The young pages here and the other young people—I think it's unconscionable to leave the debt to your children and grandchildren. That isn't meant in a malicious way; it's a statement of fact. We can blame Stephen Harper. We could blame David Miller. David Miller—one of his great left-wing allies has been screaming about one of the tragic cuts in public transit. The former Minister of Transportation is here. He probably wanted that to go ahead.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, the Premier, who's in charge, who has the keys to the vault, who gives out the money and the perks and the other loose change to various individuals and groups and organizations, cut \$4 billion from that transit, so now we've got gridlock. We know that's a drag on the economy. I don't see any consistent plan. I think the time is coming when people will see through all the rhetoric.

All of us here want a better future. All of us—that would include the NDP and the Conservatives as well as the Liberal Party—want Ontario to be the best place to live, to work and to raise your children. We want the best environment. We want the best schools. We want the best day care. Let's check out the priorities. How are we

doing? The biggest item that we all know is health care. It's the largest in my area, the riding of Durham, which includes Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington. We're hearing from the LHINs. In fact, we know they don't have enough money. We're blaming the LHINs, but the money comes from that person over there, the leader. All the hospitals are going to be in complete withdrawal because their budgets are basically payroll, and their allowance—I think it's 1.2% of the overall allocation to health care—is to the hospital side. That means that, like in Northumberland hospital in Lou Rinaldi's riding, I think they're cutting 23 beds, which means that elderly people will be pushed into the community. And there's no community support. We know the CCACs have been told and directed to cut the spending by 20%.

Here's the real issue when you get down to it—we're only dealing with the issues, the priorities. How are they doing? What is the report card? Health care? I'd say a problem. I don't want to wish anyone's untimely death, but I see problems. Yanking \$1 billion out of the pharmaceutical portion of the health care budget, which is about 46 cents of every dollar—if they can't manage the biggest one, what's happening to the smallest ones?

Then I look at the other end. Children's aid societies across this province are starving. There was a good article in York about how overall, across the province—and these are organizations sanctioned legislatively to take care of vulnerable children, often children who are wards of the court and other circumstances that the children had no part or no say in. These are vulnerable children. I am working with the Durham Children's Aid Society, and I think they do a marvellous job. I want to thank the director and the board. The board is volunteers. They really give up their heart and soul for our children.

At the other end, they threw out a pot full of money around by-election time after the children's aid societies provincially were screaming in the north. They were actually prepared to close. When you cut those organizations, you cut services directly to children, services that are mandated by the minister. I know now that they have a structural deficit. This is the last day of the fiscal year; it's March 31. It's the end of the 2009 fiscal year. I think they're short around \$3 million to \$4 million. That means services for children. We've got the health care dilemma. The smoke is there but we can't see the fire yet. It's huge challenges, big-time challenges. At the other end we have children's aid.

We also know that the school boards are in a bit of a bind. They've been given this full-day kindergarten to implement. I'm hearing now that it's being implemented in a completely ham-fisted manner. I think they've set up Leona Dombrowsky, the Minister of Education, now, and are protecting Kathleen Wynne, who has been moved on to transportation. She's a popular person and has a passion for education—no doubt of that. I would say I do, myself, as I was a trustee for a couple of terms. As well, I would say that with five children and my wife and one of my daughters as educators—don't ever think that anyone doesn't realize the importance of education, primary,

elementary, secondary and post-secondary. It is the key to the future. It's a knowledge-based economy; we get that.

What are they doing with full-day kindergarten? They're making class sizes larger in the elementary grades, period. They will all be over 20. We know that in grade 8 now, it's almost 30. They're really supposed to be preparing for post-secondary and more complex study and a more rigorous curriculum, and they're saying there are more graduates coming? They hope that the \$300 million they're pumping into the post-secondary portion is going to cover it, but I'm looking at the priorities here. We've got the two biggest items, health care and education. I'd say education—it's sort of like the old saying, "Peace at any price." We have declining enrolment, increased spending; forcing down their throat this full-day kindergarten. There are partners in the early learning centres, and others, who have been doing fantastic work. We all understand the importance of early intervention with children, especially children at risk, and I think we would all find that there have to be more choices for parents there—supported choices, choices that are regulated by quality. We don't need lower standards; we don't just need babysitting; we need caring and compassionate instructional care.

I'm looking at the top three or four items, and I see clouds on the horizon. Let's leave it at that. No one wants to be a downer first thing in the morning on this thing, but on this supply motion, we've got to pay the bills. We're in support of that.

If I look at Bill 17, where the detail of this whole thing is, where you see the schedules, I see energy prices going through the roof. No question. They're going up—no question, up. Yet OPG, Ontario Power Generation, has applied to the energy board for a 9.6% increase. Not only that; there's this new environmental charge. You're going to be charged for your smart meter, and then they're going to add 8% HST. If you're paying \$200 a month now, open up your eyes; it's going to be \$400 before long under Premier McGuinty's plan.

What about energy? Let's look at energy. Energy is an essential consumption. It's not like cable TV—you can cut off the movie channel. Energy is an essential commodity, an essential consumption. You have to heat your home or cool it, you have to cook your food, you have to keep yourself and your clothing clean. There's very little discretionary consumption of energy. Yes, we should shut our computers off. Yes, we should shut off the high-fidelity equipment and we shouldn't have unnecessary lights on. I believe very strongly, as a parent of five children, in shutting off the lights and the electricity, but there's very little consumption used.

What is the ministry doing there? The utilities that distribute the electrons to your home are screaming that they get paid on how much electricity they sell. Now we're conserving—which is good; I support that conservation—but they're saying their revenue is declining because they aren't selling as much electricity, so now

they have to up the rates. You're going to pay more and use less.

People on fixed incomes are getting squeezed right out of the equation. This is the most discouraging circumstance to have to talk about here, in a province that used to be number one and now is the recipient of \$1 billion in transfer payments from the federal government.

We are the largest province. We're a little in excess of 30% of the country's population. We used to be 50% of the economy; now we're about 38%. Danny Williams is beating us, and Newfoundland and Labrador has fewer people than the region of Durham. Prince Edward Island has fewer people than my riding.

**0920**

**Ms. M. Aileen Carroll:** But it's a nice place.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Oh, it's a beautiful place, absolutely. In fact, Canada is a wonderful country, and that's not the debate. My debate is, how are we doing? I think we should be generous, sharing and caring. I completely support that. But when you have other provinces supporting you in the transfer payments—that's how it works—I think it's unconscionable.

I've looked at three priorities. I've looked at the big ones, education and health care. How are we doing? Let's get the report card out. I've looked at the other end. I've looked at the energy file as well as the children's aid societies and I'll even look at social assistance, welfare. They cut the special meal allowance for people who are on support payments who may have diabetes or other kinds of ailments. You know why? Because those vulnerable people have no voice. They've attacked—and I think it's tragic that people, seniors, are going to be paying more in HST on July 1. Imagine it: If they're spending \$100 a month, each month, on, say, TV cable service, Internet and maybe heating for their home, basically essential consumption—we're not talking the theatre or the opera here—if that's \$100 a month it's now going to be \$108 a month. That's another \$100 right there without them changing one thing they're doing. It is a tax increase.

As I said, in Bill 17—I was looking through there—it's not just the energy. On property registrations, the land registry office, the surveyors: When they do land surveying and block this all out and register it, you're going to pay a fee for it. Now they've got a private company. I look around and I watch the scandal at the Ontario lottery and gaming commission. I watch the scandal at eHealth—\$1 billion. I've listened to the auditor and the Ombudsman, whom they're trying to fire because he's looking into some of the wasteful spending in some areas.

With all due respect, I think the Premier has lost his way under the heavy slugging in this tough economy. We saw it in the budget. He didn't have the courage even—I'll give you one example. There was a small expenditure, in terms of government spending, of \$25 million. What it was is, the employees who currently collect the provincial sales tax and gas tax are being transferred to another department where they're going to collect the

HST, which is the harmonized federal and provincial tax. They're going to be going in the same car with the same business card to the same office, and get to go to the same businesses to audit their books, to give them advice on how to remit their tax or make up deficits that they might have. And we're giving them severance pay of \$45,000 each when they did not lose their jobs. I want this very clear: Having worked in personnel, there are responsibilities by employers, and if there is a severance, they should be entitled to severance. Usually it's one month pay for each year of service, up to a maximum, I think. There's one example of an expenditure.

Another example were these untendered contracts to, some say, those friendly to the Liberal Party, connected, often even worked for McGuinty—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** But we're talking about a specific case here. Offsetting it with another wrongdoing is not productive, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It's not productive to show another error to address a current error that I'm discussing. Staff that are related—there are provisions under the conflict of interest standards where they're not supposed to gainfully employed in these kinds of things.

We had a person who is well respected, a long-serving expert in health care who was sort of let go and then hired back in a contract for \$350,000. These are expenditures in a time when we should be very seriously guarding the dollars that the hard-working people of Ontario pay.

I want to conclude by saying that the opposition, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, is supportive of the supply motion, which is the motion to pay the civil servants who have contributed so much to this province. That's our obligation, and Conservatives believe in following your principles and obligations.

I am concerned, and remain concerned—and I want this left on the record—that the government has lost its way. We have a deficit, and the economy of Ontario is not growing as robustly as in other provinces. There is a lot of work to be done. I want to see a vision with some action attached to it. It saddens me, after my roughly 15 years here, to see the province go from a leader to a laggard. It's quite disturbing.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to take about half the time that is available to the NDP to talk about a number of issues that concern us in the budget that was recently presented.

Certainly for us, the deferral of spending on transit—on Transit City in Toronto—is symptomatic of the fundamental mistakes that have been made in this budget. If you look at the reality in the GTA, congestion costs us \$5 billion to \$6 billion a year in negative economic impact—far beyond the cost of putting in this new transit. The new transit alone won't solve all that congestion, but if we don't make ongoing investments to reduce congestion and allow traffic and people to flow freely, then

we undermine the economic base of the GTA, which is a big chunk of Ontario's economy itself.

The Toronto Star, which is generally very supportive of this government and its budget, has been pointing out that this deferral of funds is a mistake and will have negative impacts on the GTA and Ontario's economy. They also point out in an article today that the withdrawal of funds for bus replacement will mean a reduction in service. If this government persists with its attack on transit in this budget, then the kinds of numbers we've seen showing the GTA as number one in terms of long commute times—that negative result will be strengthened.

I had an opportunity the other day to ask the minister about the lack of transit investment, and what I got back was a recitation of all the investments that had been made and all the good works claimed by this government. It was interesting that even the Toronto Star today said in its editorial that clearly that answer is an embarrassment; the reality is that the investment is inadequate to the needs of the GTA, inadequate to the needs of this very large urban area—and frankly, probably to the other large urban areas in Ontario—and that that lack of investment will undermine us economically. It will also drive up health care costs, Mr. Speaker, because as you well know, the more cars and congestion on the road, the more air pollution we have to deal with. That's more people in hospital with asthma and more people clogging emergency rooms because air pollution is making them sick.

So this decision to push back investment in Transit City and in new buses means higher costs for our economy, undermining our competitiveness and higher costs for health care—my colleague from Nickel Belt will talk about health care in greater detail when we get to that item.

We have to have a change of heart on this item. This government needs to rethink its failure to invest properly in transit. Just before Christmas, we had the report from the climate secretariat, from the minister, about the simple reality that this government was not going to meet its climate change targets in Ontario; it was not going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the amount it committed to. That's of significant consequence. Whenever I ask the Minister of the Environment what he's going to do to make up that difference, what he's going to do to actually close the gap to meet the targets, as inadequate as they are, I get nothing, again, but a reciting of the virtues and wonders of this government.

**0930**

In fact, in this budget, the deferral of investment in transit is a rolling back of action on climate change. Transportation is responsible for 32% of greenhouse gas emissions in this province. Two thirds of that is personal transportation. If in fact you can't even invest in transit, how are you going to meet the targets that were set out? How are you even going to start making up the shortfall? I don't think you are. I don't think this government sees action on climate change as a priority. It sees it as something that it has to deal with in public relations, in a

spin sort of way, but in terms of concrete action, an investment in this province signals in this budget that that isn't where we're going.

I want to talk as well about the full-day learning plan, because I think that what Dr. Charles Pascal brought forward made a lot of sense and was of consequence to this province, of consequence to families and of consequence to children. What he brought forward was an integrated plan for expanding child care in this province, but what we got was not what he set out. If you'll remember, in his plan he said that you have to take the integrated program as a whole to actually ensure that things make sense. What we're seeing now, and what I'm getting in emails from constituents and from people outside of my riding, is the plain fact that for daycare centres that have been economically viable because they've had older children, their economics have changed radically. It's a good thing that there's full-day learning. The flaw, the fault, is that there is not the funding there to help the other parts of the daycare system survive and in fact expand, to fulfill the promise that was set out in Dr. Pascal's report. That's a huge problem. That is a very huge problem for parents, for families, for children and for the long-term good of this society. That is something that has to be corrected when this budget is debated, when this budget is voted on.

The failure to provide high-quality, universally affordable daycare and the failure to put in place a transition plan undermines the earning potential of Ontario families, frankly, because it reduces—I say “reduces” because there's the potential for loss of a lot of daycare spaces—the investment we make in our children. That is not good for the long-term health and viability of this society.

In the short time remaining to me, I want to say that the elimination of the special diet allowance is also part of that short-sighted approach to the well-being of people in this province. People who are on welfare, who have a medical condition, who are going to lose their medical allowance or have it cut back dramatically are going to find it very difficult to live. These people will wind up in hospitals, they'll wind up in doctor's offices, and they will be trying to deal with medical conditions that flow from a lack of an adequate diet. Not only is it morally wrong to do that, but in practical dollars and cents it's wrong to do that. In fact, you can have a very expensive medical intervention or you can have a far less expensive and humane allocation of funds so that people can eat properly. That's a substantial problem in this budget, a substantial problem in this approach, and it reflects that short-sightedness. We are failing to make the investments that will cut our costs in the long run and provide us with a better quality of life in the long run, and imposing substantial burdens on individuals and on society right now. This budget is profoundly flawed.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to take the time to have a little discussion here on this particular

motion. What we're looking at is a supply bill, which obviously is something that means the business of government, in terms of payments to be made—is the issue of this particular motion. But it means that it's an opportunity to look at the way in which the government is spending its money. I'm going to take the time here to look at three different areas that I think merit particular emphasis.

The first one is simply understanding that one of the fundamental responsibilities of government is the management of taxpayers' money. That's where all the money comes from, and obviously the trust that people put in their elected representatives is to demonstrate that they have that trust in the management of their own money. But there have been a couple of examples that I think demonstrate why people are cynical and certainly suspicious about the way in which their own money is used.

We've seen in the last few months the question of untendered contracts, the fact that people have been awarded business opportunities, and in fact quite lucrative ones, particularly in the eHealth scandal, and now we're looking at ones with the local health integration networks, which are commonly referred to as the LHINs. Here again, we see untendered contracts. Now, in question period the government has referred to the fact that they changed the rules, that this is not the opportunity it once was.

Aside from that, I think it's important to understand that the government is in the business, and has been in the business forever, on the issue of procurement; that is, making opportunity available to the private sector to undertake some responsibility, whether it's building something or maintaining something, providing advice as consultants—there's an entire range of activities that fall under that. So it seems to me, given the fact that this process is a historic, well-honoured process, that the notion that the reason the government fell into this trap of untendered contracts has something to do with the rules and the need to change them is very unfortunate, because obviously there were always rules on tendering, and this seems to diminish the importance this government has on the importance of those rules.

Another area that people expect, of course, is the delivery of services. What we are witnessing in the immediate past is that too often the government is cutting corners. They are looking at the delivery of certain services, and I would suggest that this ends up being a false economy. In my riding, it's well known amongst the people who are receiving services from the CCAC that there has been a decrease in those services. What happens as a result? People are forced to use a more expensive process from the taxpayer point of view, and that is, of course, through the door of the hospital, with the inefficiencies, then, that that creates within the hospital.

Another example is the plight of the children's aid societies representing two areas: Simcoe and York. I was involved in the discussions that the respective children's aid services were finding in meeting what is their legally

mandated responsibility; that is, to look after the most frail and vulnerable children in the community. They found themselves in the position of having to lay off workers, and then at literally the 11th hour, the ministry came in with some funding to take them to today, March 31, the end of the fiscal year. That kind of instability creates more problems. It would seem, again, to demonstrate that by cutting these corners, by leaving these organizations desperate for money and having to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities—that meant they had to lay off people and give notices back in December. That's not good management. That's not the way to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

**0940**

Finally, I would like to just give a couple of figures on another area: the deficit, which is the gap between what monies are anticipated and what monies are going to be spent. That deficit is at the point of \$21 billion, the largest in Ontario's history and a greater amount than the entire deficit of every other province put together. We also have a debt; a debt that has gone, since this government took office, from \$148 billion to \$289 billion. This is the legacy of this government to the children and grandchildren of the province. It has meant that we have dropped into have-not status, which again is for the first and only time in Ontario's history.

All of this, then, naturally creates a concern about what the future holds. Well, our leader, Tim Hudak, has come up with 10for2010.ca as a vehicle to outline practical, affordable and convenient opportunities that we believe this government should be taking. We believe that they should be doing things that create jobs and stimulate the economy and encourage consumer and investor confidence. When we look at the kind of spending that this government has taken—the corners cut, the false economies—these are all things that take away from consumer and private sector confidence.

I want to just finish on the fact that there are alternatives. There are things that we could be doing that this government is not doing.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to rise in the House this morning and talk a little bit about this bill. The first thing I would like to talk about is the 1.5% increase that was included in the budget for hospitals.

I had the pleasure to tour rural and northern Ontario with the Ontario Health Quality Council. I was on a panel, and I will name my colleagues because it will become pertinent pretty soon. The first one is Dr. Claudette Chase. Dr. Chase is a physician serving remote First Nations communities. Another panellist was the Honourable Roger Gallaway. Roger was a Liberal member of Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton from 1993-2004. I also had Dr. Tim Macdonald. Dr. Macdonald is a surgeon. He was with the Armed Forces in Canada but was also the former chief of staff of Englehart hospital. I was also on the panel with Mrs. Barb Proctor. Barb is a retired registered nurse, and she is from Prince Edward county. We also

had Kay Tod. Kay is also a nurse. She was an executive member of the RNAO, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, as well as a past president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, local 32.

Together we went to 12 different rural and northern communities. Those included Wallaceburg, Shelburne, Kincardine, Welland, Cobourg, Port Perry, Haliburton, Burk's Falls, Winchester, Picton, St. Joseph Island and New Liskeard. What we saw and what we heard from the hundreds of people who came to those hearings was that they feel that the shortfalls in funding to hospitals are being compensated on the back of small rural and northern hospitals.

In each and every one of those communities, people came and told us about service cuts. The first one, which was almost in all of their comments, is that they would divest themselves of the physiotherapy department, of their outpatient physios, and they would divest themselves of their diabetes education. In some of them, if you look at Fort Erie or Port Colborne, it was the emergency departments that were closed, to the point where those people would come and explain to us the effect that this is having on the community.

Once the hospital does not have a critical mass of services anymore, they start to lose staff—all of them. I remember in Picton, a delegation of dietitians came to tell us that they were all being laid off. Their layoff notices, actually, will be executed today—six nutritionists, highly trained people, helping people manage diabetes. We know that type 2 diabetes is going to reach epidemic proportions in Ontario. We're expecting a million more Ontarians to have type 2 diabetes, yet we're laying off trained nutritionists who have specialty training in helping people deal with diabetes and prevent it. That we heard all over the place.

Once those professionals are gone—in some of the areas, like Burk's Falls, they lost their professionals long ago—it makes it really hard for them to recruit and keep the other services viable. It then makes it hard for them to recruit physicians, and people start to have difficulty with access to primary care, because there is nothing in their community that they can offer a physician but solo practice. Very few physicians want to go to a community where they are the only show in town. That means if your patient presents with musculoskeletal problems, you don't have a physiotherapist to refer to; you have to handle them yourself. When a person comes to you with grief, there's no bereavement, there are no social workers to refer to. When a patient comes to you with diabetes, there is no dietitian; you are on your own. This is not conducive to providing good-quality care. We all know that for primary care to be good-quality care, primary care has to be offered by a team. So as we gut services out of remote, rural northern Ontario, it becomes impossible for those communities to have access to good-quality primary care, and it goes downhill from there.

We heard this in every community we went to—people, having just had hip surgery, being discharged and being unable to access physiotherapy. I remember one

person who had a total knee replacement who could not extend her knee fully. She needs physio or she will lose range of motion for the rest of her life. And although the most expensive part of the care, the surgery, was there for her, she could not access physio to make that surgery a success—success being regaining full use of her leg without pain. So the health care system was ready to pay for the expensive care but was not ready to pay for the physiotherapy that would make her mobile.

I remember a very nice-looking younger woman who was in a motor vehicle accident and who came to present—the same thing happened to her. She lived in a rural area. The physiotherapy had been closed. There was private, for-profit physio close by, but she did not have the money to pay, which means that services were not available to her. This is happening throughout rural and northern Ontario, and we don't see anything in the budget to change this.

