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**Official Report
of Debates
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 15 April 2010

Jeudi 15 avril 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 15 avril 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CREATING THE FOUNDATION
FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS
DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE**

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted and honoured this morning to stand up and speak about the government's budget measures.

As you know, we introduced our budget quite some time ago as a result of many different things that happened in the province of Ontario, in our beautiful nation of Canada and around the globe. The economy for the last couple of years has been suffering from a lot of anxiety as a result of the collapse of the financial system in many different nations. Many banks went bankrupt, many companies closed, many factories closed and many businesses closed their doors as a result of the bad economy.

As a result of this economy, our government took extra measures to put in plans for the province of Ontario to make sure that the people of this province have a job, good health care and a good education system at the elementary, high school and post-secondary levels. Also, we made sure our infrastructure investment continued in the province of Ontario in order to stimulate our economy, maintain our prosperity and make sure that people can commute from one end to the other without any trouble.

I come from a city called London, Ontario. My city was hit hard by the collapse of financial institutions in the world. Many people from my riding of London-Fanshawe lost their jobs. Many companies closed. Many families were looking for a solution to feed their families, put food on their table and pay their bills and mortgages.

So we faced tough times in this province after many, many good years.

As you know, our government put in plans to absorb the results of this financial crisis. They put in plans to stimulate the economy; they put in plans to maintain our health care in the public domain; they put in a plan to maintain our public education system to be open for all the people in Ontario; and we also have a plan to open our universities and colleges to people from around the globe as a result of our Open Ontario for business and education.

I had the chance to visit Saudi Arabia not a long time ago. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, allow me to introduce my friend, who came from Saudi Arabia a couple of days ago, the president of the Canadian Dawah Association, Mr. Shazaad Mohammed. He was our guide when we were there.

We had the privilege and honour to visit many different institutions. By the way, I went with my colleague Dave Levac, the member from Brant. We had the privilege to meet government officials, we had the privilege to meet university presidents, we had the privilege to meet a chamber of commerce, many different stakeholders, many different people, many educators, and all of them told us they love Ontario. They love the education we have in this province, and all of them asked us how they can come and study in this province.

Over and over, they spoke to us about our green energy. They believe we're on the right track, that we're taking the right direction in order to protect our environment by creating initiatives, which we call the green energy system in the province of Ontario, to engage many different companies, factories, scientists and researchers from around the globe to come to this province and invest and tell us how we can change our habits, how we can produce energy in a green way, in a positive way, not harming our economy and not harming our environment.

We went to a university, and the first thing they asked us was, "How can we go and study in Canada? How can we attend universities and continue our research and innovation in Canada?" Therefore, our initiative is working; people around the globe have heard of our initiative, have heard of our Open Ontario plan. They've heard that our universities and colleges are open for all students from around the globe to come and study, because we can offer something nobody else can offer on this planet. We can offer the discipline; we can offer high education; we can offer many different things nobody else can do.

That's why we have to capitalize on this initiative. We have to open our colleges and universities. That's why in

this budget we have a plan to increase our capacity by 20,000 students this coming year and also increase our capacity in universities and colleges by 50% to allow students from outside to come and study here. I think it's a great direction, a great strategy to engage people from around the globe.

As you know, when people come from different nations to study here, they establish a good relationship with our community, with our culture, with our government and with our many different stakeholders. So when they go back to their countries, if they get a job in government or become ministers, governors or whatever, the first thing they think about is Ontario and Canada. It's the best and most important natural way to attract people to deal with this beautiful province. That's why we have the Open Ontario strategy for open education in our colleges and universities.

We know exactly that we cannot build a future without building on our education system, without investing in our youngsters in this province. That's why our government strongly came with a project—full-day learning. Full-day learning, hopefully, if the bill passes all the stages, will be opened in September. It would be about 35,000 students from across the province of Ontario in those classes. Almost 600 schools across this province will be open for students to come and study.

0910

Let me tell you, I had the privilege and honour to be on the committee where we discussed this bill for many days. Many stakeholders came. Some of them voiced their concerns, and they had a right to voice their concerns. I was happy and honoured to see the Minister of Education and the government listening to the concerns and adjusting the bill in a way to protect our child care spaces in the province of Ontario, our good partners in the province of Ontario who have worked with us for many years to provide support for many youth and children. Therefore, full-day learning will be a great answer for many families who cannot afford to go to work and leave their kids behind. This I think is the right step in the right direction.

Despite the tough economic times, our government took the right decisions and opened the schools for all the people in this province to study and to learn, because we know exactly that the most important thing, the most important time when you invest in the youth is when they are still young. You give them the chance and the strong base to grow up with and good education. I think the people of Ontario, in September, are going to see the positive results of this direction.

Despite our tough economic times, we didn't stop investing in our infrastructure. We heard for many years that our infrastructure was neglected, our infrastructure was not being paid attention to. We have crumbling roads, bridges and sewer systems that are very old and not handling the capacity of cities and towns. Many people cannot deal with commuting because of the narrow roads in many different jurisdictions. That's why our government, despite the economic situation, despite the finan-

cial difficulties, continued to invest in our bridges, our roads and our sewer systems, in order to update them to the level where we are strong and able to support and service the people of this great province.

In my riding of London—Fanshawe, as a result of this investment, many bridges will be reconstructed, many roads will be surfaced and widened, many recreation facilities will be supported, and many parks will be enlarged and expanded in order to absorb and look after many people who want to visit those parks. I think, as a result of the bad economy, we have started turning in a positive way. As a result of that, we have created many thousands of jobs for the people of Ontario, and I think it was a good way and a good method to stimulate our economy.

As a result of our investment in infrastructure, as a result of our continuation of investment in the education system and health care, we noticed the positive impact because our economy started coming back.

As a result of that, we heard that the GM Oshawa plant is going to rehire more than 600 people. As a result of that, CAMI in Ingersoll is going to rehire 700. Also, there was good news the other day about the Toyota plant in Woodstock. They might add another shift, which means about 800 good-paying jobs are coming back to our economy. Our economy is coming back due to our initiatives, due to our strategy.

I want to commend the Minister of Finance for his steps, for his directions and for his commitment to this economy and this province. Also, I commend our government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, for seeing the future and a great vision for this province of Ontario.

As you know, we are one of the biggest provinces in this beautiful nation. Our responsibility and duty is to help others, our responsibility and duty is to attract more jobs to come to this province because, as you know, we are the engine of the economy of Canada. If our economy is strong, this country will be strong.

I had the privilege and honour to visit many different locations in the province of Ontario. I saw and heard many people commend our strategy, and commend our budget. I was asked, "How come the opposition party won't support you? How come the opposition party, in a difficult time, doesn't come with you as a government—forget about political divisions and political strategies and tactics, and come together in order to create a good economy for the people of Ontario?" Because in difficult times, people put politics aside and think about the people of Ontario. That's what we're doing here. I hope the opposition parties, the Conservatives and the NDP, come with us and join our hands and our efforts.

Laughter.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The member from the opposition is laughing.

It's important for all of us to work together, because working together is very important in showing leadership for the people of Ontario. Because you know what? I want to tell you, people don't care about party affiliations, they don't care who is in government, who is in

power, which party, many different things. They don't care. Do you know what they care about? They care about finding jobs. They care about their families. They care about the most important thing for them: to provide food for their families. That's why I believe that in difficult times, all of us should work together to create a good economy and a good direction for the people of Ontario. That is what we're working for on this side of the House.

When we try to pass this bill, when we finish the debate, hopefully all of us can take a chance to support this direction, because Open Ontario is our plan. It's a very important plan for the people of Ontario. It's an important plan for our economy. It's an important plan to maintain the health care system in the public domain. It's important for all of us to invest in our education, because education is the way of the future of this province. It's important for us to support our colleges and universities, to open the capacity, to increase the capacity, to welcome the students of this province and also to welcome students from around the globe. As I mentioned to you, it will be a good tool for us to tell about our prosperity and also to bring business back to us, to have a good time, a good connection with our province.

That's why I'm standing up today and speaking from experience about what I heard from many different people in the province of Ontario, in Canada, from around the globe. Because I know we take a lot of things for granted in this province. We think we have nothing to offer. As a matter of fact, who says that and thinks that way? It's wrong. They are wrong. We have a lot to offer. We are being looked at from many different directions around the globe. Everyone tells us, "You live in the most important and most beautiful province and the most advanced province in the world. How can we come to share this advance and knowledge and sources with you?" That's why this budget is talking about opening up this province for businesses to come to Ontario, to open in Ontario, to prosper in Ontario.

I also have a friend who has a good connection with a Chinese company. They are good in green energy. Do you know what they said? They want to come to Ontario. They want to open factories in Ontario because they think we are the most important province to open for business, because our businesses, our system—health care, education, infrastructure—all fit and make it easy for a company to come and open in this province. That's what we want. We want business. We want to work for the people of Ontario. We want people, when they wake up in the morning, to be able to go to work and come back to their family in good health and in good shape, in order to provide for themselves and their families. So our strategy is working.

I want to say again, our plan, if implemented fully, would be good for the people of Ontario, would be good for our economy, would be good for all of the people who want to come to Ontario.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You sure let them spin you in your caucus meetings.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The member from Welland—hopefully I can hear his plan. I know the opposition talks about many different things. They come up every single time and criticize us, but what's their plan? I don't know what their plan is; I have no idea. I didn't hear the plan yet.

Mr. Jeff Leal: They've got a plan: Darrell Dexter's plan in Nova Scotia.

0920

Mr. Khalil Ramal: See? I don't know anything about their plan. Instead, they stand up and criticize us. Show us your plan; I might change my mind. Maybe I'll support your plan. But I want to see a complete plan to serve the people of Ontario, serve our education, serve our health care, serve our infrastructure and create jobs for the province.

I was listening to CBC Radio this morning, and TV. Do you know what they said? Our economy is performing very well. We're not there yet, but we're on the way to having a good economy. I don't want to fool the people: We had a tough time. We're climbing back again to a good level, and we can offer people good service and good health care.

I think our government is taking initiatives. You heard about pharmacy issues lately, and I heard the opposition supporting the pharmacists against the people of Ontario. Supporting the people with a lower price of drugs is very good for everyone in this province. We're creating a measure to help people pay less for drugs. I think we should be commended. I want to take this opportunity to commend the Minister of Health for her great initiative and her great direction to maintain health care in the public domain by creating many different ways to save money for the people of Ontario, for the government of Ontario to be able to reinvest this money in health care: in cataract surgery and in knee and hip replacements, and also to lower the pressure in the ERs and allow people to be healthy again.

I think our government has taken the most important directions. We're not thinking about the political aspect of it, because we don't care about politics; we care about Ontario. We care about how we can help the province of Ontario. We care about how we can create jobs for the people of Ontario, how we can continue working with the people, how we can create a strong economy and provide for us collectively as a province and as a people, and how we can create jobs for those people who are looking to us, as elected officials, as saviours. That's why our initiatives, our budget bill, will make a lot of difference for the people of Ontario if it passes, because it means continuation of infrastructure, maintaining the education system and health care, and also opening Ontario for business, opening Ontario for education, opening Ontario for all people to come and learn and be prosperous with us in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing me to stand up in this place and speak about our budget. I'm looking forward to hearing from the opposition. Hopefully we can work together.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. For a while there I felt like singing Kumbaya.

The honourable member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm glad to accept the invitation of the member from London–Fanshawe to respond to his remarks about his government's plan to open Ontario. Here is what the government is opening Ontario to. They are opening Ontario, this coming Canada Day, to a new 13% tax on everything that Ontario consumers will touch; that's what they are opening Ontario to. They're opening Ontario to what will be the highest energy prices in North America; the announcement will be made this week as we listen to the Ontario Energy Board give us those results. They're opening Ontario to one of probably the most difficult battles we've seen initiated by a minister of the crown: the battle that is raging now between the government and the pharmacists in this province. What they're opening Ontario to is the inability of pharmacists to keep their doors open, because unilaterally, with one announcement, with one piece of legislation, this government is carving out approximately \$300,000 of revenue from every pharmacy across the province of Ontario. That is what this government is opening Ontario up to.

And no, I and my colleagues will not follow the member and his government down that road. We refuse. We'll stand with the people of this province for good government, not the kind of policies that this member and his government are forcing on the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: In the interests of full disclosure, I should indicate at the outset that I like the member from London–Fanshawe. He's a most congenial person, and one is hard-pressed to say anything other than kind things about him. But we're not talking about him—in fact I just have, in the most complimentary way—we're talking about the regrettable failure of this government to understand that—yes, there's an economic recovery. The stock market, the TSE, is now over 12,000. Banks are reporting bigger and better profits, and their stock values have risen along with the other TSE 300 types. But it's a jobless recovery, because what happened is that Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals allowed this province to be gutted of its manufacturing jobs. Those are the wealth creation jobs. Not service sector jobs, not the hospitality sector—value-added manufacturing jobs. That's how you create wealth. You don't create wealth in a casino; you create wealth in manufacturing.

What's remarkable is that when the economy was tanking, when it was in free fall, this government wanted to accept no responsibility whatever: "Not our job. We have no control." It's like that observation that success has a thousand parents and failure is always an orphan. All of a sudden, Mr. McGuinty had no control over the free fall. He wants to take credit for the economic recovery, but he also doesn't want to acknowledge, first of all, that he can't take credit for it and, second, that it has nothing to do with creating jobs, because jobs aren't being created in this province. There are \$10.25-an-hour

jobs, but you don't send kids to college and university on minimum wage.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to rise in this House and participate in the discussion on the budget. At the outset I would like to congratulate Minister Dwight Duncan for bringing such a responsible budget to this House. The budget reflects the values of our party. It reflects the values of our government.

What is in the budget, as you can see, are investments in our education, investments in our early childhood education, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, investments in our universities. We are going to create 20,000 new spots in our universities and colleges.

There are provisions for the establishment of a new online institute for learning, higher education, which is new in Ontario. This is going to open up higher education to every individual who is living in any part of Ontario. In his home, in her home, they can access the best education source, to increase their knowledge and education. Also, they can get a university degree.

That is the essence of this budget. The social services investments will be there, and education and childhood education as well. There are also other elements in this budget relating to the infrastructure investments. We are investing \$16.5 billion in our infrastructure. This is stimulating our economy, creating jobs and keeping jobs. This investment will create 300,000 jobs.

This is what we need at this time, when the world economy is in recession. We need to invest heavily in our economy in order to create jobs, and that's what this budget is going to do.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: We listened intently to the member from London–Fanshawe. As the member from Welland said, he's a respectable commentary person and well informed in some respects, but in this case he's certainly not revealing everything that the people of Ontario should really know.

This budget is a failed budget. It still has a deficit of \$21.3 billion. I think the general theme in the media has been that we're going to pay more and get less; that's basically it.

We have the highest tuition in universities and post-secondary in Canada. That's only one example. According to the media reports this morning—and I could recite these, and will in the time I have next to speak—we have the highest electricity rates, which will make us less competitive, as the member from Newmarket–Aurora, Mr. Klees, said this morning.

0930

On July 1, we're going to implement the HST, which is going to net the province about another \$3.5 billion in tax revenue, and we must not forget the health tax that was levied on Ontario right after the 2003 election. That revenue, per year, from the taxpayers of Ontario, is about \$3.5 billion.

What they really have here is—all members here want to serve Ontario and provide all Ontarians, equally, the best possible services and level of services.

If you look at the sunshine list that was issued last week, there is a 63% increase in public sector servants receiving \$100,000 a year or more. In my own ministry, government services, there are 60 people making over a quarter of a million dollars a year. I would challenge even the minister to name one.

What's happening here is we are paying more—your spending is up by 67%—but the service level is down by any measure, and I think this is just unacceptable in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member for London–Fanshawe has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Welland, Richmond Hill and Durham for commenting on my speech.

First, I want to go to the member from Newmarket–Aurora: I don't want him to support the government; I want him to support the people of Ontario. He needs to decide if he's on the side of the people of Ontario or on the side of the drug companies. I have nothing against the drug companies, but we have to be fair when we apply our policies and how we can create a mechanism to protect the people of Ontario. That's what we are doing on this side of the House.

Also, the member from Welland: Look, when the economy hit North America and around the globe, it was tough for many different nations. Sometimes we cannot control it. But the most important thing is not to panic but to create a plan to absorb the result of the negative impact on the people of Ontario, and to try to stimulate the economy and create more jobs for the people of Ontario. That's what we did by continuing to invest in our infrastructure, by making rules and regulations to allow people to come to this province and reinvest and show some kind of confidence in this province.

Also, the member from Richmond Hill was right; it's important to invest in our children and youth, and also in the universities and colleges, because that's the future of this economy and the future of all our lives. It's very important.

The member from Durham: I want to tell him something. What we said is true. We want to invest in education and health care and infrastructure because we believe this is the only way we can survive in this province of Ontario. It's the only way we can build a stronger future for the generations to come. I want to tell him that we're not shy about our record. We're going to continue advancing ourselves in this direction in order to achieve our goal, which is prosperity for this province.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: In the few minutes I have, unfortunately, on the budget bill, Bill 16—I'm trying to represent my constituents from the riding of Durham.