Other things we don't see in the budget: There is no investment in health promotion and disease prevention in keeping people well—what we in the NDP call the second stage of medicare. If we want to curb the escalating costs of our health care system that is there to treat people when they are sick, you have to invest upstream. You have to keep people well. There is nothing being said or done in Ontario to try to keep people well. All we do is say that we cannot afford the escalating costs of our health care system.

Je voulais également parler du programme de la maternelle et du jardin à temps plein. La maternelle et le jardin à temps plein est une bonne idée. Il n'y a personne qui va vous dire que ce n'est pas une bonne idée. Un investissement dans la petite enfance est quelque chose de bien.

Du côté francophone, dans les écoles séparées comme dans les écoles publiques, on offre la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein depuis longtemps. Malheureusement, le projet de loi qui a été présenté n'a pas été présenté d'une façon qui est respectueuse de ce qui se passe dans la communauté francophone déjà. Ce projet de loi-là n'a pas été fait pour les francophones et n'a pas écouté les francophones non plus.

Les communautés francophones sont encore fragiles et ont besoin de protection, mais le projet de loi, comme il est en ce moment, est tellement rigide que les structures qui ont été développées et mises en place par les écoles francophones ne seront pas capables de continuer.

Certaines écoles sont capables de s'adapter, mais pour bien d'autres, ça va vouloir dire une diminution de services à la population francophone dans son ensemble parce que les garderies, les services à la petite enfance, et cetera, qui s'étaient développés pour appuyer le programme en place, n'auront plus de masse critique pour pouvoir continuer.

Du côté francophone, on dit que le projet de loi, dans sa forme actuelle, aura pour impact d'augmenter l'assimilation des étudiants francophones. Pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement n'écouterait pas les francophones quand on leur dit que leur projet de loi va assimiler les petits

Franco-Ontariens et les petites Franco-Ontariennes? Je ne peux pas croire que notre gouvernement veut faire ça. Ils doivent nous écouter. Ils doivent écouter les francophones et mettre de la flexibilité dans le projet de loi pour protéger contre l'assimilation et également pour aider avec la pénurie d'éducatrices et d'éducateurs à la petite enfance.

Dans un dernier temps—I see that I'm running out of time.

I wanted to talk about the energy credit in the bill. The energy credit of between \$130 for a single person and \$200 for a family will not cover the increase that the HST will bring to the people of the north. We're looking at an average of \$270 for the people of the north. If the government is serious that they want to help the north, don't put the HST on energy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, supplementaries only. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

## SUPPLY ACT, 2010

### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2010

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further business at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There being no further business at this time, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0954 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've got some folks here from down Niagara region, people who have been fighting the McGuinty health care cuts and hospital closures: Marelyn Athoe, Dori Emerson, Fiona McMurren, June Robinson, Joy Russell and Pat Schoefield.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm happy today that we have visitors from Burlington. Bert and Mae Radford are residents of Burlington who are billeting a Rotary exchange student from Denmark. I welcome Bert and Mae, and also Mille Stockfisch, from Vojens, Denmark.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome—they're going to be here shortly—the grade 7 and 8 class from St. Peter's school in Quinte West. They have a bunch of friends, exchange students from Yukon, and they'll be here shortly.

Also, I'd like to introduce my good friend Bob Dodds, from my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West, in the west gallery.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm not sure if my guests are here, but I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Dennise Taylor-Gilhen, Lynda McKenzie and John Parkhurst, who are all here today with the Parkinson Society Canada.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to introduce some of my staff—Paul, Susan, Heather and Susan's daughter Emma—to Queen's Park.

Also today, Fashion Design Council of Canada has been in the building. It's Fashion Week.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to take this opportunity to wish happy birthday to our colleague from Hamilton Mountain. Since she has been here, she has been getting younger and younger.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to introduce to the House today friends of Ontario in the members' gallery east, and my colleague from Peterborough will have a further statement later in the day. In the gallery are Mr. Ed Carter-Edwards, an Allied airman shot down in World War II, and my friend from Peterborough will elaborate on that later today; his wife, Lois Carter-Edwards; their son Dennis Carter-Edwards; Karen Carter-Edwards, daughter-in-law; Craig Carter-Edwards, a grandson; and Sean Carter-Edwards, their great-grandson. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** While they're not quite in the gallery yet, I'm going to acknowledge the visit to Queen's Park today by Mr. David Pranger and the grade 5 class of Holbrook public school, which is located in my riding of Hamilton Centre. I welcome them.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to introduce today several friends and family members of page Mathilda Murray. We have Mathilda's mom, Lisa; her brother Jack Murray; her uncle Kevin Schildroth; her aunt Beth Malloy; Tony Weldon; Suzanne Malloy, Mathilda's grandmother; and last and certainly not least, her grandfather Tony Malloy. Welcome to all.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Catia Marceau, I'd like to welcome her mother, Giulia Marceau, and family friend Rob Castellarin to the members' gallery east. Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Brampton West and page Colin Boyle, I'd like to welcome his mother, Joe-Anne Boyle; his father, Bill Boyle; his grandmother

Anne Armeni; and his sister Caitlin Boyle to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no further introductions, it is time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. Everything you said about a wage freeze last week was qualified when you admitted this week that there are exemptions for years of service, performance, learning and who knows what else. Everything you said about not raising taxes was qualified when you raised the health tax, four taxes on energy bills and the HST. Everything you said about putting an end to untendered contracts was qualified by your untendered deals for Casino Niagara, the Windsor Energy Centre, and with local health integration consultants.

Premier, does everything you say come with fine print?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's a lot in there, but on the other hand, there's nothing in there. Let me just say that as my friends scramble about in search of a positive policy that, at some point in time, hopefully, they will place before the people of Ontario, I want to remind my colleagues that we have a plan for Ontarians—it's called Open Ontario. It's about committing ourselves to a province that is enthusiastic about our future. We're not shrinking from a world that the Conservatives see that threatens us; we see a world that welcomes us.

We want to find ways to continue to invest in the quality of our health care and the quality of the education that we deliver to all our children. We're going to find ways, for example, to make Toronto an elite financial centre that attracts still more investment from around the world. We're moving forward; they're mired in the past.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It's difficult to get to the meaning of what the Premier is trying to say when everything is in the fine print, and then the fine print is buried. The June 17 press announcement, in which he said, "From now on, the government and all its agencies will no longer allow sole-sourced contracts," does not have an asterisk.

Up until this week, Premier McGuinty said he put an end to all sole-sourced contracts, but unfortunately, the Liberals are trying to cancel the public review of the LHINs, where we could hold the Premier to account for his on-again, off-again ban.

Can Premier McGuinty explain the difference between an untendered contract and an untendered contract extension?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague the Minister of Health has, at some considerable length

now, had the opportunity to speak to those very issues, but let me tell you about the big picture here from the Conservative perspective.

If you want to shut down hospitals, you've got to get rid of the community champions, so you're going to have to get rid of the LHINs. If you want to fire nurses, you're going to have to get rid of community champions, so you're going to have to get rid of the LHINs. If you want to reduce hospital beds, you've got to get rid of community champions.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members from Renfrew and Welland.

Members will please come to order. I think most members would want to have a question period and not have the Speaker stand.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If your real agenda is to make cuts to health care and to compromise the quality of health care services for Ontario families, then you want to get rid of the LHINs. That's why we can expect from this party, for a protracted period of time now, an ongoing assault on community members who decide to participate in their LHINs in their communities to stand up for their community health care. That's what this is really all about.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Any suggestion that the Progressive Conservatives want to make deep cuts in health care is complete nonsense, but back to the question.

Up until this week, Premier McGuinty said he put an end to all untendered contracts, but now the McGuinty Liberals are defending the untendered contracts they handed out to communications and administrative consultants.

The Waterloo Wellington LHIN didn't put contracts out for competitive bids if the consultant was "highly regarded," the LHIN was "short-staffed," or it was a contract extension. How do we know? They told us.

Did Premier McGuinty scrap the public review of the LHINs to keep us from finding out these flimsy excuses, or did he have something else to hide?

1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to refresh my honourable colleague's memory about the construct that was in place that we have changed, governments used to have regional health offices in the communities. Those were sub-offices of the Toronto-based ministry in Ontario communities. We've changed that. We've put representatives of the community at play, exercising a role of influence for good in a community.

So again, if you wanted to put in place a plan to make dramatic cuts to health care, you've got to get rid of the LHINs, because they're going to stand in the way of those health cuts. They'll be opposed to reducing hospital beds; they'll be opposed to nurse-firings; they'll be opposed to hospital closures.

We have LHINs in place. We support Ontarians, we support their LHINs because they're standing up for local community health care, and we'll continue to find ways to work with them.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Again, my question is to the Premier: Our freedom-of-information records show that bureaucrats at unelected, unaccountable, anonymous local health integration networks like to keep untendered contracts in the family.

Take Barry Monaghan: The former CEO of the Toronto Central LHIN walked away from what the 2008 sunshine list reported to be a \$351,000 salary to become a health care consultant and was handed an untendered contract from the Mississauga LHIN. Actually, it was two untendered contracts: On the very same day, the Mississauga LHIN handed him a second sweetheart deal covering the same time period.

If getting caught allowing this double-dipping to happen isn't why you scrapped the public review of the LHINs, then what are you hiding?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, this is part of an ongoing effort to malign the LHINs and the people in their communities who choose to serve in those.

My honourable colleague made reference to these anonymous people. There are 105 current Ontarians who have been appointed to serve on their local health integration network. All of those appointments are referred to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Of the 105 current appointees, the Conservative Party only called seven to the standing committee, and they were in favour of each and every one of those. So you can't have it both ways: You can't say that you support community-based health care, you can't say you support Ontarians who come to the aid of their community health care and at the same time malign them. Either you are in favour of local health integration networks, local influence on health care or you're not. They believe LHINs stand in the way of quality health care.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** To the point of this question, which is that the Premier promised that there would be no more untendered contracts, and clearly they're continuing to happen. Just like with eHealth, work is being built on contracts before they're even being signed, and they're untendered. Our freedom-of-information records show that you let it happen again in 2009, when the Mississauga LHIN did two untendered contract extensions on the same day: one paying \$42,000 for three months' work and one paying \$42,000 for two months' work. No wonder Monaghan left the Toronto Central LHIN and his measly \$351,000 salary.

Did you scrap the public review of the LHINs to protect Barry Monaghan or to protect yourself?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just to repeat what the Minister of Health has already said, we believe that it

is only sensible and realistic to have a review conducted once the LHINs have fully assumed all of their responsibilities, and they have yet to do that. We've already put a review in place. KPMG took a look at this. They've come up with some 47 separate recommendations. We've adopted all of them. They're all either implemented or under way.

Again, fundamentally, what this is all about is, if your agenda is truly to find savings in health care, if you want to make cuts to health care—if you want to close hospitals, if you want to fire nurses and if you want to reduce hospital beds—you've got to get rid of the LHINs. So we can expect an extended strategy and series of tactics now deployed by the Conservative Party to undermine public confidence in the LHINs, because they stand in the way of this party's agenda to make cuts to our health care. That's exactly why we will continue to support our LHINs.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd suggest that the Premier is imputing motive here on our side, which is clearly not true. We are not in favour of cutting public health care. We are not in favour of making cuts in that area.

But again, back to the question: Our—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Member from Simcoe North.

Start the clock.

Please continue.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Our FOI records also show that Premier McGuinty was paying Monaghan for a super-LHIN he called the LHIN collaborative. Others assigned to work on the super-LHIN are a who's who of the untendered-contract feeding frenzy at eHealth. Matt Anderson is on the eHealth board and related to Michael Guerriere, who got sweetheart deals from eHealth and the LHINs. Ken Deane approved untendered contracts at eHealth. John McKinley blocked the auditor's eHealth investigation. Did the Premier scrap the public review of the LHINs because McKinley blocked the Ombudsman? Or was it to bury proof of this year's sunshine list executives turned consultants? Or does he have something else to hide?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Would you like to super-size that LHIN—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final warning for the member from Renfrew.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Durham.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Somebody else want to be on borrowed time?

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Those Ontarians who take responsibility for LHIN activities are appointees. There

are 105 of them, and we're lucky to have them rise to the occasion and assume those responsibilities.

I want to come back to the theme here, which I think is very important. They're going to be selective in terms of trying to malign or demean certain individuals, but the people who are taking responsibility for the decisions are 105 Ontarians who have agreed to serve on their local health integration network. They believe in what we believe, which is that the community itself should be lending shape to health care policy so that it best serves the interests of the community. They want to go back to a system where you put regional offices of the Ministry of Health in communities so you can dictate from on high. We have a different approach. We believe in local integration. We believe in local quality—

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

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is to the Premier. Last week's budget will leave families scrambling to deal with more closed emergency rooms, more closed clinics and more delayed surgeries. We're joined today by patients from across Ontario who are here in the west members' gallery who are feeling the crunch.

My question is this: Is the Premier prepared to look these patients in the eye and yet again deny that he's making cuts to front-line health care services that people rely on every single day?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague and I want to remind her—and perhaps she would use this information to remind Ontarians as well—about our accurate record when it comes to health care. No government has ever escalated investment in health care more quickly than ours in the history of our province. We've increased funding for hospitals by over 40% since 2003. We've hired thousands more nurses. We have invested heavily in building new hospitals and expanding existing hospitals. We've got wait times down for MRIs, CTs, knee operations, hip operations, cardiac operations, cataract procedures and cancer surgeries as well. That is our record when it—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier forgets that real people have to live with the consequences of his cut-backs. Marelyn, who's here today, had to watch as a family member who suffered a stroke languished in the Niagara Falls ER for seven days. That hospital has been overwhelmed since the closure of emergency rooms at Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Will the Premier look at Marelyn and tell her that her front-line health care services aren't actually being hurt?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's no doubt about it: There is always more work to do. One of the exercises that we're going to have to participate in together has to do with how we can find a way to continue to ensure that

we can continue to fund the growth in our health care system.

Twenty years ago, when I got here, it was 32 cents on the dollar that went into health care; now it's 46 cents. They tell us that shortly it's going to be 70 cents. That will compromise our ability to fund our kids' schools. It will compromise our ability to invest in our roads and our bridges, in supports for our vulnerable and investments in economic growth. So that's an important conversation we're all going to have to participate in very shortly.

But I can say that along the way we will continue to find more ways to invest more dollars in the health care system, to find efficiencies where that makes sense, and to find ways to improve the quality of care we deliver.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier talks about money that's being thrown into the health care system, but it's not being wisely invested, and that's the problem we have in this province.

Marelyn's story, unfortunately, is just one of many, many stories. Mr. Richer suffered a heart attack and had to be transferred three times to get the care he needed. He and countless other Ontarians live in constant fear that the ambulance or emergency care when they need it is not going to be there for them. How dare this Premier try to justify cuts that are leaving families all over Ontario coping with closures, coping with cutbacks and coping with lost services?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, \$113 million more I don't call a cut, and I don't think my honourable colleague, were she to consider it carefully, would either.

Hospital funding is up by 50% over the last seven years. It's going up by another 4.9% this year. That includes a 1.5% increase in the overall base funding formula to meet the service requirements of hospitals. We've added more hospital beds, and about 2,000 more are now in the works. We've opened 8,000 new long-term-care-home beds, and there are almost 2,000 more in the works.

Now we're going to turn our mind towards innovating, to ensuring that we can provide quality. We've done a lot to increase access. For example, 900,000 more Ontarians now have access to a family doctor. But we want to do a lot more to ensure that the care they are getting is in fact high-quality.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's cool comfort for the patients who are here today.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is to the Premier as well. While concerned citizens have watched their ERs close and their loved ones spend weeks in emergency rooms, some people have actually seen salary windfalls in the province of Ontario in the health care sector. Between 2003, when the Premier came to office, and 2008, the average salary of hospital executives increased by 36%. Does the Premier think it's fair to be

closing ERs while health dollars are spent on seven-figure salaries?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think everyone who enjoys the privilege of working in public service and is paid for by the provincial taxpayer has a responsibility to be accountable and to ensure that the salary they are receiving, the compensation, can always be qualified as fair.

The approach that we are bringing through this budget, as you are well aware, is to lead by example. Everybody in this House is having their pay frozen for three years. What we're asking of everybody else in the public sector is that we freeze their wages for two years. We think that's fair.

The commitment we are also making is that all those savings will be reinvested in our schools, in our hospitals and in our other public services. We think that's a responsibility that we share and one that I would invite all Ontarians in public service to assume.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Clifford Nordal, the CEO at St. Joseph's hospital and London Health Sciences Centre, made more than \$700,000 last year. He's retiring at the end of this year, and Londoners have been told that two CEOs are going to be hired to replace him. Does the Premier think it's right that cancer patients in London lose their nurses while \$1.5 million goes to paying two new CEOs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As my honourable colleague will understand, we don't set those salaries. Those are determined locally by the hospital boards. I know that she would want to join me in encouraging all those people who work on our hospital boards to be very careful when it comes to making determinations about those salary levels, what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, not only being mindful of our economic circumstances, but also being mindful all the time of how hard families work to contribute their tax dollars to their precious public services. So I know my colleague would want to join me in sending that important message to those people who are making those decisions about those salaries.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier talks a good game about restraint, yet only patients see it, while hospital CEOs continue to cash in.

I have a very simple request of the Premier: If he is serious, will he cancel all bonuses for hospital CEOs this year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, my honourable colleague, I'm sure, will want to understand that this is a matter between hospital boards and their employees. I'm wondering if there are any other agreements she would call upon us to interfere with. It's only one small step from private contractual arrangements to those involving collective agreements, and I'm wondering if my colleague is going to take the next step, perhaps in another question, and ask me to now interfere with collective agreements.

There is some sanctity associated with these kinds of contracts, and as a matter of principle we think we have to honour contracts that are already in place.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty Liberals have diverted \$176 million from front-line health care to salaries and administration at his unelected and unaccountable health bureaucracies known as the LHINs. In fact, in just three years the number of executives at the LHINs who earn more than \$100,000 a year has more than doubled. The sunshine list for 2008 reports that Barry Monaghan made \$351,000 from a LHIN he didn't even work at.

My question is a simple one: Did the Premier cancel the public review of the LHINs because his LHINs are the new all-stars in today's sunshine list?

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Once again, the members opposite continue to attack the local health integration networks. Those networks are in place to provide better care for patients. The work they do is all about improving care for patients as they transition from one part of our health care system to another part of the health care system. The work they're doing is very important for the future of our health care system and it's important for the people today who, as they go through a period of health care, would have a time when they need the intensive support available in a hospital; then there would be a time when they could use home care and other community supports. The whole goal of the LHINs is to ease that transition. It's important work, and it's important that it be done in the community.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The \$351,000 that Barry Monaghan scooped from the Toronto Central LHIN is the kind of severance package that an HST collector could only dream about. Over that same time frame where the 2006-07 sunshine list grew by 150%, total salaries and compensation at the LHINs grew by 213%. That doesn't even include the millions being handed out in untendered contracts and what we have now found out to be untendered contract extensions with consultants.

So my question to the Premier: How many more millions of dollars will be diverted from front-line care to pay the rich executive salaries of unelected and—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said, the party opposite has a very different vision of the future of health care in this province than the people on this side. Their agenda is crystal clear: They will deny that they want to cut health care in this province, but their stated position is to freeze spending. Anyone who works in health care understands that a freeze is a cut.

Make no mistake about it: We are committed to continue to improve health care in this province, to continue to improve access, to continue to bring down wait times, to get better value for the money we spend in health care and to focus on quality. Our health care record speaks for itself, and, sadly, so does theirs.

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. We're all concerned about the safety of seniors in retirement homes. There have been three horrific retirement home fires in the past few years, causing death and permanent injury. Much of this could have been alleviated if the government had required mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes across our province. Yesterday, the government introduced a bill that falls drastically short.

Will the government take this bill back to the drawing board and implement mandatory fire sprinkler systems in all retirement homes in our province?

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community Safety.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** It's a very important question and it requires an answer that will instill some confidence in our fire safety system. I have that confidence.

When we look at the record of investments that we've made in fire safety in the province of Ontario, I think our government can be very proud. When we look at the changes to the Ontario building code and the Ontario fire code, I think we can be very proud of those changes.

Certainly, there is no question: Sprinklers are an important tool. They are one tool in fire safety. We have to ensure that we provide a fire safety plan—

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That was an interesting reply. The Ontario firefighters, whom you were just talking about, and fire chiefs across this province are strongly urging that sprinkler systems in all retirement homes be mandatory immediately. Lives are at risk, loved ones are concerned, yet the government seems to be passing the buck between ministries.

How many more lives have to be sacrificed before this government does the right thing, steps up to the plate and legislates mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes immediately?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The member referenced the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, so I want to read from a letter that Fred LeBlanc, the president, sent to me. He said, "We are concerned that there will be too much emphasis on and faith placed in technology, resulting in a false sense of security." They are not a magic bullet. They are only one of the many tools required to adequately protect the residents in the event of a structural fire.

We agree with the professional firefighters that they're an important tool, but they are only one tool in the arsenal to fight fires.

## NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Recently in our budget, I was very pleased to learn that your ministry will be pro-

viding \$15 million for infrastructure upgrades to the 288-kilometre Huron Central Railway line from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury. As you know, the economy of northern Ontario is also struggling, and this investment is essential to businesses in the region.

In yesterday's Sault Star, Brenda Stenta, spokesperson for Essar Steel Algoma, said, "The government has demonstrated their commitment to a vital piece of infrastructure, and without the rail system to transport product, Essar Steel would be putting an additional 350 to 400 trucks on the road per week, something that has negative environmental and social costs."

This investment secures 45 direct jobs, 100 indirect jobs and supports thousands of workers and businesses along the rail line in northeastern Ontario.

Minister, can you elaborate on other infrastructure investments that we are making—

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who has done a great job on this project. He's been a relentless advocate for the Huron Central rail project; he really has. I know his community is really excited about this, as are we.

This government recognizes the importance of this project to Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and all communities in between. It's a critical link for northeastern Ontario that will help expand business and project jobs. Without this funding, the Huron Central rail line was in danger of being shut down. The closure of this vital link would have had detrimental effects on local communities. That's why, in our 2010 budget, we committed \$15 million toward capital repairs for this very important line.

Again, I thank the honourable member—

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

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** This is great news for our region. I want to thank you and our Minister of Finance for helping to address in a very real way the needs of northern Ontario. I certainly hope that my NDP colleagues from northern Ontario, who have been calling for these types of investments, will support these investments in our budget.

The northern industrial electricity rate program, averaging \$150 million annually, will help make large industrial power users more competitive and will help to protect jobs. The mayor of Sault Ste. Marie, John Rowsell, said, "This is absolutely great for Essar Steel and I'm hoping it will make a difference for St. Marys Paper."

Minister, can you comment on how this energy program and others contained in the budget will assist industry and our residents?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We're introducing the northern—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'm trying to understand how your question and the supplementary are related. They're not.

New question.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, the Premier ducked accountability for untendered contracts that he allowed the LHINs to hand out after his on-again, off-again ban. Seven consecutive questions were pawned off to the Minister of Health. In fact, the Minister of Health may want to take a look at the Hansard from September 23, 2009, and then have a chat with the member for Don Valley East to find out what happened to him the last time Dalton McGuinty forced a minister to carry the can.

So, to the Premier, a very simple question: Who made the call to scrap the public review of the LHINs? Was it the Minister of Health or was it you?

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As we've talked about much, today and throughout the week, the LHINs are a very important part of our vision for the future of health care in this province. It's very important that we give them the time they need to get established, to do the work, so that when we do review the LHINs with an all-party committee of the House, we will have a full understanding of what they are doing well and what we need to change in the act to ensure that they do it even better. The appropriate thing to do is to make sure that they have the full range of their mandate in place before we start that review. That will take place in two years' time.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** So I guess the Minister of Health cancelled the review, according to the Premier. But what Ontarians need to know is if they can bring out a magnifying glass to read the fine print in what the Premier and his ministers say is accountability.

The Ministry of Health accounts for more than half the provincial budget, and these LHINs are your babies, but just like with eHealth, as soon as the tough questions get asked about patient dollars being wasted, Premier McGuinty beats a hasty retreat to his thinking place and leaves it to others to explain the unexplainable. No wonder caucus morale over there is lower than a garter snake on a backcountry road.

André Marin is on to you, so you want him out the door; and we are on to you, so you're blocking the public review of the LHINs.

So I've got another question: What are you trying to hide, Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I must say that I'm having difficulty pulling the question out from that little rant. Anyway, let me try again.

The LHINs are a very important piece of our health care system. They knit together the health care services that patients in this province need. The LHINs are there to improve the course of care of patients.

We, in this province, have too many people, for example, who are in hospital beds and would be better served in the community with home care, in long-term care or in one of the range of options available to them.

The LHINs are the organizations that are really responsible for driving the improvements in health care that will help those people move into the most appropriate and best level of care. The work of the LHINs is critically important.

#### MINISTRY GRANTS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In April 2007, the Bengali Cultural Society, a group with absolutely impeccable Liberal ties, received \$250,000 of taxpayers' money granted to provide community services for the growing Bangladeshi community. The cheque was turned over to the Bengali Cultural Society's partner agency and a building was purchased in 2008. It has now been three full years since the money was doled out. Can the minister explain why there are still no programs serving the Bangladeshi community?

1110

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I was pleased to speak with the member from Beaches—East York about this issue several days ago. As he of course is aware, the Bengali Cultural Society indeed was one of the organizations that in 2006-07 received funding for multi-year projects. The society received funding that was used to purchase a new facility, in partnership with COSTI Immigrant Services. The Bengali society reported that the funds have been successfully spent for the intended purpose, and the ministry has closed the file on this grant. We hope that both organizations continue to meet the needs of our newcomers.

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Over the past six months, I have spoken personally to two ministers and the staff of two ministers' offices, and they've told me the same thing you said today: The file is closed.

There was no follow-up, even after I brought this situation to the government's attention in January, and no follow-up today. Our worst predictions have been realized: \$250,000 of taxpayers' money have been handed out and aren't being used for the purposes for which they were intended.

How much more Liberal slush fund money has been mishandled, and why is this government washing its hands of the blatant squandering of millions of taxpayers' dollars?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, I was pleased to speak with the member opposite about this issue several days ago. He knows that the Auditor General conducted a review of the 2006-07 year-end reinvestment process and provided a thorough report that stated there was no evidence that any organization received a grant because it had political ties.

We have also improved the process for organizations wanting to apply for this type of funding in the future, in accordance with the auditor's recommendations.

The society in question, the Bengali Cultural Society, issued their final report early last year, indicating that the

funds had been expended according to the intended purposes of the grant. The ministry has closed the file.

#### USE OF TASERS

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** My question is for Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the member for the great city of Sudbury. Minister, I am aware that officers who have access to conducted energy weapons find them to be useful in apprehending those suspected of misconduct. However, in discussion with my constituents, I'm also aware of the concerns they have about how and when police should be using them.

Minister, you have said publicly that your ministry initiated a review to look in detail at CEW training requirements, reporting procedures and precautionary measures. Yesterday you announced a new guideline on the use of conducted energy weapons in Ontario and that the province will continue to take a measured approach to the use of CEWs.

Is this new guideline based on the recommendations from that report, and how will the guidelines ensure Ontario families in my community stay safe?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre, Glen Murray, for the question. It's an important question, and he's an important partner in community safety.

Ontario is a national leader in the training and use of conducted energy weapons. Our new guidelines are, without question, the most comprehensive in Canada.

These changes are based on the recommendations from our government's review, a review that consulted stakeholders and partners from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the chiefs of police, police associations and advocacy groups, and pulled information from national and international studies.

Our new guidelines will also mandate that all CEW users and instructors at the police college get the consistent training they require—

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

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** I am pleased to hear that Ontario continues to be a national leader in this area and that our province-wide guideline and new training practices will go a long way towards protecting both Ontarian families and our police officers.

I understand the review also concluded that CEWs are a less lethal use-of-force option. Currently in Ontario, the use of CEWs is authorized only to front-line supervisors and various specialized first response teams, such as tactical units and hostage rescue teams.

Even with Ontario's measured approach, I see from media reports that there are mixed views on the use of CEWs. Some people are calling for an all-out moratorium on their use, while others are calling on the government to expand them to all front-line officers.

Minister, can you elaborate on this issue for us?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The member has touched on a very, very important issue. Police officers face any num-

ber of challenging and unique situations every day. They use their judgment, experience and training to determine how to deal with these situations. We want to make sure that our new guidelines work for those who use them. Therefore, we think that the next logical step is to evaluate how this consistent and new training standard and guideline is working for police.

At present, there are no plans to expand CEW use. My ministry will continue to monitor their use in Ontario, continue to collaborate with our policing partners and continue to provide input into the national research study.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, a couple of weeks ago we were at a meeting with the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture, and their number one priority was the risk management program.

Since then, we've had a budget, and I know you have really been in the media, telling how wonderful the budget was. In this budget, you did pick up the daycare that the feds dumped on you. Also, on the radio, you mentioned that your ministry received a lot more money.

I know in your heart of hearts you want to help agriculture; I know that. Madam Minister, today, will you announce the risk management program without the feds—screw the feds. Don't worry about them. You don't need them. You have the extra money now. Will you announce this program immediately today?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you very much for the question. I want to begin with: It was a wonderful budget. I say to you that that support that we have shown the agricultural community has been always there and continues to be in this budget. We saw an increase of \$150 million in the ag budget.

I can tell you that that did not happen throughout Canada, but we stand with our farmers. We know that the suite of programs that is available today, quite frankly, isn't working. We know that what they're looking for is bankability, predictability and stability. We will work with our farmers, and we are working with the coalition.

I look to add even more information in the supplementary.

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is also, of course, to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, you know that the federal government believes that the proposed risk management program would have trade implications if it was implemented nationally. This is an Ontario problem that needs an Ontario solution. Our farmers are competing against people from across Canada who have the support of their provincial government.

Minister, you aren't a lobbyist; you are a level of government. When are you going to start acting like it and help our farmers?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'll tell you that I'll stand with my farmers. We recognize in Ontario that regional diversity is the way of the future—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful, the member from Thornhill. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of the Environment.

Minister of Agriculture?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** This is really a critical piece. When I hear that question coming from that side of the House, I have to assume that they stand by Minister Ritz's comments. Minister Ritz's comments were that 80% of our farmers are not being affected by the agricultural programs that are available today. It is not providing assistance; 80% of the people are doing just fine.

**1120**

We say on this side of the House that the programs aren't working. The suite of programs needs work. We are going to continue the work with the coalition on all of the commodities, sitting at the table. We are going to come forward. The consultation begins with the federal government. I'm encouraging all farmers—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The clock will stop.

Minister of the Environment. I remind the honourable minister that when I'm standing, she's not to be standing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, you asked.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I didn't ask.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It has been a while since he's been thrown out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** How about yourself, member from Welland?

New question.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. This government's decision to delay transit projects threatens hundreds of jobs at Thunder Bay's Bombardier plant. More than 400 streetcars were to be assembled in Thunder Bay to operate on Toronto transit lines that are now in budgetary limbo. With the hopes of so many riding on these transit projects, will the Premier admit that he has made a very serious mistake and immediately restore the \$4 billion in transit project funding that was cut—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The member from Thunder Bay will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** And this is a final warning for the member from Thunder Bay as well.

Please continue.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So the question was, will the Premier admit that he has made a serious mistake and immediately restore the \$4 billion of transit project funding that was cut in last week's budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just to correct my honourable colleague, and she may want to take advantage of the supplementary to admit to this, we're not talking about a cut here; we're talking about stretching out an investment in a way that's more affordable for us. We wanted to do full-day learning all at once. We couldn't, so we've stretched that investment out over a number of years. We'd love to be able to make this dramatic multi-billion dollar investment in TTC all at once, but we can't. It's affordable for us to do it over a number of years. That's all we're doing here. We haven't cut a single program. In fact, we're proud to have invested \$9.3 billion in public transit as a government. We look forward to investing in those projects, and I'm sure there will be more along the way.

Again, we had to make a choice as to whether we could find savings by stretching out this kind of program or making cuts to our hospitals and schools. We said no to those kinds of cuts and yes to stretching out this investment.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I've talked to people who work at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay, and they say that delaying the streetcars for the new lines will cause serious harm to their employment prospects. They say that keeping to the present schedule will allow the company to invest in crucial plant upgrades which will enable Bombardier to secure orders worldwide.

The Premier needs to realize that the long-term future of the plant and hundreds of jobs for families in Thunder Bay are at stake here. Will he restore the transit funding he cut in last week's budget, or will he stubbornly stick to a wrong-headed decision that could kill hundreds of good-paying jobs in Thunder Bay?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, we think, we believe, we know that the decision we have made is prudent, it's realistic, it's responsible and it's fair, given the circumstances. We've merely decided to stretch out these investments over an extended period of time.

But I do want to remind my honourable colleague that she does lead a party which voted against our investment in a TTC subway expansion to York region. I recall visiting that very same Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay. I recall meeting with the workers there. I recall them voicing their great displeasure at the NDP for opposing that investment. So I find it passing strange that today the member would say she's against our plan—our reasonable, responsible plan—to stretch out this investment over time, which will in fact result eventually in those new jobs.

#### FIRST NATIONS

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I understand that today,

March 31, we have the occasion to celebrate National Aboriginal Languages Day.

The day was established by the Assembly of First Nations in 1989 to create awareness across Canada of the languages of First Nation peoples and to build support for their preservation. We must support this effort. Through supporting language preservation, we are assisting aboriginal peoples and strengthening the cultures and traditions that are part of the very foundation of Canada and Ontario.

What is the purpose of National Aboriginal Day, and why is it important that we celebrate it, Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Meegwetch. Nyawah. Thank you very much for the question. I am honoured to stand here and celebrate with all of us National Aboriginal Languages Day. I join the First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario. I join the Anishinabek Mushkegowuk Onkwehonwe Language Commission of Ontario in celebrating this.

Language and culture are essential to our identity—every people's identity. It is extremely important that we not only preserve but celebrate who we are, and by preserving, protecting and enhancing language and cultural identity, we actually preserve, protect and enhance our own identity and make for a stronger future.

It is extremely important that we all recognize the importance of this day, not only to First Nations but to ourselves.

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

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I understand that Cree and Ojibway are the first languages spoken by many children in First Nations families across Ontario. Cree is a language spoken in many First Nations in Ontario's mid- and Far North, and Ojibway is the language of many First Nation communities in the near north, northwestern and southwestern Ontario, but I was surprised to learn that 11 other First Nation languages are in danger of extinction in the province today. How is the province of Ontario supporting the revival and preservation of the aboriginal language?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Again, thank you very much. There is a history, which unfortunately was not supported either in Ontario or throughout Canada, of the preservation of aboriginal language, First Nation language and culture. The residential schools, for example, were a very sorry and sad blot on our history. We are individually and collectively overcoming the effects of that.

I think the first way we stand to protect and preserve is to support initiatives such as today's. But it's not simply an initiative of a day; it's an initiative of every day. There is a new website launched by the organization to enable people to understand what the languages are and the interrelation between the language of First Nations and Canada. The very word "Canada" derives from a Huron word.

We have a bright future as a country. First Nations have a bright future. Our future—

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

## RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. One year ago, your government announced its so-called Open for Business plan to cut red tape for small businesses. You promised a 25% cut in regulations over 24 months, yet in 12 months you have nothing to show for this promise—no plans, no action, no cuts in regulations.

Minister, when are you going to start working on this promise?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to find a critic on the other side of the House. If I may say, our Open for Business strategy has been an aggressive, very innovative way for our government to link up with industry directly, bring industry to the table, actually do that by sector, so that we can talk about their priority areas of concern and actually solve the problems. I'm delighted to say that we've made some very good progress, and in your supplementary, I'd be happy to share some of that with you.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Time is running out on your promise to help small businesses. It's already been a full year with no action, yet you even recycled your promise to cut red tape in your Open Ontario plan, or what sounds to me more and more like "oops." You haven't cut red tape since you announced the Open for Business plan, so why should anyone believe you now with your "oops" plan?

1130

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm actually very pleased to suggest to you that the number of business organizations that we have been dealing with for the last several months is growing—a number of associations across a number of sectors, which are in our office on a regular basis.

I have to tell you that I remember the Red Tape Commission of the past, when you were the government. It amounted to three guys in trench coats taking a photo op. The difference here is that we actually bring industry to the table and move forward with the elimination of regulations, all the while strengthening the government's role in assisting to improve business conditions and the business environment.

I am delighted to sit down with this member in particular, and we can share with her not only the plans for the future but what we have been able to accomplish in dialoguing—

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

## SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail. Recently, National Grocers, part of Loblaw Companies Ltd., announced that it would shut its doors at its Sudbury warehouse, putting 100 workers out of work. They will join the 6,000 workers who lost their jobs in Sudbury last year. Most of these workers who are

being terminated have over 20 years' experience, yet they will only get the very minimum severance, as dictated by the Ontario Employment Standards Act.

Why is the Minister of Labour allowing those workers to be treated so unfairly?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I have to say: Whenever a worker loses their job, we are all hurt. It hurts the individual, their family, the community and this province. But I can also say to the member that our labour relations record here in this province, in terms of working with labour groups, employers and employees, is the strongest it has ever been, the best it has ever been in over 30 years. That's because, through the Ministry of Labour, we do all that we can to assist the parties when they're negotiating agreements, but also, through our employment standards office, to ensure that workers get what they are owed, to ensure that workers get the rights and pay they are owed through the Ministry of Labour.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If this is Ontario's best, we're in trouble. On the same day the company offered Sudbury workers the bare minimum severance as dictated by law, they offered their Quebec employees faced with the same scenario "well in excess of statutory minimums, as well as relocation assistance."

As part of the Open Ontario plan, the McGuinty government is telling corporations that they have carte blanche to treat workers unfairly, to give them the bare minimum. Meanwhile, in Quebec, the provincial government sets a different, more progressive tone toward the treatment of labour. Companies in Quebec wouldn't dare give their workers the minimum severance, but in Ontario it is tolerated and, I would even say that it is encouraged.

My question is simple: When will the McGuinty government stand up for workers and ensure they get a fair and decent severance when large corporations decide to restructure?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** To the member, the McGuinty government stands up for workers every single day. Our Employment Standards Act is the most progressive employment standards legislation in all of Canada. Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** The member may want to hear this. Ontario is the only province or territory that actually legislates severance pay, I say to the member opposite. It's absolutely unacceptable when companies are not adhering to their responsibilities. We want to ensure, and we do ensure, that the rights of workers are upheld in this province.

## AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I know that the minister is working hard to bring the importance of the Buy Local initiatives to Ontario consumers. Farmers in my riding appreciate the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy, as it aims

to open up the local market for them and helps them get a better return on their hard work and the resources they put into the high-quality foods they produce.

The recently announced budget moves the Open Ontario plan forward, a plan that includes looking to create new opportunities to encourage Ontarians to buy local. We know that everyone has a role to play—government, industries, stakeholders, producers and retailers.

Minister, could you please tell the members of this House more about our Buy Local strategy and about some of the results we are seeing across this province?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you for the question. Our strategy to increase awareness of and demand for fresh, delicious Ontario food products is working. Local food benefits the local economy and our personal health.

I want to talk about the results. Sobeys Ontario works closely with Foodland Ontario to promote Ontario producers and products through the Ontario Fresh Pick program at Foodland and IGA; and Grown in Ontario for Sobeys, a program at Sobeys, Longo's and Highland Farms. Both prominently feature Ontario fresh produce and home-grown Ontario meats. Market research on the Foodland Ontario program: 90% recognition for Foodland Ontario's symbol, and 51% of principal grocery shoppers report that they are actually buying more fresh Ontario foods than previously purchased. If we—

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

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Members of this House know that goods produced by Ontario farmers are among the freshest, safest and best-quality in the world. As we have moved forward with our Buy Local strategy, my constituents are more and more aware of the benefits of buying food that is produced in Ontario.

We also know that promoting Ontario foods in new markets will help support our agri-food sector and all the benefits that go along with that, including a stronger farming and food production industry as well as healthier rural communities. Farmers in my riding appreciate the direction that our government is taking in partnering and working closely with them to help address the challenges that the sector has faced.

Could the minister please provide this House with more information about how we will work with our agri-food sector to seek new markets for Ontario-grown produce?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** The Open Ontario plan aims to ensure that rural Ontario benefits; that rural Ontario is ready to seize on the opportunities emerging from the global recession.

The activities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs directly impact export sales and job creation. We continue to support growth and expansion in our agri-food sector to open up new markets outside this province. In total, Ontario agri-food exports for 2009 totalled \$8.9 billion. Value-added, consumer-oriented products represent the strength of Ontario's food processing industry. Based on third party research undertaken with Ontario's exporters, for each dollar spent on the minis-

try's export program, more than \$20 is generated in new export sales.

We'll continue to work with our processors and producers. Our product is ready to be available throughout the world—

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

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period today, the member for Sault Ste. Marie asked a question of the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and referenced our most recent budget. I recognize that your rulings are not appealable, but I am asking you to review Hansard, as you have the prerogative to do, to look at whether or not his supplementary question was appropriate. I do believe it was, given that he referenced—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member for her point of order, and I'm certain that the honourable member is not intending to challenge the Chair in the Chair's decision. I stand by my decision.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the House today Dr. Mohammad Ashraf. He's the secretary-general of the Islamic Society of North America. He is accompanied by Muhammed Haroon and Humaira Hamayun. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

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

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GENERAL MOTORS OF CANADA

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I rise today to speak with respect to 240 Canadian General Motors dealers who received notice in May 2009 that their dealer sales and service agreement would not be renewed beyond October 31, 2010. Many of these dealers invested millions at the request of the company and were never paid a personal visit or consulted in any manner prior to receiving the termination news.

Here's a quote: "We were simply energetic, profitable franchises that were discarded as a quick solution, and I am questioning how this measure can be 'cost saving' for the corporation." This came from a former GM dealer in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. He goes on to say, "We operated as independent businesses purchasing parts, vehicles, and tools from General Motors on a daily basis. How can that be a financial burden to the parent company?"