We had two post-budget open houses in my riding of Durham, serving Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington, and

both of those presentations were put on by reputable accounting firms—BDO Dunwoody in the north. It was held in Port Perry. The mayor of Uxbridge was there, Scugog was represented, as well as business leaders and retired persons. There were about 50 persons at the one in Port Perry from Uxbridge and Port Perry. In the south, at the other one I had, there were about 70 people involved or who attended—almost all of council, including the mayor; the head of the utility; representatives from OPG; the board of trade; a couple of the Rotarians; the president of the rotary club; and other members of the community.

The interpretation that they said was, "What is the future?" When you look at the overall budget, in excess of \$110 billion, there's still \$21 billion—probably around 20% of the total spending is deficit. Deficit is really the lack of funding for the operational budget, and it actually becomes accumulated debt.

When you look at the accumulated debt in Ontario, it's increasing. It has increased every single year in the province. In fact, my own impression is that you don't like to criticize spending if it's for the right reasons, but you like to measure the outcomes of that spending. The most important part that the Premier said in remarks on budget day—health care is one example, and maybe I'll spend my time on this document on two areas that are very important to my riding.

The two areas, of course, would be health care—and the Premier said in the budget speech itself that, in 12 years, 70% of the entire provincial budget would be health care. That's not sustainable, and I suspect we're seeing now just the beginnings of the battle which will be fought on the backs of patients.

But let's take a little look at where we are today. I met last week with Dr. Michael Damus, as well as members of the Central LHIN, which covers the Uxbridge Cottage Hospital, along with Mayor Bob Shepherd. Our concern is that we want the hospital to remain as a full-service emergency level hospital. We'd like to have elective surgeries there as well.

But what is happening is, unless the doctors are adequately compensated or the hospital indeed is compensated through the Central LHIN, the local health integration network, they can't keep the hospital emergency open. If they can't keep it open, it becomes nothing more than you enter the hospital, you're stabilized and transferred to the Markham-Stouffville site, which is part of that hospital organization. There was the same challenge this year in Port Perry, as well as in Bowmanville. Bowmanville hospital was threatened as well because of the funding deficit.

All hospitals in the province right now are required by law, Bill 8, to have a balanced budget, but we know that almost every hospital has an operating deficit. In fact, during the two by-elections, strangely enough some \$15 million showed up to keep one open because there was a by-election, to favour the candidate in that area in Toronto. But that money was taken from one down in the Niagara-Hamilton-Welland area. In fact, a young person died en

route to hospital because the emergency had been closed. That is an autopsy report, not something I'm making up. Every hospital in every community—Northumberland Hills Hospital just outside my riding—Lou Rinaldi's riding—closed, I think, 15 beds and laid off 23 full-time nursing staff.

What else is important in this is that one of the complex issues in the Peterborough Regional Health Centre is that they have an audit. They're under a complete watch order now; they've taken over. That hospital is operating at about an \$11-million operating deficit and forecasted next year for a \$25-million operating deficit. I wish the auditors and the restructuring people there good luck, but that audit team was put in there by Premier McGuinty, taking over the autonomy of a local hospital.

Here's the outcome. I read the reports on it, and it turns out they have an inordinate number of ALC patients, alternate level of care. Those patients in a hospital—the worst possible setting for frail elderly people is to stay in a hospital with all these anti-viral infections and things like that going on. The nursing staff are so pressed and stressed that they don't have enough time. They should actually be moved to long-term care or complex continuing care in a different institutional setting.

Let's follow up on that. The biggest problem in hospitals today is the number of ALC—long-term-care—beds. They're in hospitals. Why? Because there are no long-term-care beds being built for our aging population. Why aren't they being built? When we were government, we added and funded 20,000 new long-term care beds. Here's the issue. As they opened more of them, the funding is \$40,000 per long-term-care bed.

0940

Now what we were debating yesterday in this House—and I participated. I see Mr. Phillips, the minister, is here. I have a great deal of respect for Mr. Phillips. But this file, Bill 21—it's on the order paper now—is regulation of retirement homes.

Let's not get confused here. Retirement homes are not regulated today but they exist, and they should be regulated. I'm in support of the bill. But what they're not saying is that the province is not providing them any money. So if you are going to be discharged from a hospital to a retirement home—the average person in a retirement home would be there and basically the province takes your OAS, old age security, and your CPP, Canada pension plan, up to about \$800 or \$900 a month. The province takes that and they fund the rest. If you have no other resources, they guarantee that you will have at least \$150 a month, called a personal care allowance. So if you're penniless, the province pays the rest—about \$40,000 per bed. The second part is that in these retirement homes there is no money. So if they discharge you to a retirement home, you're paying.

What does it cost in one of those retirement homes? I know at first hand. A less expensive one would be in the \$30,000-a-year range, maybe \$35,000 a year. That's out of your pocket or your mother or dad's pocket. In fact, the high-order ones—I'm looking at one for a person

who I have power of attorney for right now in Peterborough. It's Canterbury Gardens. The cost per year is \$65,000. Now, who is paying for it? I think it's a beautiful facility. The person is paying for it.

Let's just follow up on that \$65,000. What are your parents? You want loved ones being taken care of. This Bill 21 is private long-term care. That's what it is. No question about it. They're privatizing health. Right now, to pay \$65,000, a senior would have to take \$100,000 out of their RIF, because after tax they'd only get about \$68,000; you pay some 30% tax. And you want some money to get your hair done or whatever it is they do. I can't believe it. That's the future.

I expect the minister here to at least announce that he's going to ask for some companion funding under Bill 21. That is one of the amendments I would move. The minister is here and I'm sure he's listening.

If you look across health care, there is a very large battle with the pharmaceutical companies, but they're taking on the smallest participant in the drug battle. Of the billions of dollars spent in pharmaceutical care—which is important, and we should all recognize that it is the fastest-growing portion of health care, with costs escalating at about 15% per year, which, again, is not sustainable. I recognize the government is trying to contend with it, but there are three major participants. There is large pharma, the patent drug companies. They're international, they have global influence on jobs and research, universities and academic institutions, and they're an important part of the knowledge-based economy. I think even Barack Obama has tried to take them on, and good for him. How's he doing?

Here's the next part: The other participant is the generic drug part. The generic part is when the patent has expired and the formula has been copied by the generic company and they sell it for something less.

So Premier McGuinty and his health minister, Deb Matthews, are taking them on, but they're portraying it as a fight with the pharmacists. Keep in mind that what they call these promotional allowances, or whatever they're calling these things, have, under the government's watch and accord, been happening for years. It's not something that just happened in the last couple of months; it's happened for years. These promotional allowances were to educate and promote both the consumer and themselves, monitor side effects for certain drugs and all these various things. It's not like they're just doling out chocolate bars at the pharmacy. These are highly trained individuals—four-years-plus of a degree in medical and medical-related things—anatomy and pharmacology. They know more about pharmacology than the doctors themselves, I would put forward.

So they're picking a battle with the pharmacists, but what they're actually doing is changing the whole ball game. Let's be honest here. There's about \$1 billion in this amount of transactional money, we'll call it, from the generic drug industry—a very large, lucrative industry; no problem with that. But the pharmacists in my little communities of Uxbridge and Port Perry and Claring-

ton—and Clarington more specifically, because I know personally on a social level one of the pharmacists in Orono: Tito—great guy, well-educated, a pleasant community person involved in many ways in his community as a volunteer and as a professional. He will likely be closed. Why? Because they have fundamentally changed the rules of the game and they're blaming him.

They could easily have found a way of transitioning out of this. What's the difference here? Why is it that they need—right now Ontario has some of the lowest dispensing fees in Canada on a per capita basis. Here's the real issue: To dispense an appropriate pharmaceutical product on a prescription takes skill, knowledge, trust, confidence, and all these qualities that we expect these people to have. They're actually not being subsidized properly.

Doctors are paid by you and me, and 99% of them, I'm sure, earn every dollar they make, whether you're an orthopaedic surgeon, neurologist or cardiologist. I sure want the best at my bedside at the time I fall off my feet. With pharmacists, I feel the same. But right now they are not being compensated, and have been compensated on these, what they call, allowances. The government is calling them kickbacks. They want these pharmaceutical stores to stay open—and there's more to it. I could spend more time on that, because here's what's happening: Some of the generic drugs are now being dried up in Ontario and you're going to have to buy the patent drug. I have one that's a heart pill, and I'll put it on the record. That heart medication that you're buying today as a generic is \$38 a tablet. The drug you're going to get in my riding in the next week for that heart medication has been replaced by the designer drug, I guess you'd call it; it's now \$68. That's just one example of a widely used, widely prescribed medication in Ontario. That's what's going to happen.

The province is actually going to take the \$1 billion, they're going to pocket \$500 million of it and they're going to give the pharmacists a dispensing fee increase of \$1 when right now they're underfunded by \$7 per prescription compared to other comparators in the country. I'm not going to go on on that, but that's all part of health care.