Dealers were afforded only five to six days to accept a wind-down agreement that did not cover employee severance, investments in the dealership or compensation

for future earnings. Seeking proper legal advice in a matter of days was impossible.

General Motors US has recently announced that they made an error and will be reinstating 661 dealers. Will this government assist GM Canada to work out arrangements with the 240 Canadian dealerships that will satisfy all parties? For the sake of Ontario's economy, is it not in this government's best interests to give the Canadian GM network some attention?

### RACE RELATIONS

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I am pleased to rise in the Legislature today to speak of the winning students from across Durham region who showcased their creativity at the 2010 Race Relations Forum in Pickering on Wednesday, March 24.

In September, the Pickering Advisory Committee on Race Relations and Equity partnered with the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board to present a creative arts contest called In Your Words and Expressions. Students from grades 2 through 12 throughout Durham were invited to submit a written or creative arts piece based on the statement, "My perfect world is ...."

A panel of judges representing the written word, music and art reviewed more than 150 entries and selected winners for each age category. The winning students shared their entries at the forum on March 24 in the Pickering Civic Complex.

The event commemorated March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and included the Honourable Jean Augustine, Fairness Commissioner of Ontario, as the guest speaker.

The race relations committee is made up of municipal leaders, school board representatives, community cultural associations, community appointees and the students. They have worked closely over the years with many different groups and organizations, particularly youth, to promote racial and ethnic harmony in Pickering.

I warmly congratulate the winners and all of the participants.

### FASHION INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise today to speak about the fashion event I co-hosted this morning with the member from Parkdale–High Park and the Fashion Design Council of Canada.

This morning, both a fashion breakfast and a press conference took place. The focus of the events was driven towards having fashion and design included in Ontario's cultural mandate so that fashion designers would be eligible to apply for arts and cultural grants. The issue here is not to ask for more money; it's simply to see the scope of the mandate widened so that members of the fashion community could apply for the cultural grants that are already available.

In a time when our province is struggling to hold on to the jobs that we have, it's time for us to think outside the box. We have heard from the McGuinty government about the need to build a knowledge-based economy and to cultivate our cultural community, and to build on their potential. This is an opportunity to do just that.

We're currently in the middle of LG Fashion Week in Toronto, showcasing the amazing fashion talent here at home. If you have a chance to attend any one of their fashion events, you will quickly see the potential for this industry. It's enormous in economic terms, from the fashion designers to hair and makeup artists, photographers, marketers and everything else in between.

Quebec has already recognized this and, in so doing, saw the employment rate in the fashion industry double in less than a year.

Fashion has already come so far in Ontario on its own. Imagine the contribution this industry could be making to our economy if we were to make this one small change. We're calling on the McGuinty government to recognize this and make this change now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm sure the member from Welland was at the breakfast this morning.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Listen, I'm a fan of fashion. What can I say? The problem is, one could become a victim of fashion.

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I stand here to tell you that while Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, wants to scrap the review process of LHINs, I say, let's just cut to the chase and scrap the LHINs. They do no one any good other than create a firewall for this government from the anger in community after community where emergency rooms are being shut down, where core hospital services are being devastated and where hospitals are disappearing.

We had some of the Yellow Shirt Brigade here at Queen's Park this morning, the brigadistas, people like Fiona McMurren and Marelyn Athoe.

While they're joining the Yellow Shirt Brigade from Niagara that's been fighting tooth and nail to keep hospitals open, like the emergency rooms of Fort Erie and Port Colborne, they're going to be here on April 7, along with the Ontario Health Coalition, making sure that Minister Deb Matthews—when she's speaking down at the posh Royal York hotel to the Canadian Club, of all places, about health care, they're going to be out there demonstrating and picketing and letting the Minister of Health know that there are folks across this province who don't believe this government for a minute—not for a second—when this government says that it's doing anything to sustain health care, never mind improve it.

I'm encouraging folks down in Niagara to be at the Fort Erie Leisureplex at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 7, to get a bus to Toronto; be at the Welland market at 8:30 a.m. and get on a bus and come on up to Toronto; be at

the St. Catharines Pen Centre at 9 a.m. and get on a bus and come up to Toronto, and let them know what you really mean.

### GOVERNMENT MAILINGS

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'd like to ask members for support of a private member's resolution I'm going to introduce tomorrow. It's going to ask the federal Minister of Transport to issue a directive to Canada Post to amend the Consumer Choice Program of Canada Post that allows, and rightfully so, people receiving their mail to refuse unaddressed mail.

What I discovered in doing a referendum question in my riding was that MPPs' and MLAs' mail right across the country and municipal councillors' mail gets blocked with this policy, but lo and behold, MPs' unaddressed mail gets through. So there's an issue of inequity here.

I would ask the federal government to direct Canada Post to make it equal so that all of us elected officials of all three levels of government in this country have the democratic freedom to have our unaddressed mail received by our constituents.

To me, the policy should be consistent, and I certainly respect people's ability to block unaddressed mail. Obviously there's a lot of junk mail out there that people don't want, but many times the literature that municipal councillors, provincial members of Parliament and our MPs deliver is of great value, and I think all three levels should be treated the same.

### ZACHARY WINKLER

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to recognize a young man from my riding who is one of the recipients of this year's Junior Citizen of the Year Award. Eight-year-old Zachary Winkler was recognized for the phenomenal fundraising work he does for the Hospital for Sick Children.

For the last three years, Zachary has held his Do Something Sweet fundraising event on the first Sunday of November on the driveway of his family home, where he hands out candy floss and asks folks to donate what they can.

**1510**

He advertises his fundraiser by handing out flyers in his neighbourhood, at his school and synagogue, and runs ads in his local paper.

This year he convinced local merchants to cover the cost of T-shirts that he handed out to those who donated over \$20 as a thank you.

Did I mention that Zachary is only eight years old?

To date, Zachary has raised almost \$6,000 for Sick Kids hospital, bringing in over \$3,300 last year alone.

On top of being an enthusiastic student and big brother to his sister, Maya, Zachary also delivers the local paper and participates in many other fundraising activities.

I had the privilege of meeting Zachary and his family at the awards luncheon on Monday. On behalf of all resi-

dents of Thornhill, I want to congratulate him on receiving the Junior Citizen of the Year Award, and thank this extraordinary young man for his efforts. He is a hero to his family, his community and to all those who benefit every day from the great work done at the Hospital for Sick Children.

### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to comment today on the positive investments made by our government in last week's budget for northern Ontario and for my riding of Sault Ste. Marie.

We recognize the unique circumstances of northern communities, and we announced new initiatives to strengthen the northern economy and help create long-term prosperity.

Significant energy and infrastructure investments include:

- \$15 million to help upgrade the Huron Central rail line from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury;

- a northern industrial electricity rate program worth \$150 million annually for qualifying large industrial facilities, to reduce their electricity prices by an average of 25%, which will assist Essar Steel in our community and St. Marys Paper;

- a new permanent northern Ontario energy credit of up to \$130 for individuals and up to \$200 for families. This credit is worth an estimated \$35 million and will help low- and middle-income northern Ontario residents with their energy costs;

- a \$10-million increase to the northern Ontario heritage fund. This moves the fund from \$80 million to \$90 million, which will help to create new jobs and support economic development; and

- a \$45-million investment over three years to support project-based skills-training programs for aboriginal peoples so that they can more fully participate in the emerging economies in northern Ontario.

We're making significant investments, nearly \$1.2 billion, in infrastructure, and we are creating more job opportunities to help stimulate growth.

Our budget has received very positive reviews from all individuals in our community. I want to urge all members in this Legislature to support our budget.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** In 1986, as minister of multiculturalism under the Peterson government, I stood in this place to declare Hispanic Heritage Day.

Today I am proud, along with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, to declare, upon unanimous consent of this Legislature—in fact, all of you—April as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Why are we doing this? We're doing this because we want to recognize the great contributions that Hispanics of all 23 countries have made in terms of art, music,

commerce, industry, films, economics, science and medicine.

It is only fitting, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month tomorrow, that there is an invitation that goes to all members to attend, and to ensure that everyone who arrives there who has Hispanic background in their bones and in their blood will recognize that they have made a contribution, and that they are recognized as making one not just today but in the future.

Why are we doing this? Because we have many countries—Bolivia, Belize, Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela—all these countries have Ontarians here, who are Canadians, who are proud Hispanics. Congratulations to all of us, because tomorrow will be the day when we congratulate them.

#### BUCHENWALD

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** April 9 marks the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald, one of the infamous concentration camps operated by the Nazis during World War II.

At this camp, the Gestapo enforced an “extermination through labour” policy, literally working inmates to death. Through labour, illness and summary executions, up to 56,545 souls were lost at Buchenwald.

Among those commemorating this anniversary is Ed Carter-Edwards, a decorated Canadian veteran and one of 168 Allied airmen who, through tragic circumstances, were incarcerated in Buchenwald from August to November of 1944.

Ed and his fellow airmen experienced first-hand the horrors and inhumanity of Buchenwald. Their story supports those who suffered the Holocaust, and refutes all those who would deny it ever happened.

Sadly, there are fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors alive today. There is a great danger that, with their passing, the immediacy and urgency of their experiences will be lost. It is essential that successive generations carry that torch and ensure that the important lessons of the Holocaust endure.

Ed will be joined at the Buchenwald memorial by his wife, Lois; his son and daughter-in-law, Dennis and Karen, constituents of mine in Peterborough; his grandson, Craig, and his wife, Suzanna; and his two-year-old great-grandson, Sean.

The joining of four generations to commemorate the liberation of Buchenwald sends a strong signal that the legacy of those who experienced the Holocaust will never be forgotten. We must, each of us, join this effort, be ever-vigilant and ensure that we never allow this terrible chapter of history to repeat itself.

We have the Carter-Edwards family in the members' east gallery today. We want to salute one of the outstanding Canadian heroes, a veteran of World War II who was at Buchenwald.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I beg leave to present a report from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

*Report presented.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Very briefly, the all-party select committee was asked to report its observations and recommendations concerning a comprehensive provincial mental health and addictions strategy. Over the last year, operating in a very non-partisan fashion, we've had overwhelming response from individuals and organizations around Ontario. Their contributions will be found in the interim report that was tabled today and will be used to develop recommendations for the final report, which is due toward the end of this summer.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ENHANCING THE ABILITY OF INCOME SUPPORT RECIPIENTS TO BE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 REHAUSSANT L'AUTONOMIE FINANCIÈRE DES BÉNÉFICIAIRES DU SOUTIEN DU REVENU

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 and the Taxation Act, 2007 /  
Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

**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. Toby Barrett:** The other title is Enhancing the Ability of Income Support Recipients to be Financially Independent Act, 2010. The explanatory note: The bill amends the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, the bill raises the asset limits that apply in determining whether a person is eligible for income support, so the person can have \$12,000 individually or \$20,000 if there is a spouse included in the benefit unit. In addition, child support payments that a person receives are not included in income for the purpose of determining the

amount of income support for which that person is eligible.

At present, the amount of income support that a person is eligible to receive is reduced by 50% of the person's other monthly income. The bill lowers the reduction so that a person can retain a maximum of \$700 of other income monthly or a maximum of \$1,000 of other monthly income if there is a spouse included in the individual's benefit unit.

Under the Taxation Act, 2007, an employer that employs a person who receives income support during a taxation year is entitled to a non-refundable tax credit based on the maximum of \$10,000 that the employer pays to the person in salary arrangements for that year. The tax credit is available for a maximum of five employees.

I apologize for the length of that explanatory note.

1520

#### FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES

Mrs. Meilleur moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day /  
Projet de loi 24, Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-  
Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

**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 minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

#### TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC MATTERS ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES QUESTIONS D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to require that meetings of provincial and municipal boards, commissions and other public bodies be open to the public / Projet de loi 25, Loi exigeant que les réunions des commissions et conseils provinciaux et municipaux et d'autres organismes publics soient ouvertes au public.

**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. Kim Craitor:** The bill requires designated public bodies to give reasonable notice to the public of their meetings and proposed additions to meeting agendas and to ensure that the meetings are open to the public. A

designated public body will be required to keep minutes of its meetings and to publish them.

The bill establishes a procedure whereby a person who believes a designated public body has contravened or is about to contravene the bill may make a complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The commissioner will be empowered to review the complaint and to undertake a review on his or her own initiative.

The bill sets out the powers the commissioner may exercise in reviewing a suspected contravention, including the powers to enter and inspect premises and to demand production of documents and things relevant to the review, and to require any person to appear before the commissioner to give evidence. The bill authorizes the commissioner to make certain orders after review, including an order that voids a decision made by a designated public body at a meeting that did not conform to the requirements of the bill.

Under this bill, it will be an offence to fail to comply with an order of the commissioner.

#### MOTIONS

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the consideration of the budget motion and the budget bill.

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

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 71(d), the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may consider Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act, while the House is debating the budget motion on Thursday, April 1, 2010, and Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts, on Thursday, April 15, 2010.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je suis très heureuse de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner le lancement du projet de loi qui reconnaîtrait officiellement le 25 septembre comme Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariens. Cette autre belle initiative du

gouvernement McGuinty envers la communauté francophone vise non seulement à souligner l'apport historique et déterminant de l'un des peuples fondateurs du Canada, mais aussi à souligner l'extraordinaire essor de l'Ontario depuis la Confédération.

Si adoptée, la Loi de 2010 sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes rappellerait aux Ontariens et aux Ontariennes de toute souche que la présence française en Ontario existe depuis 400 ans cette année.

The 2010 Franco-Ontarian Day Act, if passed, would remind Ontarians of all backgrounds that the French presence in Ontario dates back 400 years.

This act will also celebrate the 35th anniversary of the creation of the Franco-Ontarian flag, which was raised for the first time, in Sudbury, in 1975. And it will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of French Ontario's driving force, known today as the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. This assembly was formed in 1910, the dawn of a new era in French-language education in Ontario.

En présentant ce projet de loi, le gouvernement désire d'ailleurs répondre par l'affirmative à une requête de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario qui, en décembre dernier, avait adopté une résolution demandant une telle loi.

Rappelons-nous tout le chemin parcouru au cours de ces quatre centaines de présence française en Ontario, depuis l'arrivée de Samuel de Champlain et celle d'Étienne Brûlé, qui fut le premier Européen à atteindre et à découvrir l'embouchure de la rivière Humber, marquant ainsi les débuts de ce qui allait devenir Toronto.

Since then, there have been many achievements that supported the francophone community. This includes the battle for French-language education in Ontario at the turn of the last century. There is also the phenomenal progress that the francophone community has made over the past 40 years, during which time its economic prosperity grew significantly for the benefit of all Ontarians of all origins and all languages.

The bill I am proposing today would not have a big financial impact on the government, but symbolically its impact will be tremendous. It would recognize that throughout our province's history, the francophone community has always been there to help build Ontario in co-operation with its anglophone counterpart.

Nous n'avons qu'à penser aux contributions des francophones à l'établissement des systèmes scolaires et de transport ferroviaire, au développement de nos ressources forestières et minières, et à leurs contributions à notre système de cours de justice et à notre réseau de santé, qui font l'envie du monde entier.

Je pense aussi à l'apprentissage préscolaire, qui est une priorité de notre gouvernement. Ce système a été mis en place pour la première fois par les conseils scolaires francophones et sert désormais de modèle au reste de la province.

La communauté francophone, grâce au leadership de ses organisations, comme l'AFO, a aussi contribué à construire le Canada en étroite collaboration avec les autres provinces canadiennes et les Premières Nations.

La communauté franco-ontarienne d'aujourd'hui accueille à bras ouverts de nombreux immigrants francophones et francophiles du monde entier qui viennent s'établir ici dans notre belle province. Ces francophones arrivants apportent une richesse culturelle, des compétences professionnelles, et surtout une ouverture sur le monde qui positionne l'Ontario comme société d'avenir, ce qui a un impact des plus positifs pour notre économie.

Monsieur le Président, comme vous l'aurez constaté, je suis animée d'une grande fierté en vous faisant part des réalisations des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.

I therefore invite everyone here to support the passing of this bill which will enable francophones and all Ontarians to celebrate Ontario's 400-year-old francophone community every year on September 25.

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

**M. Peter Shurman:** Nous, dans cette Assemblée, recevons de bonnes nouvelles aujourd'hui avec la courtoisie de la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Il me semble que nous considérons fréquemment des projets de loi des membres privés, donc nous devons donner une reconnaissance pour la proposition d'un jour spécial; peut-être une fête nationale, ou un jour désigné pour un groupe identifiable.

**1530**

Malheureusement, à date, nous n'avons aucun jour spécifique pour rendre hommage à un groupe extraordinaire dans son rôle comme une des deux nations fondatrices de notre province, notre Ontario. Le choix du 25 septembre comme date est excellent parce que c'était l'anniversaire d'adoption unanime du drapeau franco-ontarien, et j'ai ce drapeau dans mon propre bureau.

Premièrement, je voudrais féliciter la ministre pour sa diligence et pour le travail nécessaire pour créer en Ontario un jour des francophones. Comme pays, le Canada est officiellement bilingue mais trop souvent, nos racines francophones prennent une position secondaire. Notamment, ici, dans notre province de l'Ontario, il est oublié de temps en temps actuellement que nous avons deux nations fondatrices, soit les Franco-Ontariens et les anglos, qui sont des partenaires égaux. Le Canada était, de plus, un des fondateurs de la Francophonie il y a 40 ans, mais les francophones sont des Canadiens et des Ontariens depuis des siècles.

Il me semble que nous sommes ici, véritablement, un miroir du monde. Dans notre histoire et aujourd'hui, nous pouvons dire que notre communauté franco-ontarienne fait partie d'une communauté mondiale vaste, complexe, inclusive et ouverte. De temps en temps, on doit se souvenir que les résultats et les bénéfices pour nous, maintenant, en 2010, ne sont pas seulement justifiés, mais extrêmement appréciés, parce que deux peuples ont fixé un objectif, ont commencé une tâche, ont maintenu

un défi avec patience et ont montré une habileté commune à maintenir le cours face aux obstacles durant des siècles.

C'est maintenant une opportunité de donner une reconnaissance réelle, de rendre hommage aux Franco-Ontariens—à peu près seulement 4 % de notre population, mais vraiment un partenaire égal dans et depuis notre fondation. Il est important de se souvenir que les objectifs doivent être clairs : de promouvoir la langue française et la contribution de nos concitoyens, les Franco-Ontariens, dans les disciplines variées économiques, médicales, sociales ou n'importe laquelle. C'est notre devoir. C'est notre responsabilité.

À l'image de la population de l'Ontario, la population franco-ontarienne est diverse et vibrante. Elle accueille, depuis de nombreuses années, des francophones de l'Afrique, de l'Asie, du Moyen-Orient et de l'Europe. Les minorités raciales francophones représentent aujourd'hui plus de 10 % de la population francophone de la province. Alors, nos racines franco-ontariennes sont maintenant vraiment mondiales. Nous avons, en Ontario, la fierté et la confiance d'être une force majeure dans la francophonie du monde.

De la part de l'opposition officielle, je souhaite à la communauté franco-ontarienne mes félicitations et je félicite la ministre pour avoir introduit cet important projet de loi.

I would like to switch into English now to propose a motion to this Legislature.

I move that this bill be adopted with second and third reading today without debate by unanimous consent.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** With the member's indulgence, I'm going to give the opportunity first to the member from Nickel Belt to respond, and then I can come back to your point.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You must be clairvoyant, Speaker, that you knew that I was going to say something about this.

Pour moi aussi il me fait extrêmement plaisir de participer à la discussion aujourd'hui. J'aimerais rappeler que cette année, l'ACFO—l'AFO maintenant—célèbre son 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire. C'était une des demandes qu'ils avaient faites, mais ils en ont fait bien d'autres, bien entendu.

J'ai eu le plaisir de participer au souper commémoratif du 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, et c'était pas mal intéressant parce qu'il nous ramenait il y a cent ans, en 1910.

Cela avait l'air de quoi, la réunion de fondation? La réunion de fondation, premièrement, c'était tous des hommes, parce que dans ce temps-là c'était les hommes qui avaient le pouvoir. C'était surtout des gens d'Ottawa, et je vous dirais que les choses n'ont pas changé encore. Ottawa continue à être le centre de l'univers pour certains. Et on avait beaucoup de représentants du clergé. En 2010 la francophonie est beaucoup plus variée que ça, beaucoup plus diversifiée.

Par contre, il est important de se rappeler qu'en 1910 le gouvernement de l'Ontario était pour proposer le Règlement 17. Le Règlement 17 servait à l'assimilation

des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Le Règlement 17, c'est un règlement qui empêchait l'enseignement du français en Ontario. On ne voulait plus de francophones en Ontario, on voulait s'en débarrasser. On savait que la meilleure façon de se débarrasser des francophones, c'était de les empêcher l'éducation; ça passe par l'éducation. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario a passé le Règlement 17 mais la francophonie a survécu. La francophonie a vécu des moments difficiles.