The second part—it's in the clippings this morning. This is all planned; I can't believe it. I'm just amazed at this whole thing—it's like a dance. BC is looking at a new way of funding hospitals on a per-service fee. BC is leading the way on that, and it's going to fundamentally change the way they fund programs in hospitals.

Now a group in Ontario just casually, coincidentally announced that doctors are overpaid. I see another cloud on the horizon for doctors in Ontario. They're floating it as that a third party group has released a report this morning that says in a general sense—and it's in the clippings here—that doctors are overpaid.

It's not Premier McGuinty saying it. No. They'll probably do a poll next week to see just how much depth in the public—not the doctors; the public: "Doctors are making \$200,000 a year? Holy smokes; \$200,000, \$300,000,

\$400,000?" What's the threshold of tolerance for the people who are basically unemployed? We have a 10% unemployment rate; let's keep that in mind. This economy is based on having no plan in the economy. If we had lots of money we'd be doing pretty much the same thing, but when you don't, you have to learn how to put the spending in order, and that's the second part.

0950

The other part I wanted to talk about that the member from London-Fanshawe spoke about briefly is energy prices. I'm going to put that in context as well. If we look back at Ontario's Sir Adam Beck, Ontario was once applauded and respected. If you drive down University Avenue, you will see a statue of Sir Adam Beck. He was basically the father of electricity, or electricity distribution, certainly. He had a theme, and it was "Power at cost," which means a publicly operated utility. What he really meant was power at any cost, that Ontario's economy was built on cheap—or at least safe, reliable and affordable—electricity. That's what Ontario's economy was built on.

If you look at an article in the media yesterday by Don MacKinnon, who is the president of the power workers—Peter, I'm sure you've read this article—it's an excellent article. Here is what he said. It's a very technical article, but generally he says that, unfortunately, this misguided focus on trendy, headline-motivated policy is rapidly eroding any price advantage while ignoring existing strengths. He's referring to how, with the right decisions, Ontario could be an energy leader. He's talking about the frivolous renewable/sustainable energy policy in Ontario, paying 80 cents a kilowatt hour for roof-mounted solar and 16 cents an hour for wind, and at the meter we're paying about five to six cents. How is that being subsidized? We're being locked into these long-term, 20-year-plus contracts with these sustainable/renewable providers, some of them foreign, like Samsung. I'm so discouraged about the lack of confidence in Ontario on the energy file. It's just so disheartening to think our universities and our expertise cannot be respected by the Premier, instead of having to go to Korea to import their skills and knowledge. We have it right here in Ontario. There is a complete vacuum of respect for our own—not just the pharmacists, but now the electrical people and the doctors and the professors.

I'm worried about the future. You can't spend your way into prosperity. Quite honestly, we're spending our way into recession. Ontario is in worse shape than any other province, and the future doesn't even look brighter. I think it's discouraging, quite frankly. I challenge the government to stop and take a look and work with our leader, Tim Hudak. We do have a plan. In fact, we were asked by the member from London-Fanshawe what our plan is.

Mr. Bob Delaney: You don't have a plan.

Mr. John O'Toole: Our plan is first—and the member on the other side was saying that they don't know. Well, I agree they don't. You don't seem to have a plan by any measure. I would say that for us, if you want to

look on our website, you should check 10for2010.ca. If you look at that and at the suggestions we made about accountability and transparency on public spending, on public contracts—think of the eHealth scandal: a billion dollars of health dollars wasted. Look at the LHINs. There's more waste in government. You have a \$100-billion-plus budget, and if you couldn't save 5%, then you aren't capable of managing. So I ask for your comments—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to speak after Mr. O'Toole.

There is no question that this budget reflects Liberal values and Liberal thinking. I think that's undebatable in this chamber. This is a government that talks about there being a deficit out there, about there being a financial crisis that they are having to deal with. Yet this is a government that is quite happy, quite willing, to hire a company called Goldman Sachs that was at the centre of the world financial crash. This government is willing to hire as advisers a company that sold financial instruments—asset-backed commercial paper—that were based on a fantasy about mortgages being paid back, and then was willing to sell the bet that those assets would collapse. This government has taken that company on as their advisers.

This government is quite happy to contemplate selling off revenue-generating assets when it talks about the financial needs that this province has. OLG, LCBO, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation between them generate about \$4 billion a year in revenue for this province. Why would you sell off assets that produce a large volume of revenue and, frankly, are critical to delivering your policies on energy and your policies in terms of making sure that the sale of alcohol is made appropriately? The contemplation of the sale of those assets reflects Liberal values, Liberal values being "We're going to look as nice as we can, and we're going to sell the silverware to pay for an operation, an approach that is not sustainable."

This budget is a failure. This province deserves more.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to stand here and discuss Bill 16, and also to make some comments on the remarks by the member from Durham. He spent a considerable amount of his time talking about health care. I think buried in there somewhere was an acknowledgment that we have made strides. He alluded to the hospital in Peterborough, which, as far as I've heard, is state of the art and a huge addition to that community and the broader community around the city of Peterborough.

We've certainly had many successes in health care. There are now 900,000 more Ontarians who have access to family physicians. We've reduced wait times for many surgical procedures, including cancer surgeries. Our Open

Ontario plan certainly shows that we remain focused on quality improvement in health care.

But given our deficit situation, of course we have to look for cost savings, and we are doing this in many different areas. The area that is being talked about a lot at the moment is reforming the cost of generic drugs. It is certainly a situation that needs to be addressed. Ontario is paying some 50% more than other jurisdictions for generic drugs.

Lowering the cost to 25% of the original brand name drug for people who receive their drugs through the Ontario drug benefit program will also benefit those who get their drugs through private employer drug plans and people who pay for drugs out of pocket. All in all, we're going to be saving taxpayers millions of dollars with this particular strategy. By eliminating the professional allowances, we will be compensating pharmacists more directly for the services they offer. This is a good step forward.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to make a few comments on my colleague, the member from Durham's speech he just gave a few minutes ago on Bill 16.

One of the things I'm most concerned about, as a rural politician, with the rollout of this budget and the debate on the budget—and I think what my constituents are concerned about as well—is the debt we are accumulating in the province of Ontario. It's my understanding that when Premier Dalton McGuinty came to power in 2003, the total accumulated debt of the province of Ontario was \$114 billion. That's from John A. Macdonald's days right through till 2003.

If you look at the budget document itself and the projections through to the year 2017-18, when Mr. McGuinty or the finance minister claims he will balance the budget, the accumulated debt will rise to just shy of \$250 billion, which is a quarter of a trillion dollars in my way of thinking.

That scares me. I know that we can talk about infrastructure investments and health care and all these different things you can talk about and you can brag about, but the reality is, every government since the beginning of time has had those same kinds of challenges, but they haven't taken a budget from 2003 and, 14 years later, have doubled the accumulated debt in the province of Ontario. That scares me a lot.

My constituents are concerned about that, and along with things like pharmacy and HST, I think it will be a high-level election issue for this government in 2011, when we go to the polls.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: How does one dare respond to an address by the member from Durham? But I shall try.

The member for Durham references Sir Adam Beck. Sir Adam Beck would be a nobody, a minor, obscure member of the lower nobility, if it weren't for Nikola Tesla. I for one want to make it clear that our electricity

system here in the province of Ontario—and across North America and the world—is a result of the genius of Nikola Tesla. As I say, he is so often unsung, but we should acknowledge his most significant contribution to the 20th and 21st centuries.

Look, the government's taken on pharmacists, and let's make this clear: The big-box pharmacies are going to survive regardless, because they don't make money selling drugs. They make money with those cosmetics counters and the high-priced toiletries with huge mark-ups, a product that in many respects is recession-proof. The people who will suffer, the people who will be displaced, are small-town corner pharmacists, the kind of pharmacist I grew up with and still patronize down in Welland where I come from, or in Port Colborne or Wainfleet or Thorold.

This government should be taking on the drug companies, but it has neither the guts nor the gonads to do that. They don't have the gumption to take on the big international drug companies. Because if you want to talk about obscene drug prices, those are the villains, not the pharmacist; not the guy who corrects the doctor's prescription because you have an allergy to something that the doctor mistakenly prescribed because he or she is so harried and rushed. So rather than take on real villains, this government creates villains out of some of the greatest, noblest and finest people in our communities: small-town pharmacists.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member for Durham has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to thank the members from Danforth, Oak Ridges–Markham, Simcoe North, of course, and the member for Welland for his very respectable comments; he's a great, experienced debater himself.

I'd only say that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, who is a doctor, Dr. Jacek, was the medical officer of health for York region. I have a lot of respect for your comments and hope that you would speak up for the challenges facing health care, and bring some—it's a discredit that you're not actually the Minister of Health; they have doctors sitting in the caucus who basically don't have any serious responsibilities. I say that respectfully, not critically.