Par contre, on est rendu en 2010 et le gouvernement de M. McQuinty présente la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein comme quelque chose de révolutionnaire. Pour les écoles francophones ça fait longtemps qu'on a ça. Ce projet de loi-là n'a pas été écrit pour les francophones, mais va vraiment à l'encontre de la francophonie. C'est un projet de loi qui va servir à assimiler nos petits Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Je ne sais pas pourquoi on ferait quelque chose comme ça en 2010, mais ils sont en train de le faire quand même.

Je regarde également cette année. On va avoir notre journée franco-ontarienne. On célèbre également le 35<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien. Je suis toujours fière de dire que ce drapeau-là a été fait à Sudbury, sur le campus de l'Université Laurentienne. M. Gervais, celui qui l'a fait, a encore le drapeau original, cousu à la main—disons qu'il n'était pas couturier, mais c'est quand même très beau—qu'il garde bien précieusement et qu'il sort lors des moments commémoratifs. Cette année, certainement, avec le 35<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du drapeau, on va ressortir le drapeau original, qui est toujours chez lui, à Sudbury.

M<sup>me</sup> la ministre nous parlait que c'est maintenant le 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'arrivée de la francophonie en Ontario. Je dois vous dire que j'ai eu la chance de participer au 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la ville de Québec, et ils ont mis la barre haute. J'ai hâte de voir les célébrations qui vont se passer en Ontario pour célébrer 400 ans d'histoire francophone. Parce qu'ils ont mis la barre haute, ça va être pas mal difficile d'être à leur égal.

À date, je n'ai pas entendu parler qu'on était pour célébrer quoi que ce soit, mais j'ai encore hâte, puis j'ai encore espoir, puis j'espère qu'on va faire ça aussi bien que la ville de Québec a réussi à le faire.

Il y avait de petites choses dans le discours de la ministre qui m'agacent un petit peu; de dire qu'on est ouvert à l'immigration et qu'on accueille les francophones—les immigrants qui font du français leur langue d'immersion sont très rares. Si tu regardes les possibilités d'emploi pour nos nouveaux arrivants qui décident d'utiliser le français comme langue d'insertion, les possibilités d'emploi ne sont pas trop fortes, et les possibilités d'intégration sont difficiles également.

La Loi sur les services en français, qui était promulguée en 1986, célèbre maintenant son 24<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, mais pourtant, on regarde à la une des journaux et on voit que les gens de Peel n'ont toujours pas accès à des services de santé en français. Ça fait 24 ans qu'ils se préparent à offrir des services en français dans cette communauté-là. Combien de temps est-ce que ça va prendre avant que ça

leur rentre dans la tête que c'est une loi en Ontario? Quand tu vis dans une région désignée, tu as le droit d'accès à des services en français. On est encore loin de là. Nos lois ont été passées, des régions sont désignées, mais les services en français tardent à arriver.

Donc, moi, je suis très contente que le 25 septembre je vais célébrer avec toute fanfare la nouvelle journée des Franco-Ontariens, et j'ai également très hâte d'avoir la journée de congé. Ça va me faire encore plus plaisir.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Shurman has asked for unanimous consent for the orders for second and third reading of An act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day and for the question to be put on the motions for second and third reading forthwith without debate or amendment? Agreed? I heard a no.

The government House leader on a point of order.

1540

**L'hon. Monique M. Smith:** C'est encore un peu dommage qu'on doit dire "non" aujourd'hui à cette demande mais, vraiment, on a beaucoup de gen dans la communauté qui voulaient venir fêter avec nous cette célébration de la journée du drapeau. Alors, on a décidé que ce n'était pas sur le programme de le passer en troisième lecture aujourd'hui. Alors, on va le remettre pour une autre journée où on peut avoir tous les gens de la communauté ici à célébrer avec nous.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Is it my understanding that the House leader from the Liberal Party is the person who said no to that? I would like to clarify the record. It's very important. On this side, we are supportive of this third reading unanimously, unless there's another agenda.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Speaker: I suspect you may find that there isn't a point of order, but this illustrates how uncomfortable it can be for either side of the chamber when that technique—and I'll leave it at that for the moment—is used. It's used at the end of sessions, for instance, when private members' bills are being pursued aggressively by sponsors of those bills. I'd love for there to be an enforced accord amongst parties that would make sure that these sorts of things didn't happen, because dollars to doughnuts, before the year 2010 is over, we're going to have people from the other side doing that to the opposition members, attempting to squeeze them and embarrass them into voting for a particular bill. It's not good procedure and it's not good process, but I've got to tell you, you know as well as I do that it happens from both sides of the House. Today is just a wonderful illustration of how uncomfortable it can make people.

**L'hon. Monique M. Smith:** J'ai hâte de célébrer avec mes co-célébrants de ces communautés francophones. Comme une francophone de la province de l'Ontario, je suis très contente de voir que tout le monde est du même avis sur ce projet de loi, mais je pense que c'est avec un peu de respect pour notre communauté qu'on les invite ici pour célébrer avec nous. C'est pour ça qu'on demande que ce vote soit remis.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I would simply like to go on record by way of saying that I proposed what I did totally

above board and without any political motivation. I am the francophone affairs critic for our party. I believe in what I said in the response to the minister's statement.

In response to the bill, I do believe that the bill is proposed in earnest. I have the utmost respect for the French community and would love to see it passed by unanimous consent today. If those are not the government's wishes, that's fine; I accept that.

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

To the original point of order raised by the member from Durham: All that is required for the Speaker is to hear a no, and there was a no in the chamber.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to read a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, as follows:

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

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

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

"Therefore we, the undersigned," from the riding of Durham, "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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

I'm pleased to sign and support it.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm pleased to present this petition from the people of Nipissing, and it reads as follows:

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

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

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury

Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

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

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

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I’m pleased to be at this end of the House.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Niagara Centre for the Arts and the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts are dependent on each other to build the density of activity required to make the arts centre financially feasible, failure to fund the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts would jeopardize the viability of the entire centre;

“Whereas the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts and the Niagara Centre for the Arts play the most significant role in the comprehensive plan to launch downtown St. Catharines as a significant arts hub for Niagara;

“Whereas independent consultants have confirmed that St. Catharines is very poorly served in comparison to similar cities in Canada with respect to existing arts spaces, the people of St. Catharines are poorly served as audience members and as students of the arts;

“Whereas the project will provide stable resources to support the work of St. Catharines arts groups and will work toward the development of new ones;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding toward the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.”

I’m pleased to sign my signature in support of this.

#### TAXATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services;

“Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget.”

I’ve affixed my signature as I’m in agreement.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I have a petition signed by more than 300 people from the town of Millbrook in my riding. It says:

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

“Whereas it is being respectfully requested that a moratorium on all water taking in excess of 50,000 litres per day be in effect until the legislated municipal watershed plans for every watershed whose streams originate within the Oak Ridges moraine have been completed and approved;

“Furthermore, that an amendment to the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan be made that would prohibit the servicing of any major development from ground or surface water sources within the Oak Ridges moraine plan area unless a watershed plan has been completed.”

I table this petition with page George.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition with regard to health care in the Parry Sound area, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas availability to see a doctor in the Parry Sound district is unacceptable;

“Whereas many residents attempt to call, get on waiting lists and are still not able to see a doctor, ultimately told to go to the emergency department if severe. This situation has deteriorated the last year.

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

“That the Minister of Health require this situation be seriously looked into so that the health care for residents seeing a doctor substantially improves.”

I support this petition.

1550

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Timmins–James Bay.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You took me by surprise the last time; I put it away.

I have a petition here signed by a number of citizens from the Earlton area, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, as citizens of Canada and residents of the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the government of Ontario that the potential takeover of Grant Forest Products by US multinational Georgia-

Pacific could have profound impacts on the forest-dependent communities of northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the government has already failed to represent the interests of the north by allowing foreign multinationals Vale and Xstrata to take over key mining interests; and

“Whereas there is a viable Canadian consortium willing to bid on these forestry assets;

“Therefore, your petitioners request the government undertake a full and diligent review of any potential selloff of Grant Forest Products operations to determine whether or not the proposed sale of it is in the best interests of the citizens of northern Ontario.”

I sign the petition.

#### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

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

“To continue the partnership with the Right to Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

“To expand the Right to Play program to other First Nations communities; and

“To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to that, as well.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in the Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional long-term-care patients in our hospitals; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario;

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

“(1) That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals, as has been done in other Canadian provinces.”

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

“Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

“Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province’s ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government’s plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province’s expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water.”

I support the petition and have endorsed it.

#### TAXATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services;

“Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget.”

I’ve affixed my signature as I am in agreement, and I give it to page Giselle.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would especially like to thank Nasir Chatha, Mohammad Qureshi and Deborah Sturgeon for having gathered the signatures. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and ask page Anne-Marie to carry it for me.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario’s history” but he still cuts health care services and nurses; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again” on Canada Day 2010 “with his new 13% combined” GST “at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13%” combined GST “will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as”—there are 20 items listed, and that’s only part of it;

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

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

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly [should] ensure that this valuable resource is used to advantage all Ontarians”—this petition is signed by members of Toronto in concert with those in the

north—“while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

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

“To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

“To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

“To respect the rights of the First Nations people and communities; and

“To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities.”

I sign the petition with respect and offer it to Mathilda.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario’s youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

“To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

“To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

“To continue to support Ontario’s families through these initiatives; and

“To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province.”

I agree with the petition, and I sign my name and send it with page Harsh.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### 2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2010, on the amendment to the motion by Mr. Duncan, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It’s my pleasure to take this opportunity this afternoon to provide the response to the budget from New Democrats. I want to start that process by invoking counsel of a fellow member who sits not far from here in the Legislature, in the chamber, and that’s the Premier.

**1600**

Many times the Premier has delivered his well-worn refrain that Ontario must adopt new ways of thinking to

keep up with the times and move on with the future. That's his favourite refrain these days, I have to say. The old ideas, the Premier always says—and reminds us on so many occasions—are a thing of the past, and we have to build a prosperous Ontario and build our prosperity with new thinking, not the old ideas of the past. This is what the Premier is constantly telling us.

It's really quite perplexing for New Democrats that the Premier continues to use that kind of language, because when we see what's in the actual budget, we see that the economic prescription the Premier has actually put forward is really, truly rooted in those very old ideas that haven't worked, those tired ideas that have actually paved the way for the very recession we're trying to crawl out of right now, and that has created so much hardship for so many families that are still struggling today in Ontario.

In fairness, I think there is no politician who would disagree that the task we have ahead of us is a very difficult one. The challenge of getting this great province back on track and ensuring a brighter future for those people who are having trouble today is an important one. People have struggled a great deal during these very difficult times. Yet none of us in the House, I don't think, should underestimate exactly how difficult it's going to be to get us back on track. The magnitude of the job before us is significant, and the real concern that people continue to have today is quite great, and rightfully so.

Anyone in this House who has knocked on a door or attended a community event when they've been home in their ridings over the past little while—I'm sure many MPPs will be in their ridings for quite a number of days coming up very shortly over the Easter holiday and into the following constituency week. Anyone who takes that time to talk to constituents is going to know that the impact this recession has had on regular, everyday families has been serious and severe. People are truly suffering; they're truly having a difficult time. You don't need to open the budget pages and look at all the fancy graphs and all the charts. That's not what it's about. It's about real folks who have had real difficulty over the last months—in fact, over a year; almost two years now—in terms of the economic downturn we've been suffering.

But when we look around at our friends, at our community members, at our neighbours who have struggled and who are working really hard to try to get out of this economic downturn, we know that they are still going to bed every day worried about the future. We know that this budget has not been something that has provided them with a heck of a lot of hope or a heck of a lot of help in terms of making ends meet. We know that this budget that the Premier brought down a week or so ago is going to do nothing to alleviate the fear they still have for the future, for themselves, for their children and for their families.

It's during these very, very challenging times, when hard-working people feel they're fast running out of places to turn for help, that families look to people like us, their elected officials, for solutions that help support

them and help them get through very difficult and tough times. They look to us, in fact, more than ever before in times like this.

There's no doubt that it's a challenge for us to come up with the solutions we need to make people feel that that hope is there again. New Democrats would acknowledge that that's definitely the case. Yet it's a challenge we must rise to. It's a challenge we can't ignore. It's a challenge that is our obligation to step up to the plate and meet. Ontario families expect a hand up when they're down, and we on this side of the House—at least New Democrats—believe they deserve to get that hand up when times are tough and when things are down.

In the conversation I've had with families across the province, certainly in my community but in other places as well as I travel from one part of Ontario to another, it's pretty clear that there are two pretty basic things that the people of this province were looking for in the budget. They were looking for a clear road map that would show a way out of the recession; some kind of mechanism for putting stronger tools in place to better shelter Ontario from the winds of economic uncertainty the next time they blow; a blueprint to get back to the work of assuring stable funding for our hospitals and our schools; a real strategy for building secure, good-paying jobs based on the innovations and expertise that have long made this province work.

But second, and more importantly, given the challenges that many families are facing, Ontarians were counting on this budget to deliver the kind of help that they need right now. Yes, Ontarians are willing to engage in a discussion about whether we should be pursuing the export of clean water technology or how we can best update our Commodity Futures Act. Certainly, those are conversations that people are prepared to engage in. But they were also hoping that their government might just extend the consideration of also making time for their day-to-day struggles to be addressed.

To put it another way, Ontarians just wanted this budget to give them a little bit of help, something to make it a little bit easier just to pay the bills; a little support to help keep the family budget out of the red; a small boost that would have families know that their government was actually looking out for them. In my view, that is not a heck of a lot for people to ask of their government, particularly because of the tough times that we're in.

Yet this budget offers not a single bit of help. It offers no help at all in the immediate for families in Ontario who are hoping for even a small gesture that would have made life just a little bit more affordable for them. In fact, at a time when families are bracing for the introduction of the harmonized sales tax, this budget is, in many ways, only contributing to their worry; it's making things worse for the people of this province.

Last week's budget only serves to more deeply reaffirm our belief, on this side of the chamber, that this Liberal government risks paralyzing a real recovery with this budget, and worse, making Ontarians even more vulnerable to financial instability as we move forward.

On the issue of jobs alone—the biggest single issue on people’s minds today, the largest concern that people have—on that issue alone, we know that the building of secure, durable, long-term jobs requires that we make sure that we’re building on the unique expertise that we have here in this province instead of looking at a quick fix with a jobs plan that focuses, really, solely on creating the types of positions that could again be uprooted and moved out of the province as soon as the winds shift again. But, unfortunately, when it comes to creating and protecting good jobs, budget 2010 reveals that this government is setting our province up to once again repeat the failures and the mistakes of the past.

Ontarians know that the same failed, discarded policies that left us with huge holes in our economic sector aren’t now going to somehow miraculously give us the job growth that we need to get the province back on track. Those same old policies are simply not going to work. But what we see in the budget are those same ideas that haven’t been working for the hundreds of thousands of people who have been losing jobs in this province.

New Democrats have been pretty clear about the plan that we think we need to get Ontario back on track, and it’s a pretty straightforward plan. We need to get back to some basics to do, once again, what Ontario has always done well, which is capitalizing on our strengths to build a stronger, more stable tomorrow. Ontario’s natural resources, for example, our public assets and our tax dollars, should be used to create and protect jobs and to build for Ontario’s future. Ontario needs comprehensive programs that would ensure that provincial and municipal procurement projects give preference to Ontario- and Canadian-made projects. This is a very simple policy that could be in place, that could be putting tens of thousands of Ontario workers back to work, and yet this government refuses, time and again, to implement that kind of a policy.

#### 1610

We need a policy that insists that Ontario resources are processed here in Ontario. An effective buy-Ontario, local-tax-dollars-for-local-jobs program would allow smaller and mid-sized Ontario companies to achieve the scale that they need for export and to successfully compete in global markets. This is something that would help us get back on track. It would create good-paying jobs for Ontario workers.

This government’s economic strategy is too rooted in giving up control of Ontario’s economy. Ontario must create more value-added jobs in the forestry and mining sectors. That’s something that we should be trying to do. The budget speaks not at all of these kinds of initiatives. A value-added strategy in forestry would mean more jobs making hardwood flooring and doors, engineered wood products, cabinets, furniture; and less unprocessed lumber, less raw logs simply being shipped out of this province to be processed somewhere else. In fact, we must process Ontario resources here in Ontario, not in outside jurisdictions, as much as possible, and that’s only going to happen with strong policies put in place by this

provincial government. We need the steps to be taken to keep investment closer to home and we also need action to protect the jobs that we already have.

I rise today talking about this when yet another announcement from my own community—that’s almost 700 jobs in three weeks or so—142 jobs, Lakeport Brewery, yesterday’s announcement. A couple of weeks ago, Siemens, a plant that had manufactured gas plant turbines and other kinds of turbines in Hamilton for over 100 years—we actually had the press conference about the closure of that plant in front of a cornerstone that was put in place about five years ago signifying the 100th year of that plant existing on that site, employing workers and creating good jobs with good benefits, good pensions for umpteen families, for hundreds of families, probably thousands of families over the years of operation. But unfortunately, that plant is closing.

We have to protect the jobs that we have. We can’t simply allow these companies to pull up stakes and walk out of our province, turning their back on workers, turning their back on communities—and this government has been silent. It’s been total absent of any ideas, of any policies, of any programs to keep our good jobs here in Ontario.

In fact, we know that electricity costs in this province have been driving jobs out of Ontario, driving jobs out of northern Ontario. Quebec and Manitoba have an industrial hydro rate that is 40% less than Ontario’s industrial rate. So the government, in their budget, announced a roughly 25% reduction in hydro rates for large northern industrial users; however, we know that this is something that New Democrats have been calling for, for at least five years. While this government sat on its hands and did nothing for five years, 45,000 forestry jobs were lost in northern Ontario.

My friends across the way might want to jeer and heckle at me but they should go up to Thunder Bay and they should talk to some of those workers who describe the suicides that happened in their community to the brothers and sisters that they used to work at the plants side by side with. They’ve killed themselves because there’s no hope left up there. Now, five years later, this government has the gall to try to buy off some votes and save the seats of a few members up there by throwing this pittance at northern Ontario, and it is shameful to the nth degree that they would be prepared to do that. It is callous, and I can tell the members across the way who think it’s funny that in fact the people there are suffering significantly. And they see this for exactly what it is: It is too little and it is far too late for those 45,000 workers and their families.

You know, the government put in place and they brag about a forestry sustainability fund. They say “Oh, we’ve done all kinds of great things for northern Ontario.” Well, guess what? Five years after the fund was put in place, 50% of it is still sitting in a bank account, unutilized, because this government is out of touch with the needs of the forestry industry and the needs of the people of northern Ontario.

Just as First Nations should have been consulted about the impact of the harmonized sales tax and the effect it would have on their communities, particularly in relation to their treaty rights, First Nations should have also been at the table with the government talking about the Ring of Fire. This government talks a good talk when it comes to their renewed relationship to First Nations. Every First Nations leader I've spoken to—and I've spoken to many, particularly in the last year or so—thinks it's a mockery. They know darn well the government did not talk to them about the harmonized sales tax and has begun this highfalutin plan about the Ring of Fire without even having the respect to have a dignified conversation, nation to nation, with First Nations representatives.

They can talk all they want about a renewed relationship, but everyone knows, particularly First Nations leadership, that the government is playing a game. They're playing a shell game with the harmonized sales tax, blaming the federal government, knowing it was their responsibility all along to have a conversation with First Nations leaders about treaty rights and the impact of the harmonized sales tax, and they're playing a game now, pretending that they have this relationship that they don't have at all. It's a shameful state in this province. It's a matter of basic respect and dignity for First Nations communities in Ontario.

One of the things that it will also do, if the government begins to finally do the right thing, is create opportunity for First Nations, create job opportunities for First Nations. But that's not going to happen if this government doesn't get serious about having that respectful conversation. Any discussions around the Ring of Fire have to be focused on ensuring that we can deliver sustainable jobs and resource wealth to First Nations who live there.

The government likes to pretend that the few things they put in the budget are going to be enough. It's not going to be anywhere near enough. I certainly hope that the Premier is listening in the same way that I am listening, in the same way the member for Timmins—James Bay is listening, in the same way the member for Kenora—Rainy River is listening and in the same way the member for Nickel Belt is listening to the concerns of First Nations communities, because I have to tell you that we're hearing some very concerning comments from First Nations leaders. This government has been given enough opportunity to realize that they have an obligation and that if they fulfill that obligation, there are possibilities for good things to happen. But if they once again turn their backs on First Nations communities, it will be not only their shame, but the shame of our entire province.

It's interesting: The government, in its budget, also put this piece in place that tried to show a little bit of concern—I suppose that's what they were trying to do—making it look as if they were trying to provide a little bit of support for northern Ontario families. Unfortunately, the reality is that northern Ontario families are going to get hit so hard by the harmonized sales tax that this

small, little energy credit that the government put in its budget isn't going to come anywhere near to making up just for the harmonized sales tax cost on home heating and electricity. You just have to do the math and it's really, really clear.