I think that this is an important time for all members to represent how this budget affects their riding. I look at my riding and the auto sector. The restructuring in the economy just in Durham is a good example of what Ontario is going through. But then if I look in the north, there's a special provision in the budget because the north is paralyzed in recession. The pulp and paper industry and the forestry industry generally are in serious, serious trouble. A lot of the mining and resource sectors are in trouble as well, and a lot of them are very dependent on having reliable energy.

This budget falls short. It has no plan to deal with future spending. It has committed to reducing spending by 1.5%, I believe, on average; that is not sustainable

either. They have to find new ways and new partnerships to deliver services across the schedule, yet they have a predisposition to tax and spend in excess of the health of the economy. Unless the economy picks up, we're headed for a double dip in Ontario.

We need leadership that's prepared to say, "Here's the plan," and work together. Our leader, Tim Hudak, will be there—and I'm sure the NDP and Andrea Horwath would be there as well—because this is about the people of Ontario, not political interests.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Given that we will be adjourning within the next few minutes, I will be giving the opening part of my one-hour leadoff. I'll have the opportunity, I gather, in a few days to continue through.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I note that there are enthusiasts out there.

The member from London–Fanshawe talked about the deficit that this province is wrestling with and the fact that the government is faced with a financial crisis in the broader society that it is trying to come to grips with. It's trying to manage its financial, social and political obligations in the context of that crisis.

I want to talk about the context of this budget, but before I do that, I have to remark again, because it is extraordinary to me that this government, recognizing the scale and scope of the global financial crisis, has hired a company, Goldman Sachs, that has been testifying before the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission in the United States about its role in that financial crash. I alluded to this briefly in my remarks earlier.

Goldman Sachs, a broker company and investment banker, sold financial instruments that sold asset-backed bonds that were based on quicksand. It sold those to institutional investors and investors around the world, and those bonds were the equivalent of selling houses that were going to burn down. At the same time, it sold, to others who were interested, insurance that those houses would burn down and even bought that insurance knowing those houses would burn down. In the heart of the financial crisis, they gained somewhere in the range of \$10 billion, cashing in those insurance policies on asset-backed commercial paper, those IOUs they sold that were just simply junk.

When you have a government that is dealing with profound financial problems, and it hires a company that was at the centre of the crisis that has afflicted the globe, you have to ask about its judgment in terms of who it brings on board to advise it. This government faces, within 18 months, an election, and in some ways this is similar to the situation that faced the Harris government at the end of the 1990s. That was a government that needed cash to cover a budget deficit; it needed cash so it could address the financial demands, the needs, of this province; and a government that sold an asset at about a quarter of the value that it is now assessed at.

Dalton McGuinty wants to be very clear that he isn't doing the same as Mike Harris. That is his public line.

That's his messaging. So when he met with the editorial board of the *Globe*, as reported by Adam Radwanski, he said that we don't want to be seen as burning the furniture to keep the house warm. He's trying to figure out where to allocate the money that would be forthcoming from a sale. He has a problem, because the simple reality is he is breaking up the furniture to heat the house. If he applies it to the deficit, people will understand very quickly that's not sustainable; it is a one-time hit and that, in fact, he has gotten rid of a revenue stream, a series of levers for the operation of this province, for a quick hit before an election.

He doesn't have a lot of other good-looking options. One of the options that was floated in Mr. Radwanski's column was using the money to pay for assets, possibly in post-secondary education, but it's just a shell game. If you need a few billion in one pocket, and you put it in that pocket, then, money is available in another pocket. It is all a shell game. You have to understand this budget is being written in the context of an election happening in the next 18 months: "How do we find the cash to look as good as possible?" Not, "How do we make sure that the long-term interests of this province are safeguarded?" That's the question that has to be asked. That's the question that has to be answered. And hiring a company that was one of the central architects of the financial projects that caused the world economy to crash is not something that's defensible.

We have a larger context for this budget. If you talk to Armine Yalnizyan at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, if you read articles about what has happened with income in this province and in this country, you'll see that for the last few decades the income of the middle class in this country and this province has been stagnant. People have been working hard, people have been upgrading their skills, but the central reality is that the broad middle class in this province has had its income stagnate.

1010

The wealthiest have gotten wealthier; the poorest have gotten poorer. And, in the middle, that group that our economy depends on for purchase of goods to drive the economy; that group that is the social backbone of this province, because they're the ones who get the education, hold down the skilled jobs, do many of the critical things that the economy of this province demands—and frankly, membership in that class is something that people aspire to, either to get into or to maintain a position in. That income stagnation arises because of a decline in the economic base of this province, and this budget has to be understood in the context of that decline.

In any society, when a province, a country or a city writes a budget, it reflects its underlying wealth and it reflects the different power between social and interest groups in that society. The underlying wealth of this society has been threatened. I ask you, if you go to London, Hamilton, Windsor, Cambridge, Kingston—all over this province—people see manufacturing in decline, economic activity in decline, loss of middle-income jobs, forcing people into very low-paying jobs.

That's a substantial piece that has to be addressed. It's not addressed in this budget. This budget is part of the management of the decline, rather than an attempt to reverse that decline. It is not a budget that is actually going to take on the fundamental weaknesses in Ontario's economy and address those weaknesses. That's a profound problem.

This government, this Liberal government, has been making some very high-cost choices in terms of the future for this province. Instead of taking on sprawl in the way it needed to be taken on, it's going to allow sprawl to continue. It may nip a bit here, tuck a bit there—and recently the Pembina Institute brought out a report about the cost of sprawl and congestion on the economic centre of the province, the greater Golden Horseshoe—but the simple reality is that more and more greenfield sites are going to be eaten up for sprawl, and that is going to have huge impacts in terms of costs to provide infrastructure and huge costs in terms of the congestion that will arise from that, all of which will weaken and undermine our economy. This budget does not take the steps necessary to address that, and the policy decisions made by this government leading up to this budget don't address that.

Once again, the fundamental problems facing our economy, the ones that need to be addressed so that we are an affordable and attractive jurisdiction, aren't being addressed. That is a huge problem.

Just recently a study came out about the impact on health care of the ban on smoking in bars and restaurants in the Toronto area. I have to say, in the 1990s I was one of the pioneers of efforts to prohibit smoking in bars and restaurants. The simple reality, when you look at the demographics, is that Toronto cut visits to emergency rooms for people with breathing problems and heart problems quite substantially, quite noticeably. So in fact, when you take actions in the wider world that impact on people's health, then you have an impact on health care costs.

This government is in a position to put its coal-fired generators on standby. Demand for power has been dropping, but we're still burning coal. This government knows very well that burning coal causes death, causes health damage. It could be acting much more quickly than it is to help contain health care costs by reducing deadly air pollution. It is not doing that. That is an underlying factor that drives health care costs.

I understand that my time is limited and I will take up the rest of my speech when I next have the opportunity.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: On behalf of our page Avery Watters, I'd like to introduce members of her family who are here today: her father, Mike Watters; her brother,

Cameron Watters; family friend Mike Healy; and their grandmother Rita Mueller. Welcome to Queen's Park. Enjoy the day.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my absolute delight to introduce this year's girls' government team. They're from Annette and Runnymede public schools. They're going to be meeting with Minister Bradley and they're going to Ottawa next month to meet with a cabinet minister. They're accompanied by Michael Kanalec and Vanessa Shrimpton, their teachers. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. John Milloy: I know that members will want to join me in welcoming Maureen and Eric Sanderson, who are in the gallery today, from my community. It is Eric's birthday today, so we wish him a happy birthday.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to welcome to the Legislature this morning Mr. Sukhdial Singh Bhullar. He's a retired inspector general of police from Punjab, India, and he is the most decorated officer in the police forces in Punjab.

Accompanying him is Mr. Devinder S. Sangha. He's a good friend of mine. He just moved from Montreal to Ontario. I think finally he saw the light. Welcome.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'd like to introduce Sylvia Maracle in the gallery, who is head of the Friendship Centres.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Oxford and page Kyle Rutherford, to welcome his mother,Carolynn Rutherford; his father, Mark Rutherford; his sister, Jenna Rutherford; his cousin Cole Pirie; his grandmother Sandra Rutherford; his grandfather John Rutherford; his grandmother Irene Baker; and his grandfather Ralph Baker. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Can you list how many different rate increases, taxes and fees the McGuinty Liberals are imposing on Ontario families' energy bills?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We've said many times—and I've said it in this place and I've said it in response to questions from the member—that there is no question energy prices are on the increase in Ontario. We've been saying that for some time, but there is reason for that. One of the reasons is, when we came to office we inherited an energy system that was in an absolute shambles, an energy system where the supply of energy just was not adequate enough to ensure the sustainability and the reliability of our energy system. So we've had to make investments in nuclear modernization; we've had to build new gas plants; we've had to invest in renewables.