Obviously, the government didn't do the math. Instead, they've put this pittance in the budget that is really a slap in the face to northern Ontario families, who are not only going to have to pay more in home heating and more in electricity—and let's remember that this is year after year after year; this is for people whose hydro costs are much greater than in southern Ontario, simply because of seasonal issues and the length of their winter; families whose heating costs are significantly higher than the people in southern Ontario's, simply because it gets a heck of a lot colder there for a heck of a lot longer. This government puts a few pennies on the table, not even acknowledging that it won't even cover off those two pieces. But guess what else? The people of northern Ontario don't have a TTC. They don't have a transit system; they drive everywhere. And the cost of gas, come July 1, is going to go up 8%. So never mind that this small credit that the government has put in the budget isn't even going to cover the HST on home heating and electricity; what about gas in your car, which, again, is something that northerners use a lot more than people in southern Ontario who have actual other transportation options. It is a slap in the face. We're not even talking about the cost of getting your hair cut, taking your pet to the vet, your funeral costs, fees for—

1620

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Sports.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:**—sports—thank you, Paul Miller, member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—fees for kids to join. I was in northern Ontario not too long ago with a hockey association that is extremely concerned about the impact of the HST on the fees that they're going to have to charge their players, that they're going to have to charge their teams for registering. It's going to hit very, very hard. And this government thinks that the pittance that they put in the budget is enough to placate the people of northern Ontario. I can tell you very much that it's not going to be the case.

It's really, really obvious that this government continues to focus on catchy quick fixes but that no long-term strategies exist. No long-term strategies exist to make life more affordable for families and for people in northern Ontario or across this province; and no strategies exist, no plans, no real, firm plans to create decent jobs and get people back to work.

It's really imperative that the government have a clear plan, because we know that the harmonized sales tax, corporate tax cuts and tax giveaways to profitable banks are not going to create jobs. That's their plan, but it's not going to create a single job. A big fat tax break to RBC when they've just posted record profits ain't going to employ a single person. So I don't know why the government insists on these old kinds of policies—these across-the-board, no-strings-attached corporate tax give-

aways. That doesn't help anybody. Well, it helps the CEOs of the banks, perhaps, increases their annual bonus a little bit, perhaps, but it doesn't put a single piece of bread on the table for hard-working Ontarians who are out of luck with this government's budget.

High-wage, good, quality jobs can actually be created by carefully targeting financial incentives towards quality investments in plants and in machinery, computer technology, new employment and skills training. We need to target those investments, we need to tie the money to job creation, not just this largesse—these huge tax cuts for people who are already making money hand over fist in this province. The inputs for the government's harmonized sales tax are going to cost the treasury \$4.5 billion annually, and its corporate income tax rate reduction is going to cost the treasury a further \$2.4 billion annually.

We in the NDP simply don't believe that these tax cuts are the best use of \$7 billion of our tax money a year. We don't think that our tax revenue stream should be reduced by \$7 billion with nothing to show for it, with no benefit whatsoever to the vast majority of people in this province. A more targeted use of that kind of money, a more targeted use of \$7 billion—in fact, probably a more targeted use of even far less than \$7 billion—could create many, many more jobs, if it was invested wisely. In particular, creative and timely use of tax credits for new investments and new hiring in Ontario—something that's done in Quebec, something that's done in Manitoba and other provinces—is one other idea that is far more effective than the no-strings-attached corporate tax giveaways that this government favours.

Just as Ontarians are looking for pragmatic plans and ideas for job creation, they are also looking for some real action in other areas. One of those areas is an area that New Democrats have been talking about for quite some time, and that is the area of pensions. People were hoping that we could get some real action on the building of a pension strategy for the people of this province. We need a pension strategy that's going to give working people security and dignity once they retire. The government, in fact, has introduced Bill 236. It's more or less a house-keeping bill. It tinkers with some of the minor issues around Ontario's pension system. The budget did hint that a more substantive bill was perhaps coming forward. I'm hoping against hope that that more substantive bill is actually going to have some kind of effect on the vast majority of working people in this province who don't have a pension plan.

One of the things that we didn't see—that we didn't hear any hint of—was the commitment to increasing the pension benefit guarantee fund to \$2,500, something that not only have New Democrats been calling for, for quite some time, but even the government's own expert, Harry Arthurs, in his report that they commissioned—a report they commissioned, by the way, to get them over the last election, because they didn't want to talk about pensions before the last election, so they got this report commissioned. The report finally came forward about a year and a half ago, and still the government is dragging its

feet. But what we are not hearing is that their pension expert, who agrees with New Democrats—we're not hearing that they're going to make that commitment to the pension benefit guarantee fund.

What is that fund? That fund is there so that when workers have a plant closure and the pension plan is wound up and is underfunded, what needs to happen is that people can access the pension benefit guarantee fund to top up their pensions, or basically top up their income, up to \$2,500. That's what we would like to see. Right now it's \$1,000, and that's simply not reflective of the kinds of pensions that people should be getting but are losing as a result of these windups that are underfunded. If Harry Arthurs, their own expert, suggests it—New Democrats have been calling for it for quite some time—I don't understand why this government is not prepared to actually put in place an increase in the pension benefit guarantee fund, a top-up to the maximum of \$2,500.

Do you know what else wasn't there? There was nothing in the budget to hint that they might actually put together an Ontario pension agency to help out stranded pensions. This is another recommendation we've brought forward that Harry Arthurs was very, very much encouraging in his report, but we're not hearing any sound from the government that they're prepared to put that kind of agency together, a kind agency that actually would have helped Nortel pensioners in their situation. But the government apparently is not prepared to take the advice of the people they pay to prepare these very intensive studies.

There is no mention at all, unfortunately, on the most important issue that faces us in Ontario. There was no mention at all of the fact that two thirds of Ontarians have no pension plan at all. Two thirds of the people of this province have no pension plan at all. It's an enormous problem that needs to be addressed immediately. We know the demographics of this province. We see very clearly what is going to happen in terms of retirements and the increase in retirements over the next few decades with the baby boom getting to the age of retirement. It is inexcusable that the biggest problem in terms of the pension issue in this province is simply being ignored by the government of Ontario. Two thirds—that's unbelievable. I'm very proud that New Democrats have thought about this—we've consulted for years; the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has done a significant consultation on this—and in January we were able to unveil an Ontario retirement plan that actually is pragmatic, modern and meets the needs of the people of this province in a way that I think makes a lot of sense.

The reality is that the issue of pensions is a discussion that's long overdue. It's a really serious issue that cannot simply continue to be glossed over and ignored by this government, because the fact remains that 65% of Ontarians do not have a workplace-based pension plan, and that simply needs to change. What our plan does is it basically makes it the case that all workers in Ontario—every single worker in Ontario—would be able to participate in a workplace-based pension plan. So that

65% would be able to start saving for their retirement through a pension plan that is participatory by both themselves and their employer.

**1630**

We encourage the government to take that plan, to adopt it as its own and to implement it here in Ontario so that the working people of this province have something they can rely on when it comes to their golden years, after many years of working at various workplaces in the province.

Under our workplace pension plan, an employee would automatically be enrolled. If our plan were to come into existence, automatically every worker would be enrolled in this plan. They would have to pay a small contribution on every paycheque, and that contribution would be matched by their employer. No matter where you work and no matter how many times you change employers, from the time you're 16 years old, if that's when your first job is, or if your first is when you're 15 years old, till the time you reach retirement age, you would have this little bit being put away in a public instrument, in a public plan, not a plan that's put together by some insurance company or some bank that gouges you with fees and rips you off with rates—not that kind of plan.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Not like a Bernie Madoff plan—not one of those.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** No, definitely not a Bernie Madoff plan.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** No Bernie Madoffs.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** No.

In fact, under our plan, people would have a public option for saving. From our perspective, that's extremely important. Unfortunately, all this government seems to be prepared to come up with is the same old kind of system that doesn't work right now. The RRSP system simply doesn't work, and I'm not the only one saying that.

Don Drummond, someone who they love to consult with, says that. He says that after 50 years or more, RRSPs have simply not proven the potential that they thought they would be able to achieve. In other words, the vast majority of people don't have them, the vast majority of people haven't been putting money away, and the vast majority of people are going to retire into poverty unless this government decides to do something about it, get its act together and put together a reasonable, practical plan.

Why'd I say "practical?" It's practical because our plan doesn't force people in. You would automatically be enrolled, but you're not forced in. If you believe that you actually have another vehicle for saving that you've been putting into, and you think it's secure, you can opt out of our plan. You don't have to be in the plan if you don't want to. You would be automatically enrolled, but if you wanted to opt out, you would have that choice. It's a very reasonable approach, it's a very mature approach, and it's an approach that recognizes that there are people who really do already have that piece covered off.

But I have to say that we, unfortunately, have a government that refused to make any commitments whatsoever

in this regard. What we're going to end up doing in this province, and New Democrats are going to continue to do it, is push the government to do the right thing, push the government to adopt our plan, push the government to increase the pension benefits guarantee fund to the \$2,500 and put in place the kind of pension agency that would save the pension funds of organizations like Nortel, which I already mentioned; AbitibiBowater is another good example. There are things that can actually progressively be done by this government to address the retirement incomes of so many hard-working people in this province, but unfortunately they're not prepared to do it.

There are a couple of other issues that families have been telling us that they're really concerned about. One of the biggies, of course, is their health care system. The government has sent some pretty clear signals, and they're not positive ones, in their 2010 budget when it comes to health care. The signal that the government is sending is that there are going to be yet more cutbacks in the health care sector.

We've already seen what has happened in Ontario. We see the creeping privatization of health care under the direction of this Liberal government, and we're going to continue to see more and more of it as this government continues to cut back in terms of its health care investment.

Hospitals right now are announcing reduced numbers of surgeries on an annual basis. They're talking about cancelling and deferring surgeries on a constant basis. There is less care right now, nurses are telling us and health care aides are telling us, less hands-on care right now for patients, less supervision of patients in Ontario. There are massive layoffs of front-line staff here in this province. This is before the cuts in the 2010 budget. This is what people are experiencing already, before last week's announcement.

Of course, Ontarians are already very rightfully worried. It's abundantly clear that something about this government's health care strategy simply is not working, yet the government's proposals on health care rest squarely on starving the health care facilities that are already being forced to cancel and defer procedures and hand out pink slips to critically needed front-line staff.

They've been in this chamber within the last week. We've had nurses from cancer clinics in London come here and say the government is taking away their jobs. The government's laying them off and pulling their support from breast cancer patients and from other patients in the oncology department. This is what this government thinks is good health care, good delivery, but it's the opposite. Patients in this province are telling me, they're telling my colleagues, and they must be telling the government members, because they're telling us that health care is eroding. It's eroding at a very fast pace here in province, and people are very, very concerned already. The government's already clearly failing when it comes to its commitments on health care.

But instead of addressing that in this budget, instead of doing something to reassure people that the health care

that they want and deserve is actually going to be there for them, we get a government that's telling hospitals, "You're not even going to get funded at the bare minimum of what you told us you needed just to keep a very terrible situation in place." The government is saying, "We don't even want it to be terrible. We want it to be worse than terrible, so we're going to give you even less."

That means the 1,800 nurses that have been laid off the last year—that number is just going to grow. Here's a government that, a couple of years ago, was bragging that they were going to hire all kinds of nurses. I can't even remember what the figure was. It was quite significant. It's later on in my remarks, so I'll come to it eventually.

But the reality is that they've done the opposite. They talk a nice game. They talk a nice game, and they brag, and they do the photo ops, and they send out the press releases. But day in and day out, the people of this province see what's happening to their health care system. It's falling apart. It's falling apart under the mismanagement of this government, and people are suffering as a result.

We had people here today, people in the chamber this very day from communities like Port Colborne and Fort Erie who are talking about real people, real tragedies that are occurring before their eyes day in and day out because emergency wards have been closed in their communities and people are being forced to travel significant distances with negative health effects because of this government's decision to shut those services off from those families. That's a disgrace.

With hospital-based funding at less than half the rate of growth and one that falls below the increase that stakeholders had all called for, which was 2%—the government gave only 1.5%—we're worried that hospital care in this province is going to continue to decline.

You know what? The worst thing about it is that instead of there actually being a plan on how to turn things around in the health care sector, the government puts these cuts in place that force hospitals into these knee-jerk reactions. They say, "We're not even going to fund you at the bare minimum that you ask for." Hospitals are in a scramble, and what do they end up doing? Cut surgeries, lay off nurses, reduce the access to care for people in communities. That's not a plan. That's not a plan; that is a shameful, shameful mismanagement of our very precious health care dollars.

Meanwhile, CEOs walk away with \$700,000, \$900,000, over \$1 million—seven figures in terms of their compensation packages. You ask any family and they'll tell you that they think that that's just wrong. That's just absolutely wrong, expecting nurses to take a pay freeze or get laid off while CEOs are making seven-figure salaries. This government has allowed CEOs' salaries to go up by 36% from 2003 to 2008—five years, 36%—and last year alone another 7%. So shame on them. While nurses are being laid off, surgeries are being cancelled, emergency wards are closing and beds are shutting down, the Liberal friends at the very top are

having their pockets filled by this government. It's an absolute disgrace.

Yet what we are going to see is more of the same, because we know the hospitals have their budgets increasing to the tune of about 3.5% annually—that's the regular annual increase—and the government is only providing 1.5%. The simple math shows us that this funding is a prescription for disaster in this province, and that's exactly where this government is headed. It's headed for a disaster in health care. It's extremely worrisome, given that the direct cuts to front-line services and patient care actually started long before this budget was announced a week ago, long before the implementation of these cuts has actually taken place.

The Ontario Hospital Association, in fact, said that any increase under 2% was going to undercut the government's goals with respect to reducing wait times in emergency departments, and obstruct any reduction in surgical wait times, and erode public confidence in our health care system.

So I hope the government is proud and I hope their ministers are happy that the Ontario Hospital Association is giving them such a damning perspective in terms of what the future is going to hold. And I'll repeat it—what the future is going to hold, from the OHA's perspective, based on what this government has just put forward in their budget:

- reducing wait times in emergency departments—those goals are going to be undercut;

- obstruction of any reduction in surgical wait times. In other words, surgical wait times are not going to get any better either;

- it's going to erode the public confidence in our health care system. I would add "further"; it would further erode. Because I can tell you, where I come from there is already significant erosion of public confidence in the health care system.

This government's health care cuts basically reflect a wilful and deliberate decision to destabilize our hospitals. Shame on them for that.

It's interesting, because we've heard some language around a series of reforms that the government is talking about, and the language goes something like "increasing of efficiency and effectiveness in the health care system," yet there's not a scrap of evidence that any variation on a scheme that ultimately amounts to further private involvement will in any way improve patient care in this province.

What we do know is that the patient-based funding model is a competitive model of health care delivery that has been shown in the UK and other jurisdictions to skew incentives for hospitals. In fact, what these programs have done is—they were scaled back. So in the UK, where this plan that the government is now putting out there has been tried—the UK actually pulled back on that model. Why did they pull back? They simply were willing to admit that the end result was that hospitals were not getting the kind of funding they needed to provide the services that were necessary for patients.

So this kind of model doesn't solve the systemic problems that we currently have in our health care system. Instead, it's just more of the same from a government that's willing to pick winners and losers not only when it comes to jobs, but also when it comes to hospitals in Ontario.

We've even actually been through this experiment ourselves in Ontario. Maybe the government doesn't know its own Ontario history when it comes to hospital funding and hospital experiments in terms of funding. In the 1980s, Ontario applied a limited activity-based funding program in specific areas, and before long, do you know what happened? The evidence they got back as a result of the application of the very thing that they're looking to do again—it's kind of like back to the future, eh? Twenty years later, they're going to put in the same thing that failed back in the 1980s.

Postpartum mothers were being forced out of the hospital early. The readmission rate for newborns surged to 60%—60%. If that isn't an indicator that that kind of system doesn't work, I don't know what is. This was a limited experiment. It was only tried in a couple of places, and where it was tried, those readmission rates went up by 60%, but where it wasn't tried, everything stayed the same. So it's not like there was some other kind of environmental variable that was going on, some kind of other issue that was creating those results. The results were very clear: The readmission rates indicated that the system simply was ineffective and was problematic, specifically for the outcomes of the health of the newborns.

Anyway, the bottom line is that these experiences should send a really clear message to the government that they should put the brakes on this plan. They should put the brakes on any plan to reintroduce this kind of failed, anachronistic model of health care funding that doesn't work in the UK and that didn't work when it was tried before in Ontario. Why put in place something that has already proven to be unsuccessful? It's simply wrong-headed.

We've been clear that it's imperative that things do change so that we can actually start to guarantee a high standard of patient-focused care well into the future. We do want to see some change in our health care system. We believe, however, on this side of the House, that there are far more intelligent ways of going about that. I'm going to share a few of those with you, some of the ideas that New Democrats have been putting on the table, including our health critic, the MPP for Nickel Belt. I'm going to put three of them on the table right now during my speech here—ways we can save money in our health care system without cutting front-line services to patients.

In the first place, we should start to have the courage to take on the bureaucratic excesses that exist, some of which I've already talked about, and the consultant contracts that this government seems to favour. The eHealth debacle really did clearly show that too many people are seeking to make a profit off of the health care system

without providing a single bit of hands-on, front-line patient care, and that's a big problem within our system. A lot of people want to get rich at the health care trough who aren't even touching the patients. In fact, when I talk to Linda Haslam-Stroud, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, those are the words she uses to describe the work they do, "the people who actually touch the patients." Those are the people we should be providing resources to, the people we should make sure are there in our health care system. Instead, vast amounts of money are going to all kinds of people who don't, at all, touch the patients. That's one of the big problems we have with our system. The growing salaries of senior managers and bureaucrats need to be brought under control once and for all. Once and for all, we need to get a handle on the huge amounts of money being paid to these top bureaucrats, which simply grow and grow every passing year. Seven-figure salaries don't make sense, particularly when we're firing nurses at the same time.

Another thing we need to do is to actually focus more on prevention in this province. According to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, the province spent \$27.8 billion on direct costs for treating chronic diseases in 2009—\$27.8 billion on direct costs for chronic disease. Some 90% of type 2 diabetes, 80% of coronary heart disease and 30% to 40% of cancers could actually be avoided. They can be avoided with good nutrition, with regular exercise, the elimination of smoking and stress management. If we put some of our resources into these areas that help people to stay healthy or to get healthy, then we will be taking that figure of \$27.8 billion and reducing it significantly. In the meantime, we would have Ontarians who are a lot more happy and a lot more healthy. Yet, we have no meaningful wellness plans that focuses on helping to ensure that Ontarians have the resources to stay healthy and avoid getting sick in the first place. The government has simply ignored this particular area and is doing nothing about it. So instead of helping people to stay healthy, we treat them when they're sick, and we spend billions and billions of dollars doing it.

Third, we need to have a plan to move people out of hospitals. Those patients who are in hospitals only because there's no other place for them have to be moved out of hospitals and back into their homes or another more appropriate facility.

You know, caring for a person in a hospital is very costly. It costs \$600 a day more to care for a person in a hospital than it would to provide for the same person's care in their own home. But thousands of hospital beds continue to be tied up in Ontario with patients who are called alternative-level-of-care patients. These are patients who actually need an alternative level of care, one that needs to be provided somewhere else than a hospital bed: Their home is the best place. In some cases, that's not possible. Long-term-care centres are the other place. Yet these patients are stuck: They're stuck inside the hospitals. And while they're stuck there, at \$600 a day, other patients are unable to access the emergency

wards because the whole system is bound up by the fact that the patients can't get the care that they need outside of the hospital.

**1650**

The government has talked about alternative levels of care many, many, times. We hear the talk over and over and over again, but we don't see the action. We don't see the resources being poured into home care. We don't see the solutions being put out into the community that would actually start taking the pressure off of hospitals. Instead, we end up with the same situation of hospitals that are stuck, without the ability of moving on the patients who don't need to be there anymore, and as a result, they are not able to bring other patients in the emergency door.

For no other reason than to save face, this government needs to get serious about these kinds of reforms, the kinds of reforms that not only New Democrats but other health professionals have been urging it to look at for years now.

As I already mentioned, 1,800 nurses lost their jobs last year. That's before this government's cuts in its current budget. Despite the budget promise—here's that figure we were talking about earlier: The budget promise in 2008 was to hire an additional 9,000 nurses. In 2008, 9,000 additional nurses were supposed to be hired by 2011-12.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's funny: The ministers across the way are saying, "Oh, we already did it." Meanwhile, they haven't even reached anywhere near their target, and they're going backwards. They've laid off 1,800; they've come nowhere near the 9,000. In fact, they themselves admitted quite some time ago that they weren't going to meet those targets, but now they're going backwards. In fact, they've been going backwards for quite some time. The very people who provide the hands-on care that people need are being laid off by this government. The budget makes it clear that the plan to continue to cut back in health care means that there's simply going to be more of those kinds of layoffs over the upcoming year.

It's really obvious that this government is lurching from crisis to crisis, and they have no plan whatsoever to stabilize our health care system. It prefers band-aid solutions, unfortunately, to real blueprints that'll get us somewhere in terms of our health care system.

One of the things that we did see recently that we were happy about was the almost \$64 million in child care funding that was provided. That was something that New Democrats supported. We thought it was a good first step. But the thing that's problematic, once again, is that it's a band-aid solution. It addresses only half of the problem, and the government knows very well it only addresses half of the problem. The government barrelled ahead with its all-day-learning package. It wasn't prepared to do that in a way that was going to keep the system stable. Instead, it wanted to make some cheap political wins, and so as a result, it rammed through this

plan. Instead of following the blueprint that was provided—and that they commissioned—by Charles Pascal and putting in place a transition plan and a system that was going to be stable over time, they had to rush it out the door and get a good announcement. As a result, they're going to destabilize the child care system. Everybody knows it.

The \$64 million is going to replace the federal funding that the government chose to use over a five-year period to provide some spaces in this province, so that's positive. But when those four- and five-year-olds come out of those child care centres, the whole system is going to be put into a crisis. What's going to end up happening? Unless this government is prepared to solve the other half of the problem, parents of younger children are going to see their fees skyrocket. Child care centres are going to close in community after community after community. We already see it happening in places like Windsor, right? This government has no solutions. It refuses to acknowledge what every single person in the child care sector is telling them: that they are simply going to destabilize the child care system for the goal of putting a nice little red ribbon around their all-day learning program. And do you know what? New Democrats support all-day learning. We think it's the right thing to do, but it's not the right thing to do on the back of a child care sector that has already been a patchwork for 30 years in this province; it's not the right thing to do unless it's done properly. For the life of me I can't figure out why this government commissions these studies, asks these experts for their best advice and then ignores it—ignores the best advice and puts all of these parents, children and families into jeopardy. It's simply unacceptable.

But it's not new. It's the modus operandi—is that what you say, member for Welland?—of this government: knee-jerk reactions, band-aid solutions, no long-term plans, crisis after crisis. It's no wonder that things are not getting better for the people of this province but simply getting worse.

I only have five minutes left; I'm quite surprised. I didn't think I would go for the whole hour, and I still have many, many pages of points to make.

The other thing I wanted to talk a little bit about is the other end of the education system because, again, we see a government that is failing students. They're failing our youngest children and their families, but they're also failing families of our older students, of our higher education students. Because what we see is a budget that once again is pleased and happy to have the government continue in its old pattern. What is that pattern? The highest tuition fees of any students anywhere in this country are paid here in Ontario—the highest tuition fees. The lowest per capita investment for students in post-secondary education is here in Ontario.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Number 10.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Number 10 out of 10. That's the proud record that this government is content with. Yet they want to open up all kind of spaces for fee-

paying students from around the world. And they refuse to acknowledge that the students in this province are leaving their post-secondary studies with debts the size of mortgages. They refuse to acknowledge the fact that they are changing the education system so that the type of education that people end up with, even after their university degree, is worth little more than the paper it's written on because they're relying on part-time professors, they're relying on staff that are not given appropriate hours, that are asked to cobble together a few courses over the period of a school term or a school year. The quality of the education in this province is getting worse while the cost is becoming more expensive. It's a shameful lack of commitment to post-secondary education by this government.

There are a number of other issues that I want to touch on. One is the issue of special diets. Here's the other thing the government wants to do. They put together a budget, and they basically say that in order to get things under control, while CEOs of hospitals are allowed to walk away with seven-figure salaries, the people who are suffering the most in this province—people on social assistance, people who are on social assistance and are unwell, people who are on social assistance and are unwell and require special dietary products to help them become a little bit more well, a little bit more healthy—what does this government do? It cuts them off at the knees, cuts out the special diet, and tries to save a couple of bucks on the backs of the most vulnerable people in this province. That is a shameful picture of what this government is all about. It is absolutely indecent that they would make that kind of move.

This is a government that used to talk about a commitment to an anti-poverty strategy. They have abandoned all pretense of even caring about the growing poverty rates in this province. There's not a single word about affordable housing in this budget. It's a shameful, shameful state of affairs when we see a government that's prepared to tackle a deficit by cutting off special diet, by making sure that the people living in poverty in this province continue to live in poverty, and likely deeper poverty, while at the same time the richest, wealthiest corporations walk away with \$2 billion of tax cuts. Shame on them. Their priorities are absolutely wrong—at least New Democrats believe their priorities are absolutely wrong.

**1700**

Another thing we're going to end up doing is paying more for transit fees in the city of Toronto—three bucks already; transit fares are at that level now. And what do we see? We see the government take \$4 billion out of a transit plan that is going to mean all kinds of implications for the people of this area and the people of northern Ontario. Why? Because the trains aren't going to be built, jobs are going to be lost, the environment is going to be affected and the economy is going to be affected.

The board of trade is very critical of this government. It gave them a "D" already—a "D"—in terms of their transportation report card. They are already failing,

almost, and yet they cut transit. The people in Thunder Bay who need jobs so desperately are going to see a risky situation with the Bombardier plant. Why? Because the development of 400 trains is going to be postponed in this province, so that we end up in a situation where those workers, who should have had those jobs now and into the future, will not get those jobs because the investments that need to be there by the company can't be assured without those orders. With those orders cancelled, the people at Bombardier are not going to be able to attract the bidding for orders around the world, because those second-generation trains, the cutting-edge ones of the future, are being held back by this government—lost jobs in Toronto, lost jobs in Thunder Bay and a disgusting lack of vision by this government in terms of transit for Toronto.

Speaker, I've run out of time but I do believe I've put most of the issues that New Democrats are concerned about on the table here. I wish that the government would seriously reconsider some of the directions it took in last week's budget.

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to be able to rise in the Legislature this afternoon following the delivery of the budget by the minister last week and the responses from both the leader of the official opposition and, today, the leader of the third party, and to begin the debate in the context of members in a rotational fashion.

I'm going to take a bit of time in the 20 minutes allocated to provide some context on where we've been, a little bit on where we are, and where this budget will take us.

The leader of the third party spent some considerable time speaking to the issue of health care. There is a tendency in debate in this place to focus on what is wrong with what we're doing, as opposed to sometimes the very good things that happen.

I want to read into the record, if I could, a letter to the Windsor Star from Karen Metcalfe of Windsor. This is dated Tuesday, March 30, 2010. Actually, it was a Friday, March 19 letter, but the clipping came out later. Here's the letter to the Windsor Star:

"Over the past month, I have noticed a significant number of letters putting down the Canadian health care system and many of the health professionals that provide care.

"These people definitely have a right to express their views and I can appreciate that people's health evokes strong emotion and frustration when they feel that they are not a priority.

"However, my experience over the past six weeks leaves me indebted to the health care system in Canada and the health care professionals in Windsor and London. I feel compelled to offer one of the success stories.

"On January 15, I took my almost-five-year-old daughter to the ER at Windsor Regional Hospital ... she had an MRI and within seven hours, she was in an ambulance on her way to London.

"When we arrived at Children's Hospital we were greeted by caring and compassionate staff who continued their great care for our entire 24-day stay. Within 36 hours of our arrival in London, McKenna underwent a 12-hour surgery to remove a brain tumour. A few days later, she had a second surgery and was in critical care for over a week.

"The entire team that oversaw her care, including neurosurgeons, nurses, social workers, child life specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, respirologists, anaesthesiologists, technicians and porters, were professional, compassionate and concerned for McKenna, as well as us.

"She had all the usual tests that were required during a hospital visit and a stay in critical care as well as six MRIs. The team co-ordinated our care at a time when we couldn't think straight and transitioned us back to Windsor with the services we would need to continue our daughter's recovery.

"Because we live in Canada, we were never handed a bill for the services we received and we never will be. I am not suggesting that the system is perfect but it does give the care to those that need it the most when they need it.

"It is also giving my family the opportunity to celebrate my daughter's fifth birthday with her this week. We might sing O Canada, instead of Happy Birthday as we blow out the candles."

It's signed, "Karen Metcalfe, Windsor."

I read that letter into the record. I don't know if anyone has made reference to it in the past few days. I happened to see it in the clippings and thought, in the context of this debate today, that it's always important to put before this Legislature that our professionals in Ontario, our public service, our health care system, provide high-quality service at a time when we particularly need it. I can attest to that on a personal level, from my own personal experience and that of my family, that my experiences have been very much like the Metcalfe family.

I want to take the balance of 15 minutes or so to speak to the 2010 budget at this point in time. I'm pleased to be here to do that this afternoon. The past year has been extremely challenging, with the global recession that we've been experiencing affecting many jurisdictions, and certainly Ontario has been among those. Countries around the world are facing sharp declines in revenue, increasing expenses as people turn to governments for support. In Ontario, we're clear about what we have to do in these times: We have to create jobs, we have to help families, and we have to establish the conditions for future economic growth.

On March 25, Minister Duncan presented our government's seventh budget, and the budget will take immediate action to make Ontario more competitive now and, as importantly, into the future. We're working to bring growth back to our economy while continuing to move to a firmer fiscal footing. The McGuinty government's 2010 budget details the steps that we are taking to

respond to the present challenges and lay out a plan to cut the deficit and then eliminate it entirely. It's the right plan for the times.

Since taking office six years ago, we've remained firm in our commitment to improve the public services Ontarians have come to expect, and I'd suggest that the Metcalfe letter reflects our part in doing that. We're making investments in infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and preserve and create jobs throughout this province. In skills training, we're investing to help unemployed workers retrain for new careers and, in our communities, to keep Ontarians working and help those who are the most vulnerable. These are the measures to establish the conditions for future economic growth as we work to lessen the impact of the current recession.

Our plan is working because we are seeing signs that the economy is turning around. In the third quarter of 2009, the province's economy returned to growth. Real GDP rose by one half of 1%. In January 2010, the Canadian GDP by industry advanced some six tenths of 1%, exceeding economists' expectations. This growth in January marked the fifth consecutive monthly gain and the strongest since December 2006.

Our economy is also on the rise. Just yesterday, Honda Canada announced that it will start up a second shift and add 400 jobs at its second assembly plant in Alliston in early 2011.

I want to speak, if I can, just for a minute about the Japanese Automobile Manufacturers Association, or JAMA, because yesterday they were celebrating their 25th anniversary here at the Legislature. At that time, they were welcomed by Minister Papatello, and at the same time we heard from the president of Honda Canada.

For every car that the Japanese auto manufacturers sell in Canada, they build one in Canada. I think our history would have us think that they sell all of these cars and don't put much back into the economy, but their record is that for every car they sell in Canada, they build one. But the reality is, they build them here in Ontario even if they sell them across the country. They build them here in Ontario. I know that other members of the Legislature will appreciate their long-standing work here in the province of Ontario.

**1710**

This news from Honda just follows an announcement by General Motors last Friday to add a third shift to its Oshawa facility. I know that the other Durham members, as well as members throughout the House, would want to join me in congratulating General Motors and its employees and to celebrate in their success.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** This will add a third shift to its Oshawa facility, returning many of the needed jobs in that community.

General Motors is also increasing production at its CAMI facility in Ingersoll. The third shift in Oshawa will result in the recall of 600 workers by October 2010, while CAMI will add about 70 jobs by August.

There are other indicators that the economy is in recovery. Housing sales are at record levels. Consumer and business confidence has been improving steadily over recent months. Retail sales are on the increase. Auto sales have risen by some 30% from their December 2009 low. Credit markets are stabilizing. Ontario employment has increased in six of the last eight months as of February this year.

We're proud of this progress, but this economic downturn is not over. Many Ontario families are still coping with uncertainty caused by unemployment or under-employment. Companies, big and small, are still grappling with new ways of doing business in what's becoming a new economy. Municipalities are struggling to respond to the increasing demands of their citizens. Our work is still cut out for us.

The 2010 budget, part of the McGuinty government's Open Ontario plan, will benefit Ontario families, its businesses and communities. It will build on the progress that is slowly but surely making headway toward economic stability. It lays out the measures to manage spending, eliminate the deficit and secure the province's long-term financial sustainability.

On March 8 of this year in the speech from the throne, the Honourable David Onley unveiled the Open Ontario plan, the McGuinty government's five-year plan to create those new opportunities for jobs and economic growth. We see the need for Ontario to be open—more open to global trade, more open to investment, more open to new ideas and more open to the people of the world.

The McGuinty government's 2010 budget moves that plan forward and protects the progress Ontarians have made in our schools and hospitals at the same time as we work to eliminate the deficit caused by this global recession. It sets out the government's priorities to help people and help business.

The 2010 budget details our government's investments in post-secondary education, in jobs, growth in the north, full-day learning, child care and completing the stimulus infrastructure and managing the fiscal house responsibly.

Ontario's colleges and universities play a critical role in equipping people and preparing them for success. It's why just a few years ago the Reaching Higher plan was the centrepiece of an earlier budget, and that's why post-secondary education remains a top priority for our government.

As part of the Open Ontario plan, new commitments to post-secondary education will include adding 20,000 new spaces to colleges and universities in 2010-11, reflecting a new annual investment of \$310 million in post-secondary operating grants.

I had the opportunity over just the past few days to speak with Ron Bordessa, who is the president of UOIT, as well as Sheldon Levy, from Ryerson University. It actually just worked out coincidentally that I was speaking with both of them, but what is particularly coincidental is that my riding straddles both Durham and Toronto, so I had the chance to talk to university presidents in both Toronto and Durham. Both of those

gentlemen—and I think it's reflective of the sector as a whole—were very positive, obviously congratulatory, about the investments we're making and the job they can do with the investments for those 20,000 students that we're preparing for.

We're aggressively promoting Ontario's post-secondary schools abroad to encourage the best students from around the world to study and settle here and to contribute to our economy, and improving students' ability to navigate Ontario's post-secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit transfer system. One of the things we've been hearing during our time with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, specifically over the past year or two, and more intently from students in particular, is that we need a better mechanism to ensure that students can transfer credits, whether they be between colleges and universities, universities and colleges or between institutions. That's one of the things we want to see move forward out of this budget process.

Creating the University of Ontario Online will bring the best professors in the top programs at Ontario's universities into the homes of those who want to pursue higher learning.

Each year, more than one million Ontarians rely on Employment Ontario for help in finding work and acquiring job training. The McGuinty government has boosted Employment Ontario's spending on jobs and skills training to about \$1.6 billion in 2009-10 and 2010-2011. The special focus will be on workers affected by the global economic recession. By August of 2010, new, one-stop access will be in place to make it easier for job seekers, employers and communities to obtain the full range of programs and services they need.

We'll launch the targeted initiative for older workers with 30 projects in 25 communities across the province. This is a \$58.5-million joint venture of the federal and provincial governments to assist unemployed older workers in vulnerable communities. I'd add, at this point, that any opportunity that we have where the federal government, the provincial government and even our municipal partners as the other order of government can find mechanisms to work together is what Ontarians expect of us. No longer is it acceptable to them that we work in isolation. They very much expect that we will find those mechanisms to best use their tax dollars in a fashion that best serves Ontarians.

Ontario is also investing an additional \$35 million in its 2010-11 summer jobs program, including targeted resources for youth in high-needs neighbourhoods. The summer job program will support 110,000 employment opportunities for students this summer. We know that those young people out there will be seeking summer jobs, and to the extent that we can assist them in doing that with over 110,000 employment opportunities is very important to them.

One of the focuses of this year's budget certainly was northern Ontario. In recent years, Ontario's resource-based industries in the north have faced significant chal-

lenges, including high energy costs and global competition. But as part of Open Ontario, the 2010 document will help strengthen the northern economy. We're creating a three-year northern industrial electricity rate program, averaging \$150 million annually for qualifying large industrial facilities to reduce their electricity prices by an average of about 25%.

We're creating the office of the new Ring of Fire coordinator to lead the collective effort in advancing the economic promise in the area of the Ring of Fire. I won't speak specifically to the Ring of Fire issue. I'm anticipating that, as other members have a chance to rise in this place, one or more, particularly those in the north, will want to comment on that far more directly than I'm going to in the limited time that we have available today.

I want to talk briefly, if I can, about the green economy. It was only a couple of years ago that the Premier set us on a course to make Ontario a leader in the green economy, to make it the place that people will look to for green initiatives. We're beginning to see the fruit of that work and of that thinking. Green energy is going to be a significant source of employment in the near future. I recently spoke with a Scarborough manufacturer, who happens to live in Durham region, and he is moving very aggressively through the FIT program into the production of solar energy opportunities. He's coming from one industrial functionality and enhancing that and growing it very directly from the investments and from the encouragement that we are providing.

The McGuinty government's 2009 Green Energy and Green Economy Act is attracting new investments in renewable energy products and promoting conservation. This program will create 50,000 new Ontario jobs over a three-year span. We're also anticipating new investment in renewable generation by paying renewable energy generators under long-term contracts—it provides that level of stability. A \$7-billion investment in our green economy by Samsung C&T Corp. and the Korea Electric Power Corp. is attracting similar business to our province. We're very proud to say this is the single largest investment in renewable energy in our province's history.

1720

In this particular budget, in the Open Ontario speech, the issue of clean water has been focused on. Global demand for water is expected to rise faster than the supply that will be available. Ontario is well positioned to become a global leader in this sector as it begins to sell its services and technologies around the world. The time allocated to me doesn't provide an opportunity to talk about Eco-Tec in Pickering and the work they do in the clean water area and what they can bring to the table as we pursue the issues of clean water technology.

I'm watching the clock, even without my glasses on, and I see that I'm running out of time more quickly than I would like. To conclude, I think it's time for us to be bullish about Ontario. It's time we began to recognize the good work that's going on, the success that business is having and our part to play in that.

On behalf of my colleague Minister Duncan, I want to ask the honourable members of this chamber to support Bill 16, Creating the Foundation for Jobs and Growth Act, 2010, so that we can move forward with our vision for this province for economic growth and for the benefit of Ontarians.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's always a privilege to be able to enter the debate on the budget, regardless of the year, because it is probably the most important thing we debate as members of this chamber.

Obviously, as members of Tim Hudak's PC caucus, we won't be supporting this budget, because we've got serious concerns with how they're managing the affairs of the province. One only has to look at today's sunshine list to see that they have tripled the people making over \$100,000 in the public sector in the province since they've taken office. During that period of time, they've also doubled the debt of this province, and they have tripled our reliance on welfare cheques from the federal government through equalization.

Who would have thought, six years ago when this government took office, that Ontario would be a have-not province? Unfortunately, Mr. McGuinty has found a way to do that. It's because he is spending more money than he is taking in. It's because spending in this province has gone up dramatically. Program spending alone has gone up by 70% since they have taken office.

It might be a matter that they're proud of over there, but I can assure you that each and every day I speak to residents in the Nepean—Carleton—moms and dads like my husband, Joe, and I—who are struggling to make ends meet. They can't afford Mr. McGuinty anymore, and they certainly can't afford more tax hikes, hidden fees and surprises from this government like they found at eHealth and now with the local health integration networks.

Again, I do feel it is a privilege to speak to the Ontario budget; however, it has severely disappointed us in the official opposition and it has let the people of Nepean—Carleton down.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I too would like to share the optimism of the members across there, but I have trouble getting there.

I can only talk about Hamilton. They've mentioned a few hundred jobs here and there throughout the auto sector in southern Ontario, but let's talk about the last two months in Hamilton. Probably around 1,600 jobs have left. When I started at Stelco in 1975, I couldn't get a parking spot along Burlington Street, the industrial heartland of Ontario. I couldn't get a parking spot sometimes when I went to work in 1970s. Well, trust me: If you took a cannon and fired it along Burlington Street today, you wouldn't hit anything but may be a rat or a cat. That's how bad it is. We've got hundreds of build-

ings empty. We've got thousands and thousands of jobs gone out of the Hamilton area.

I don't know where these guys are talking all this optimism from, but it certainly isn't happening in Hamilton. Yes, we're getting some influx of medical jobs, and that's great, but let's talk about all these nursing positions they were going to create. I'll tell you right now, the graduating class in London can't get jobs. They can't get jobs, even in London, in the hospitals. These are the brightest kids that are coming out of nursing school, and they can't get a job. But there are recruiters coming up from the States looking at them, to send them down to maybe Texas or California to work as nurses, because they can't get jobs in Ontario.

This government keeps touting all the great work they're doing in the health sector. Tell me why they laid off 147 people—health care workers, cleaning staff—in Hamilton. They laid off 32 nurses at St. Joe's hospital. They're laying off more nurses at McMaster and at Hamilton General. What's going on? I don't know. They've got all these numbers. I don't know where they get them from, because it certainly isn't happening in my neck of the woods. Maybe they should get in their car, take a ride and get a dose of reality, because it is really isn't happening like they say it is.

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

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** It's kind of shameful to listen to my friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I had the pleasure of attending Hamilton Economic Development's luncheon the other day, where they announced—indeed, the member's right—that they've lost 25,000 jobs in Hamilton in the last five years. And they announced that 40,000 jobs have been created. That's not us, that's not my friend Sophia, and it's not Paul. But the sackcloth and ashes that come out of some of the members from Hamilton on the opposition are—40,000 jobs in a recession.

I tabled in this House a list of 25 companies I found on the Internet that had expanded and grown jobs—50, 60, 100 jobs—in composite materials, IT, multimedia, retail. And I sat there—I probably met two dozen CEOs of different companies, investors and labour leaders who were talking about their investments. That was before. And the McGuinty government is now delivering what? We are delivering the Innovation Park with McMaster University, making Hamilton a global leader in advanced composite materials; an LRT line down James Street, the east-west line; a new GO station at Liuna Station; a major stadium—in addition to the private sector creation of 40,000 jobs, a new stadium in west Hamilton Bay, all connected to a central arts district, a creative centre hub, an expansion of Mohawk College and some of the biggest investments in life and health sciences ever, which will have huge spin-offs.