There is no question: Worldwide, the cost of energy is going up, and will be going up in this province as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: George Smitherman promised 1%. We know where that went.

The minister won't answer the question, so I will. The McGuinty Liberals are making Ontario families pay for the following: a \$5-a-month regulated price increase; \$8 a month for the HST; \$38 a year for the loss of the small-volume discount; \$5 a month for the smart meter program; your \$53-million backdoor energy tax grab; a \$5-a-month so-called green subsidy; the \$437-million Samsung subsidy; a \$2.75-a-month OPG rate increase; and \$1.6 billion for Hydro One transmission expenses. That does not even include the Hydro One debt retirement charge or distribution charges, regulatory charges—the list goes on and on.

Can you at least come clean with Ontario families, seniors and businesses and tell them how much more the McGuinty Liberals are going to make them pay for energy this year?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the honourable member for reminding me of another thing that we're paying for: Consumers are paying for the debt that they built up in all the years of mismanagement, through their entire term in office, when it comes to energy. Our consumers today have to pay for your mistakes.

But we as a government and as a generation have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that we get it right. That does ensure that today, we have to make some of the tough decisions that their party refused to make when they had the opportunity to handle these files: investing in more nuclear to ensure that we have an adequate level of nuclear; investing in the modernization of our nuclear system, in the refurbishment of Darlington; investing in renewables—something that's important. We're leading the world when it comes to growing renewables in this province, something every—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: If the McGuinty Liberals can't do the math, we'll do it for them. Ontario families will pay at least \$300 more per year because of their policy. One leading energy adviser group estimates that after all your new green—so-called green—subsidies roll out, Ontario families will pay \$631 more each per year. They don't even consider the cost of your Samsung deal, proposed retrofits or HST tax grab.

The \$5 rate increase being announced today sends the price of electricity up more than 60% since you came to office, and who knows what pending generation cost increases will come with new gas plants in Oakville and North York, what they will add? Will you just say, once and for all: How much is too much for you?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We inherited, as I said before, an energy system that was in shambles. We've had to make tough decisions. We know that the cost of energy is going up, not only in Ontario but around the world. But we're making the tough decisions that we need to make today to ensure that we have a reliable supply for tomorrow, and in making those tough decisions, we're growing

renewables in this province. We're creating jobs and building the next-generation economy.

My question to the member is: What is your plan? You come down on us; what is your plan? You have no plan. You want to go back to coal. Your love affair with coal continues to this day. As the Conservatives are cuddling up to coal, we're doing all we can to build a cleaner, brighter future for the next generation through investing in renewables. We're going to keep going in that direction—

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

ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. If a concerned Ontario family or senior wants to know how much more they will be paying for hydro this year, where can they go?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Ontario Energy Board regulates energy prices, and the Ontario Energy Board, at least two times a year, comes forward with rate increases. This is—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You just have to say it's all your decisions—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew: You just asked the question. I don't know how you can listen to the answer when I have difficulty hearing it because of your heckling. You know the rules; if you're not satisfied in the end, you can call for a late show.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Ontario Energy Board regulates the prices of energy. In fact, this is about the time of year when the Ontario Energy Board comes forward, as they do biannually every year, to indicate what the cost of energy will be and what the price to the consumers will be. They make seasonal adjustments to the rates and thresholds to accommodate for summer and winter. So I think that the member will hear very soon from the Ontario Energy Board, who will determine what the increases will be for this year.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Their decisions on energy prices are based completely on the policies that you give them.

Dalton McGuinty spares no effort to increase Ontario's hydro bills at every opportunity, but makes no effort to let the public know about it. According to an Ontario Energy Board letter of April 9, you're directing electricity distributors to bury your backdoor energy tax grab in the regulatory charges section of the bill, so you're hiding this tax from Ontario families, the very people who will pay it.

1040

Will the McGuinty Liberals rethink the plan to bury the backdoor energy tax and post it on a separate line on people's energy bills, or will Ontario families have to

read the blog of the Premier's strategic adviser Andrew Steele just to know when you're increasing the tax and by how much?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're working very hard with our energy partners. In fact, this is something that our entire generation has to work towards, and that's to transform our energy system from the system we inherited that was reliant on dirty coal, from a system that was simply not reliable in terms of energy supply. We're making the investments today to ensure that that system indeed is reliable.

I know the member doesn't support that. He wants to move us back to the day when we turned the lights on every morning when we got up and we were never ever sure whether they would actually be able to turn on. He wants to move us back to the days of coal.

I say this again: Watching the Tories cuddle up to coal is something that should strike fear into the hearts and minds of every Ontarian who cares about the health of their kids.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: They've been promising to shut down coal since John Gerretsen's hair was black and they'll be promising until Brad Duguid's is grey.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that we refer to members by their riding name or their ministry.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The market price for electricity is at historic lows, but the McGuinty Liberals have added so many regulatory increases, taxes and fees that Ontario families, seniors and businesses now see their electricity bills at historic highs.

It's bad enough that you aren't even being transparent about all these taxes and fees on electricity bills, but the same OEB letter makes it clear that you're using electricity bills to raise taxes for general revenue. You have instructed utilities on how to collect taxes from families and businesses and send it along to the Minister of Finance.

Why have you turned local utility companies into tax collectors?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know John Gerretsen, and John Gerretsen's a friend of mine—

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

The same reminder that I just gave to the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke applies to the minister.

Hon. John Gerretsen: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: I've been environment minister for two and a half years and I've only had two questions from the official opposition. I'm looking forward to a third question in the immediate future to show that they're interested in the environment of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind all members again that we refer to riding names and ministry offices.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the difference between us and them is that we have a plan to ensure that the future of energy in this province is sustainable, reliable and indeed affordable.

But if you look back in history, Tories weren't always that bad. In the early 20th century, there was opposition to hydro power from Niagara Falls. Premier Whitney in those days moved forward with that and that powered our economy in Canada for many years into the future. Whitney was a Conservative; he had vision. How sad it is today to see the Tories when they've moved away from any vision at all.

Ontario is the leader in clean energy. We're a leader around the world. Our investments today will be looked on in the future as being visionary down the road in building a stronger economy and a brighter—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Premier says that he's breaking his promise to fund the construction of Toronto's Transit City light rail lines because this government simply can't afford them. How much money is Ontario actually saving from this decision?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's \$4 billion. We've been public about that. We made reference to that on budget day.

What we're doing is adjusting the timetable. It allows us to save this money in the short term, and it'll require that it be expended in the longer term.

I think my honourable colleague has to recognize that our revenues have been affected as a government because of a global recession. We've had to make some choices. We said that we would prefer not to make cuts to our hospitals, not to make cuts to our schools, but instead to stretch out our timetable when it comes to investing in public transit. Again, as I've said many times, I think that's reasonable and, I'd argue, it's responsible.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We know there are significant divisions on the government side over this wrong-headed decision. In fact, Toronto city councillors tell me that they've heard from several panicked government MPPs who have told them that the province, in fact, will only save about \$100 million a year, at most. That's because the province can amortize their transit investment over 40 years. One hundred million represents less than 0.1% of Ontario's 2010-11 budget. That's a small price to pay to improve public transit, to enhance economic productivity and to help the environment.

So I ask: What is the real story behind the Premier's broken promise?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think the Minister of Finance would like to speak to this.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In fact, we are continuing along with our investments. We are adjusting the time

frames. Those time frames are still very much five to seven years out in terms of when any of the projects would have started in any event.

The member is right: These projects can be amortized over an extended period of time, but if she were to look carefully, she would see that the borrowing and the cash flow has to happen at the outset. What this does is it allows us to develop these lines appropriately, finance them appropriately, and continue along the path that this government has taken over the last seven years, and that is to invest heavily in public transit, both in the greater Toronto area and indeed right across the province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Toronto-area families deserve a full explanation from this Premier. Moms and dads will continue to miss dinner with the kids because they'll continue to be stuck in traffic.

Given what we know about Toronto's gridlock and its negative impact on the local economy, how can the Premier continue to claim that his decision is fiscally responsible when in fact it is the exact opposite?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to remind the leader of the New Democratic Party that we are now providing Toronto with five times the amount of funding they were provided with in 2003. We have invested over \$9.3 billion in public transit. We are keeping our commitments on all the projects while we are adjusting the timetables. We will fund the full cost of the Transit City projects. But, as the Premier indicated, given our deficit this year of \$21 billion, we feel it is both appropriate and responsible to adjust those timelines, recognizing that the projects under consideration wouldn't even begin construction for probably six or seven years. Accordingly, we made the decisions we've made. We will continue to make the investments we've made in public transit. It is a responsible and appropriate policy for this time.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My second question is to the Premier as well. Yesterday, at a conference, pension expert Keith Ambachtsheer made a startling point. He said that fees on the \$700 billion held in private savings plans are sucking up \$8.4 billion more than contributors would pay if they were saving inside large public pension plans. That's \$8.4 billion that is going into the coffers of banks and insurance companies and not into the retirement savings of Ontarians and Canadians.

With banks and insurance companies lobbying to increase their role in overseeing retirement savings, where does the Ontario government stand in this historic pension debate?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ambachtsheer yesterday morning, albeit briefly. It's one of a number of meetings we have had to discuss the issues. He has put an element of the discussion that is before all Ontarians, and indeed all Canadians right now.

We talked yesterday. I shouldn't say we did; that was not part of my discussion with him. We did talk about the three pillars of savings in the Canadian pension system, the first being the public side of the system, the second being the private part and the third being tax-funded programs at the federal level, such as OAS and GIS. All Canadians are engaged in debate on ensuring that we have the best system possible.

The government laid out the options it's looking at in its budget. I would invite the member opposite to have a look at those options, and we will continue to work with all stakeholders on this important issue.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There really are only two fundamental sides to this debate. On one side, there are those, like New Democrats, who passionately believe in public, cost-effective defined benefit plans. On the other side, there are those who support fee-loaded private options being promoted by the banks and insurance companies.

On behalf of the four million Ontarians who lack a pension plan, I once again ask this Premier, which side is he on?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We are on the side of the best possible pension system for all Ontarians. I would remind the member opposite that one of the reasons we began this discussion and why Premier McGuinty led this discussion at the national level is because only 30% of Ontarians have a pension. We are well aware of that.

Number two: The member opposite refuses to acknowledge that many Ontarians save through other vehicles, and that is simply a fact of life.

Number three: The member opposite has not spoken about the cost associated with this, other than on one side of the issue.

We have kept alive a number of options that are well defined in the budget. We will continue to work with other provinces and the federal government—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, this is not an academic exercise. This is about providing all Ontario workers with a secure and dignified existence in their retirement years. New Democrats have come down firmly on the side of public, defined benefit pension plans. We have made it clear that billions of dollars in savings should be going into the pockets of retirees and not into the coffers of banks and insurance companies. But unfortunately, nobody knows where this Premier and this finance minister stand.

It's a very, very simple question. Whose side are they on? With pensioners on the one side, as we are, or with bankers and insurance companies and their executives?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It is not a simple equation. In fact, the member opposite needs to address a number of important issues. Should we have a segregated pension system in Canada? That is every province with its own system—number one. Number two: We agree that the

cost-effective delivery of pension services is an extremely important variable, and we agree that, for instance, the Canada pension plan's costs of administration are lower than those of private-sector-sponsored plans.

But Canadians save in a variety of ways. If she is advocating getting rid of RRSP tax deductions, for instance, she should say so. She hasn't said that. If she is arguing against a range of other tax policies that benefit savers, she should say so.

This is an important issue. Premier McGuinty and his government continue to—

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

DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Premier: I want to ask the Premier about the Ontario driver's licence tourism industry over which his Minister of Transportation is presiding. This emerging industry is not only encouraging novice drivers from the GTA to visit remote parts of Ontario, but it also guarantees them driver's licences while they're there, licences they probably couldn't even qualify for in their home jurisdiction.

I'd like to know from the Premier, can he tell us how much longer his government intends to allow these flea market driver's licences to be issued? And can he explain why the Ministry of Transportation has been turning a blind eye to this mockery of our licensing system in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I am pleased to take the question. I'm not sure my honourable colleague intends what I think is a legitimate understanding of the question he is putting to us, which is that those people who work in the sector of testing young people for their licences are somehow using lower standards or are less effective or are less prepared to uphold Ontario standards than those working within the city of Toronto or the GTA. I think that's a serious allegation. I think he ought to carefully consider making that kind of allegation.

We're proud of the province-wide standard that we have in place. It's one of the highest, if not the highest, in North America when it comes to our graduated licensing system. We have one of the safest traffic records on our roads anywhere in North America in large part because of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's precisely because we are concerned about road safety that we are challenging the Premier on this. It seems that everyone except the Premier and his Minister of Transportation understands that what's going on here is not only wrong; it's a threat to the safety of every motorist who ends up on the same roads as people who are getting their licences without the appropriate testing.

Here's how the president of one driving school explains why they haul carloads of students to remote parts of Ontario: "In Toronto, it's too difficult to get the licence

... it's more traffic ... it's easy to get their licence up there."

Will the Premier commit today to direct the Minister of Transportation to restrict DriveTest centres to testing applicants who live within the designated geographic area where the people live, to give credibility—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I will do no such thing. I think an Ontarian is an Ontarian is an Ontarian, and a standard is a standard is a standard. I have confidence that our driving standards are some of the strongest in North America. I have confidence that we apply the same standards whether we are in Kingston or Cornwall or Kenora or Windsor or Wawa or Toronto or Ottawa, or in any community in this province. Our responsibility is to make sure that we have strong standards, our responsibility is to make sure that our children, in particular, are enrolled in the best possible graduated licensing system, which we have here, and our responsibility is to uphold the safest track record, when it comes to our roads, in North America. We're proud of that, and that's what we're going to keep doing.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Your government knows that the HST is going to hit struggling Ontarians where it hurts: in their wallets and their purses. That's why you continue to roll out exemptions and rebates.

Earlier this week, the government said it would prevent landlords from increasing rents due to the impact of the HST on utilities and other costs. This will reduce the HST hit on tenants whose hydro and heat is included in their rent, but what is the government going to do to protect the growing number of tenants who pay their utilities with added HST separately from their rent?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. James J. Bradley: As the member would be aware, and as my colleague the Minister of Revenue would be prepared to tell you, of course, we have a whole tax package. What it does is, there are energy credits within that; there are credits that are available with the HST. They are the most generous in certainly all of Canada. Those credits are designed to ease the transition, first of all, and you will know there are three transition payments, but after that there are permanent credits, which are the highest in all of Canada. Our HST in Ontario, of course, will be 2% lower than that of NDP Nova Scotia, where recently the NDP Premier of Nova Scotia and finance minister announced that indeed there would be a 2% increase in their—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I have to give the minister marks for not answering the question, because he's very good at it.

Minister, tenants are the most economically vulnerable Ontarians; one third of them already live in poverty. Most tenants simply can't afford to pay an additional 8% on their heat and hydro. All tenants deserve protection from the HST, not just those who happen to pay utilities as part of their rent.

Why won't you listen to groups like the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations and protect all tenants from the HST by giving a rebate to those tenants for the HST they have to pay on their electricity and heating bills?

1100

Hon. James J. Bradley: As the member may or may not be aware, the new Ontario property tax credit—I'm referring here to the property tax credit—for instance, will provide an additional \$270 million in property tax relief every year to low- and middle-income homeowners and tenants. It is estimated that Ontario's comprehensive tax plan, including the introduction of the HST and tax cuts for business, will help create almost 600,000 jobs for people. Almost three million people, low-income families in Ontario, will receive a new, permanent—I underline that word permanent—sales tax credit of up to \$260 for each adult and child per year, one of the most generous in all of Canada.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Changes to our drug system have caught the attention of my constituents, particularly seniors in the riding of Peterborough. Seniors often have to cope with tough chronic health problems, including cancer, diabetes, arthritis and dementia. With the recent announcement of drug reform, it is clear that 70% of the \$750 million paid for so-called professional allowances don't go towards direct patient services. This money would be better spent on more health services, specifically more low-cost drugs for Ontarians and Peterborians.

I understand the government's new plan includes lower costs for drugs and an end to provincial allowances, but can the minister please provide more details about how these changes will bring more drugs to the Ontario drug formulary?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. We're making these important reforms to make sure that Ontario families get access to lower-cost drugs, and more of them, as new drugs become available. Yesterday, as we do on a regular basis, we notified pharmacists about new drugs we're adding to Ontario's formulary. We are adding six new brand-name drugs and 24 new generic drugs. It's our proposed reforms that make new listings like this possible.

This is very good news for people with many different conditions including HIV, hypertension, high blood pressure, Parkinson's disease and many more health conditions. This expansion of our formulary builds on a record of achievement since our reforms began under Bill 102. Until yesterday, we had it at 150 new drugs, including 38 cancer-fighting drugs. Yesterday, we were permitted to add then another 30 new drugs. Our reforms—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: Seniors in my riding of Peterborough were relieved to hear that so many new drugs have been added to the formulary, and with the new reforms, there will be access to even more low-cost drugs.

Shoppers Drug Mart spent almost \$150,000 in one day in advertising in the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star and the Ottawa Citizen. They're telling the public that they disagree with our proposed drug reforms and that the changes will result in a reduction of services. I understand that such distinguished groups as the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation applaud the changes, saying they will improve access to important drugs.