The people I talked to in Hamilton and Ontario are excited about the Open Ontario plan. They understand that. Maybe the member from Hamilton East should talk to the president of Hamilton Economic Development

rather than the whiners and complainers who have nothing but short-term political gain by dissing the very fine city of Hamilton, which deserves better.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That certainly has livened things up.

The member for York—Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the speech given by the member for Pickering—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for York-Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to make a few comments today in response to the government's comments on the budget.

Most people understand budgeting. They understand that they have revenue, they go to work, they get a paycheque. If they're lucky, they have some savings from which they derive some interest. But what they know about that money that comes in is that there are some mandatory things like rent and food and taxes and things like that that they have to spend it on. But they also know what happens—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order, member for Hamilton East. Will the member for Hamilton East come to order, please?

Member for York—Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I want to just remind people that, as I was saying, everybody has a budget, and they understand that they must live within that budget. They understand that if they don't—they may not call it a deficit at home, but they understand that there is a gap, and that gap growing between what they have and what they have spent may reflect on the credit card as it gets maxed out. They understand the serious nature of what they are doing. So most families understand, then, that you can't spend money you don't have. This government doesn't understand that.

1730

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** First, let me extend a thanks to the members from Nepean—Carleton, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Toronto Centre and York—Simcoe for their interventions and their two-minute responses.

Let me just generalize. It wasn't much more than a year ago, in the midst of this global recession, that the discussion was very much different. I would suggest that we—the world, and Ontario was not immune to this—were on the very edge of something far more significant that we have been able to bring ourselves if not out of, then at least to avert that catastrophic situation fiscally that we were all faced with. To a large extent, we have to credit the Canadian financial system, and give credit where credit is due to the financial leadership that comes

federally for that over a great period of time. I think it has stood us in good stead as we move forward.

In the last major recession that we had, the last very significant recession, it was the member from the third party whose party was in government at that point in time. They took a different approach as to how to deal with public services. We want to build on those public services and continue to respect those people who do that job. They were busy tearing down and breaking every public service contract in the province of Ontario.

We have a different approach. We have built our public services, we respect those public services and we're going to continue to work with them as we all, together, work our way out of this problem that we have.

Governments do have to, at times, borrow money for the purposes of their business. We find ourselves in a significant recession, and we have set out a very strategic, well-planned mechanism to move out of that deficit and back to balance. In doing that, we're going to grow the economy as we move ourselves out of there. We're going to provide public services and we're also going to grow the economy and we're going to come back to balance.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure this afternoon to have an opportunity to speak to the Ontario budget that was presented last week. I hate to say it, but I don't have quite the view of the last speaker. I see this budget as being a continuation of what we've seen in the last number of years, and that is out-of-control, reckless spending.

The past speaker was talking about our situation last year. I would characterize it slightly differently. I would say we came to the edge of the cliff and we've now gone off the edge of the cliff and we have a long way—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I disregarded one comment that you made toward the chair. Now you're not in your place and you're making more—much more. You might be watching this on TV.

Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, this budget is a continuation of the past practices of the McGuinty government, and that is, they are continuing with their out-of-control spending.

It's like this government is in never-never land. They don't seem to realize that there was a recession that happened in October 2008. They're talking a good game about restraint in this budget; I'll look further into that restraint in a few minutes, but the fact of the matter is, they're going to set a record for spending this year—\$126 billion in spending this year.

When they came to power in 2003, the budget was \$68 billion. That's over a 70% increase in spending. This government doesn't have a revenue problem; they've got a spending problem. So even when we're in the midst of

a recession that started in October 2008, they just keep on finding new ways to spend more money.

We're on track to double the debt of the province—double the debt. This is debt that's going to be borne by our children and our grandchildren, as the government is at about \$140 billion—as I say, they're on track to double that debt. That means that the interest payments, as pointed out in the budget papers, are on track to double, to some \$16 billion by 2016-17—\$16 billion. That's \$16 billion just to service the increased debt that the McGuinty government is running up.

As the member from York–Simcoe was pointing out in her comments, in the last number of years Ontario families have had to live within their budget. They've recognized that there's only so much money coming in, and they have to live within their means. That's something that this government has just not been able to recognize. As I mentioned, they just keep finding new ways to spend money. They haven't been able to prioritize spending, so that when I travelled around the province recently with the pre-budget hearings, I heard that one in six children are not receiving proper children's mental health care. You hear about all sorts of health problems across the province. This budget has done nothing to stop the way this government has been ramping up public sector job creation at eight times the rate of private sector job creation. We've seen a huge increase in the number of the public sector, but we haven't seen the same thing happen—in fact, we've seen job losses in that all-important private sector.

In the budget they're talking about restraint, and I call it the “phantom” restraint, because what they've said is, they're going to have restraint for the non-unionized workers. It's kind of the tip of the iceberg; that's the way I would characterize it. They've said they're freezing salaries of the non-unionized workers. Half the budget is wages, but most of it is the unionized part of the public service. There's about 1.2 million public sector workers in the province. A couple of hundred thousand of those are municipal, so they aren't being considered. But the majority of that million are the unionized sector, so they're not being dealt with at all in this budget, really. The government is saying that when the contracts expire—most of which do conveniently after the next election—that's when they won't see pay increases. We'll see whether they really stick to that or not. I would question whether they actually will.

But with the other part of it, though, the people whose wages have been supposedly frozen immediately—if you look at the fine print in the budget bill, what does it say? Well, there are loopholes that you can drive a Mack truck through. This is in the budget bill:

“If the rate of pay falls within a pay range that is in effect for a particular position or office on the applicable effective date, the employee or office holder's rate of pay may be increased within that pay range in recognition of any of the following matters only”—and only—“if the increase is authorized under the compensation plan as it existed on the applicable effective date:

“(1) His or her length of time in employment or in office;

“(2) An assessment of the performance”—in other words, a performance review;

“(3) His or her successful completion of a program or course of professional or technical education.”

So even the supposed pay freeze on the non-unionized part of the public service isn't actually a pay freeze. This is how serious the government is about trying to rein in their out-of-control spending—not very serious at all. I think it's demonstrated very clearly when you see things like the severance pay being paid out for the HST tax collectors. I think most rational people, most businesses would agree that the purpose of severance is for transition when you lose your job. Well, those HST tax collectors, I guess come July 1st, are going to switch from being employees of the Ontario government to being employees of the federal government. They're not going to miss a day's work. They're not going to necessarily even switch geographic areas. They'll have to have a different business card. In most cases, they're getting a pay raise. This government is paying out severance, which is up to \$45,000 for each of the individual—I believe it's 1,200—HST tax collectors. How does that make any sense at all, especially when you're facing such a huge deficit in the province of Ontario? How does that make any sense? How does that show any restraint?

**1740**

The cost of that one item is some \$25 million. That's why we had an opposition day motion yesterday to debate that item. That's why, when the budget bill is debated and when we get the first opportunity, the opposition is going to move an amendment to the budget bill to give the government the opportunity to deem those workers not to have lost their jobs. I think most of us would agree they have not lost their jobs.

I would point to BC. BC is not paying severance. They had the wherewithal to look after their taxpayers' money so that they aren't paying out, in our case, an additional \$25-million severance pay to these tax collectors.

I would like to go on to some of the items that are in the budget. The government is focusing on northern Ontario. Well, it's about time because of what's happened in northern Ontario. Just about every plant, every mill, every paper mill has closed in northern Ontario. We lost some 45,000 jobs. It's about time you paid some attention to the north. They have a subsidy for energy for the people who live in the north. They're going to need it because, come July 1, everyone's energy bill is going up 8% with the HST. The lucky folks in the north are going to get some compensation for that.

We've just heard that there's also another 9.6% increase that's going through on energy prices. We've also learned recently that there's a—I believe it's \$53 million—hidden tax that's being put on everybody's energy bill across the province.

They also have this northern industrial energy plan. As usual, it's a poorly-thought-out plan. I'm sure those businesses that are left in the north will appreciate the

two-cents-a-kilowatt-hour reduction, although I've already had calls from businesses in the north.

I had a call from a business in the Timmins area just this week pointing out to me the flaws when the government starts doing their usual winners-and-losers game. This was a small, independent mill. They happen to use about one megawatt of power. The plan the government has come up with is for large industrial users, so it's only if you use five megawatts of power. All of a sudden, this mill's neighbours and competitors are going to be paying a lot less for their energy than his business. Is that fair?

I would ask also, is it fair that businesses that happen to be just south of that line that you've drawn in the sand—some that happen to be in my riding, but they're in the same business. I could name businesses like Panolam in the Huntsville area, a company that makes fibreboard and uses a lot of energy in that process; Kimberly-Clark, which makes tissue paper; or the Tembec hardwood flooring plant that are all just south—literally 10 kilometres—of the border. All of a sudden all of their competitors that are north of the border are going to have an unfair advantage against them. As usual, the plan has not been thought out very carefully.

There's been a lot of talk by the government about the Ring of Fire and the possibilities there. As opposition, we're all in favour of providing economic opportunity and trying to create jobs in the north, and mining is a great way to do it. The Ring of Fire is a very exciting chromite discovery in northwestern Ontario. The problem is that this government's high-energy policies caused where that ore might be processed to be at risk. The more competitive energy jurisdictions of Quebec and Manitoba might be the sites for where the ore is processed. We've just seen in Timmins the large smelter at Xstrata close down. Higher energy prices were a reason for that mill shutting down.

The past members talked a lot about their green energy plan. With this government, as with so many of their plans, it's more about optics than good policy. The one thing absolutely for sure you can count on with the Green Energy Act is that all Ontarians are going to be paying more for their electricity prices—and not just a little bit more; a lot more.

This government has said there are going to be 16,000 jobs. We've heard about the Samsung jobs, where they're again picking the winners and losers, and we know that those jobs cost about \$340,000 each. But the question I have for the government is: How many jobs are we going to lose across the province because high energy prices for industry make us uncompetitive and make us, as a province, unable to attract those jobs, especially if they happen to be high energy users.

When you have your buy-high, sell-low plan, where you buy electricity at 80 cents a kilowatt hour for solar power and 45 cents a kilowatt hour for wind power, and you don't plan for the baseload because you haven't moved on nuclear energy, we know for sure that all ratepayers, including industry, are going to pay much higher electricity costs to cover those plans, which I say

are really more about optics than about providing the reliable, affordable electricity that the province needs to be competitive.

The theme of my talk has been that government spending is out of control. It is out of control because, despite us being in really tough times, they keep coming up with new programs that may be good ideas, but you have to decide: Can you afford them? Also, if you're going to do them, you should at least implement them in a way that makes sense. So they have full-day learning, a new and very expensive program that the government is coming forward with at a time when we're facing a huge deficit. That program is going to cost somewhere between \$1.5 billion and \$6 billion per year to implement, and just last week, at the early stages of Bill 242, I met with the YMCA, which runs thousands of child care spaces across the province, and they're telling me about the problems it is causing for them, partly because of the way the government is implementing it.

Bill 242 requires school boards to implement full-day kindergarten, even though the YMCA currently has all kinds of programs in the schools and is partners with school boards. They won't be allowed to run the programs before and after school because this government is dictating that the school board will run them with unionized workers, and the YMCA happens to have non-unionized workers. They are providing the program for before and after school for about \$17 per child for those families. The cost when the school board runs it is going to be about \$35 per child.

What do you think is going to happen? The YMCA is going to shut down their programs, because they're not allowed to run them, the school board will make it available at \$35 a child and the parents won't be able to afford it. So all of a sudden they're going to have to rely on other, probably less formal, methods of child care before and after school. Not only that, but the way full-day kindergarten and learning is being implemented is going to gut those child care programs. So as the leader of the third party pointed out, it is going to completely destabilize the current child care system that we have.

Health care is a huge issue for all of us. As I travel around my own riding, they're going through a deficit reduction plan right now. In the northern part of my riding, in Burk's Falls, we've seen the Burk's Falls urgent care centre close. In the current plan, they're cutting back the number of hospital beds in Huntsville and Bracebridge. In this budget, a 1.5% increase for hospitals has been put forward. That essentially means more health care cuts. We in the opposition are saying that you've created this new bureaucracy—the local health integration networks—and we see that as a diversion of money that should be going to front-line care: for the ever-increasing demand for doctors, nurses and patient care. The LHINs are a diversion of money that should be going to front-line care.

A couple of years ago, when Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare happened to have a \$1.6-million deficit, in the local paper at exactly the same time, the local LHIN was

spending \$1.6 million on upgrades to their offices and on office furniture. That's what we mean by diverting money that should be going to front-line care to the bureaucracy and to aspects of management, but not the actual health care people want.

**1750**

I can see that time is running down. I'd like to focus for a moment on the credibility of the numbers this government puts forward. The numbers change so often that you never know what game they're playing. A look back at the last year: A year ago, the budget said there was going to be a \$14-billion deficit. That was after the recession had already hit; that was October 2008. We're now in March 2009 with a \$14-billion deficit. You've had lots of time to plan. No surprise there. We're already in the recession. Then we hit June, and all of a sudden, the number goes up to \$18 billion. Well, there were some unexpected things that came along—\$4 billion—so we're at \$18 billion. Then we hit September, and surprise, surprise, the number has gone up to \$24.7 billion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Times are tough, yes.

Then, miraculously, the day before the budget is announced, it went down \$3 billion to \$21.3 billion. How did that miraculous change happen? If you read on page 68 of the budget, it says "Total revenue"—the finance minister, when he made that announcement, was saying, "Spring is here. Things are improving; things have really improved all of a sudden." When you read on page 68, it says, "Total revenue in 2009-10 is estimated to be" \$96.4 billion. "This is \$239 million ... below the fall 2009" estimate. It's below the estimate, so how did we suddenly save \$3 billion? We spent \$2 billion less on H1N1 than planned for, \$500 million less on interest, and we counted the reserve in that. That's how, miraculously, the day before the budget was presented, this year's deficit went down \$3 billion.

Those are the sorts of games this government plays. The finance minister last week was doing a speech, and he's already speculating about what's going to change next.

My time has gone quickly. I would simply like to say that the eight-year plan to balance the budget is just without credibility—absolutely without credibility. It's two elections—two elections. Especially when you look at the history of the way they play with numbers—two elections. Most economic booms don't last eight years, yet this government continues adding new programs, adding new spending, and gives us this never-never land prediction of when they're actually going to balance the budget.

It's a disappointment for the opposition. They still have not learned to try to control their spending one bit.

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the comments made by the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka on behalf of his party, the Conservative Party.

New Democrats are looking forward to a chance—we're not going to have it because it's getting close to 6

of the clock, as the Speaker is inclined to note. We're not going to have that chance today. I know that Paul Miller, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, is eager to talk about the situation in Hamilton-Niagara. It's a region that has been devastated—devastated, I tell you.

We used to reel at the prospect of losing 1,000 jobs. Now losing 150 or 15 jobs leaves us in shock because there just aren't any jobs left. We've got folks down in Niagara who've had their hopes dashed when they thought there would be a prospect of retraining, but then they realized there's nothing really to retrain for.

The casino? Well, the casino used to be the employer of last resort. If you lost your job at Atlas Steel, Union Carbide, Page-Hersey, Welland Tubes or John Deere, there was a time when you could go to Niagara College and take a course as a slot machine mechanic or as a blackjack dealer and get hired on at the casino. But the casino is laying people off now. I'm talking about the Niagara Falls casino; it's laying people off now. The slots at Fort Erie Race Track are suffering the same situation.

We've got folks coming into our constituency offices and saying, "Train me for what?" I had occasion of mentioning the other day: What are you going to do? Are you going to take a guy or gal off the production line at John Deere, who worked hard for 25, 26 or 27 years, got some good trades, maybe a welder or a pipe fitter, and put them in a tutu and send them down University Avenue here to dance the ballet at the Toronto ballet centre? Come on.

The economy is in sad, sad shape and families are reeling, families are suffering, and this government doesn't even reach out with some modest hope for those families, some modest relief, in this budget. Shame on them.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I listened very intently to the remarks from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He has been a member here for a while, and I think for a period of time he was the finance critic for the official opposition.

I think we've got to look at things in context here. We—not just Canada and the United States, but the world—experienced a severe economic downturn because of the ultimate destruction of the financial system in the United States that spread throughout the world. We went from a time in North America where we produced 17 million new units each and every year that were consumed in North America—we witnessed that that has declined to 11 million units in any given year. So that had repercussions for a fundamental restructuring of the auto sector in the province of Ontario. In the last number of days, we've heard some inkling of good news with regard to General Motors and Honda here in Ontario: that they've embarked upon a rehiring, bringing back those laid-off workers and creating some new jobs.

I would like to hear from my good friend the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka what his plan is. He said it's not credible to balance the books in eight years. I want to

know his plan for balancing the books. I want to know if he's against funding those child care spaces in the province of Ontario, and I want to know if he's against full-day kindergarten. He would do us all a big favour. He's criticized our budget. I want to know where he stands and where the official opposition stands in terms of their plan for Ontario to reduce the deficit, how they're going to handle child care spaces, and a whole range of other items in our province.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've been sitting rather quietly here this afternoon listening to some of the sidebars, but more importantly, listening to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, our critic on this file, and I commend his insight.

When he was briefing our caucus, our leader, Tim Hudak, put forward the 10 for 2010 plan—and the member from Peterborough referred to that. But I think it goes deeper than that. If the people are following the issue here today, they know that what's happening is—it's by stealth, really. They're actually extracting the future wealth of this province.

Here's what I'm saying: We know that the economy—they pumped the inflationary money in called infrastructure funding—is going to create inflation, and with inflation we know the interest rate is eventually going to go up. Here's what has happened: They've taken the debt from about \$130 billion to \$300 billion. The cost of supporting the debt today, in this budget, at the low interest we're all experiencing, is \$10 billion. If they increase that by 2%, the cost of servicing our accumulated debt is going to double almost before their term is over. So the jig is up. You're financing current spending on future taxes. Whatever way you cut it, it's borrowed money. Almost 20 cents on every dollar they're spending is borrowed, and it's borrowed from our youth and the future of this province.

So the health care that's in peril today, the economy that's in peril today, is after seven years of no plan and no vision for the province of Ontario. I'm disappointed.

Our critic certainly will bring forward for our leader a plan, and our plan is clear. We have a vision for Ontario that's missing today.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to commend the member from Parry Sound. He had a lot of good points.

I was really fascinated by some of the retorts from the government side. In particular, one member said that they had created 40,000 jobs in Hamilton. That's amazing. I have people in my office every day laid off from steel, laid off from other factories in Hamilton that have closed. I could go through the list. He admitted they had lost 25,000 jobs in the last 20 years or so, and then he said they created 40,000. I don't know what city they were created in, and I'll be looking forward to the list he's going to provide me with, the breakdown, which he said he would, of all the jobs that are in Hamilton proper that

have been created by his government in the last six years, I guess. I don't know where I was for six years, but I had lots of people lined up in front of my office looking for jobs and Second Career training. In fact, we're off the map for Second Career training.

If there are 40,000 jobs in Hamilton and 25,000 lost, I guess all those people should be gainfully employed and happy. They shouldn't be in front of my office looking for retraining or jobs. So I'm really looking forward to this list of all these, I would like to say, mystic jobs that have been created by this gentleman, who is—I don't know if he has ever set foot in Hamilton; maybe once. That's good. He was a mayor of Winnipeg, from Toronto. So I'm very curious to see—I hope he can provide me with all the names of the companies that got these 40,000 jobs and where they're located in Hamilton, because I'll be really fascinated to see that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the members from Peterborough, Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and Welland for their comments.

The member from Durham highlighted interest rates. If you go to page 49, you'll note that the government is planning on doubling the interest on the debt up to \$16.2 billion a year in 2017-18. A noteworthy fact on that is that if the interest rates go up 1%, there's a great risk, because that's another \$500 million for each 1% interest rate increase. And where do you think interest rates are

going right now? They're going up as the economy improves.

The member from Peterborough asked about what we are putting forward. We've been very clear and we've put forward 10 for 2010, and you can find those ideas at 10for2010.ca, which Tim Hudak, the leader of the PC Party, has put forward. It's ideas like dealing with red tape. I don't think red tape was even mentioned in the provincial budget. If you talk to just about any business out there, they'll tell you how they're being smothered by the red tape of this government, how it's gotten worse in the last few years, and how that makes it so much harder to do business. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that in Ontario, the cost of red tape is some \$11 billion per year. So that's something that in 10for2010.ca we plan to deal with, to change the way that businesses have to live and work and create jobs, so that instead of only being the police, like this government, the government actually comes around, explains the rules and then helps them comply with the rules instead of trying to shut down those small businesses.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being 6 of the clock or a little past, this House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on April 1, 2011. Oh, wait, I jest too soon. Tomorrow is April Fool's Day. Have a good April Fool's Day. We're adjourned until 9 o'clock on April 1, 2010.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

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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	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	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	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister 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	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of 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
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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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Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton  
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop  
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely  
John O'Toole  
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Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craiton  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial



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