But where do the seniors come in? Could the minister please tell this House how seniors feel about the changes to our drug system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Not only does CARP, the seniors' advocacy group, support and welcome our proposed changes, they conducted a poll among their members, most of whom were seniors. Let me tell you what the seniors said about this. When asked about eliminating rebates as a way of lowering the cost of generic drugs, 92% of the seniors voted that they agree with us on this issue, and 85% of the voters disagreed with the notion that pharmacies claimed they cannot afford to do business without rebates. It is clear that seniors understand why we're making these reforms. They support our plan. They know it's the right thing to do to lower the cost of drugs in this province, which will allow us to cover more drugs on the formulary.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. Ontario families are just 77 days away from July 1 and your greedy HST tax grab being added to everything, but that hasn't stopped them from speaking out.

Bruce Sovran of Kingsville says, "Everyone who will be paying the HST will suffer. Given our current economy, I think this tax is proof that our government needs to be voted out because they don't care about us." The member from Essex won't stand up for Bruce Sovran, but I will.

Premier, will you listen to the hard-working people of Essex, who know what's good for them without you telling them, and scrap your greedy HST tax grab?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member for Essex does a terrific job representing his constituents; he doesn't need any advice from that member. I think that member ought to say why he was against the personal tax cut that came into effect on January 1. I think he ought to come clean and tell the people of Ontario why it is the Tories' own expert witness at pre-budget hearings the year before said that this policy will create 600,000 jobs, raise family incomes and raise capital investment.

This is a carefully constructed policy that lowers taxes for 93% of Ontarians. It will create jobs across the prov-

ince. It will help lead this province out of this global downturn that we've all experienced. It's the right policy. It's about jobs and a better future for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: Residents in Ontario's southernmost town are not alone in condemning your greedy HST tax grab. David Harasymiw of Sault Ste. Marie says, "The creation of 600,000 jobs because of the harmonized sales tax—I don't think so. If anyone, including voting Liberals or any other voting human being thinks so, I have a mining company in Timmins that's going cheap."

The member for Sault Ste. Marie stands up for Dalton McGuinty instead of Dave Harasymiw, so I'll ask, Premier, will you scrap your greedy HST tax grab?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think Ontarians are also interested to know why his federal counterpart Tony Clement voted for this and why the federal Conservatives provided \$4 billion for this. I think they ought to answer that question. I think Ontarians are interested to know why your party said one thing before we introduced it and another thing after we introduced it. I think Ontarians want to know why your expert witnesses in the past have called for this and your party supported it and why you don't do it now.

I think most of all, while you talk a good game, why don't you stand in your place and tell Ontarians, will you abolish the tax when you form a government, if you form a government? I think they're trying to have it both ways. The people of Ontario can see through this masquerade and the people of Ontario will recognize, over time, that this tax policy is the right policy to create jobs—

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

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister for seniors' affairs. On January 20 last year, a Toronto Star article was titled "No Sprinklers in Fatal Orillia Fire." Two residents of the Muskoka Heights Retirement Residence were killed and eight were hospitalized in critical condition. I'll quote from that article:

"Last night, Ontario's fire marshal and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs told the Toronto Star that all such buildings should be legally required to have sprinklers, regardless of designation.

"There's nobody I know of in the fire service that doesn't want sprinklers in not only those buildings but in residential buildings. It's a big issue," said Pat Burke, the province's fire marshal."

Yesterday, Minister Phillips said, "We take the advice very much of the fire marshal and the fire code."

Why is this minister not taking the fire marshal's advice? Why is he not legislating mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes in Ontario?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I'd refer this to the minister responsible for the fire code, the community safety minister.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I really want to make sure that everyone in Ontario understands: We haven't shut the door on any option, and for anyone to suggest that the door is closed is in fact to give information that isn't perfectly accurate. We continue to ask the fire marshal for advice. We take that advice very, very seriously. We weigh that advice, as we weigh the advice from our other fire partners.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: In that same Toronto article, the home's owner said that the retirement home did not have sprinklers but had recently passed a fire inspection. It apparently had all the necessary equipment to prevent serious injury and death, but without a sprinkler system, two died; eight were seriously injured.

In the same article: "The fire marshal's office is putting together a review of the government's response to the Meadowcroft inquiry. He was unable to comment on his findings, but said he hopes to send them to Rick Bartolucci, Ontario Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, by month-end." That was last year.

It's very clear that the Ontario fire marshal supports mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes. Will the minister, right now, on the record, tell us the official recommendation from the Ontario fire marshal to the government regarding mandatory sprinklers in retirement homes, and is the minister going to follow his recommendations?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: We take the advice of our fire partners very, very seriously. We look forward to that advice not only on sprinklers, but on a variety of ways that we can educate the public with regard to fire safety.

I think the member knows full well—the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association issued a letter suggesting that we shouldn't place false hope in any one particular initiative.

I think it's very important. The advice I've asked the fire marshal to give me is how we can ensure that there is a total package so that we can best educate the public with regard to fire safety.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, it has been a tough year for farmers. Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers have had a number of challenges, such as the rising dollar, which has also impacted our processing sector.

Minister, a recently released report called the Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Ontario Apple, Tender Fruit and Fresh Grape Industry consists of a dozen studies commissioned by the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre which examined the strengths and weaknesses of the province's fruit producers.

Could the minister please tell this House more about the strategic plan that was released and some of the

recommendations that may benefit farmers in my riding as well as across Ontario?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I want to thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. He certainly is a strong advocate for agriculture. It really is my pleasure to answer this question.

I want to say that I applaud the apple, tender fruit and fresh grape industry for developing their 15-year strategy. Having a long-term vision and a plan to get there will be their key to success.

Three key themes were identified for the industry strategy, and I want to cover them off, as follows: the industry should increase focus on the end consumer; the industry needs to improve quality and value chain performance; and innovation needs to be emphasized across the industry.

The plan sets out an objective of thriving in the domestic and global markets. These themes resonate with our Open Ontario plan and with our Premier's agriculture summit.

I look forward to the supplementary to add—

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Minister, as you mentioned, one of the key themes in this comprehensive strategy discussion is having the industry focus on the end consumer, such as giving consumers more organic, affordable fruit, a greater fruit variety and improved marketing.

I know that your ministry has been working hard to promote the importance of buying local and to encourage both the public and the retailers to realize the benefits of buy-local initiatives.

We know that the strategies to promote Ontario food will help drive local sales and all the benefits that go along with that, including a stronger agri-food sector. Partnerships along the value chain between local producers, processors and grocers are crucial to ensure that the demand for Ontario food products is met.

Could the minister tell the members of this House more about the Buy Local strategy and what our government is doing to promote Ontario food and encourage Ontarians to buy locally?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: We do all recognize—every member in this House—that good things do grow in Ontario. The Premier's summit, held earlier this week, focused on translating consumer demand into market realities. Building a stronger value chain from farm to retail will help strengthen our agri-food industry to thrive and connect more with our consumers and develop more homegrown food products.

Through Open Ontario, we will continue to support opportunities to encourage Ontarians to buy local and we will help our agri-food sector seek new markets for Ontario-grown produce. The McGuinty government has invested over \$65 million in programming to support Ontario foods, and we are committed to adding an additional \$40 million over the next two years. When you buy Ontario, everyone wins.

LABOUR UNIONS

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Minister of Labour. This week, my office received a letter from Arc Electrical in Ottawa. This business has been under siege by the IBEW and the Ontario Labour Relations Board during the last year.

The McGuinty Liberals support union tactics that promote collusion and are illegal in other jurisdictions, including the practice of salting, where union organizers infiltrate companies, even against the will of employees.

Arc Electrical is not alone. The same is happening to firms all across Ontario, firms like Abacus, and Blenheim Electric.

Minister, your policies are costing us jobs and destroying businesses. Did union donations to your party buy these unfair labour laws?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the member of impugning motive and would ask him to withdraw that comment, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thought the member, with his time out from this chamber, would have learned something during that time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I remind the honourable member that we do not make references to people's presence or absence in this place for whatever reason they may or may not be here. I would just ask that you be conscious of that and that we not direct our comments personally to one another in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

Minister?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I understand, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking to the learning of what's going on in our province. What's going on in our province is we have the best labour relations that we have had in the last 30 years.

We understand—and it's because our employers, our labour groups, our employees have come together to work together and understand that we have challenges before our province. We have experienced the worst recession that this province and the globe has experienced since the Great Depression. Because of that, our labour groups, our employers have come together to get the job done, to get moving, get Ontario moving forward with an Open for Business plan that we have—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I've learned a lot about this Liberal government for quite some time.

To the Minister of Labour: Your government allows stripping and market equalization funds, tactics that have only one goal—the destruction of small, non-union businesses.

The owner of Arc Electrical was chased out of business by your union friends in the IBEW. Six good employees lost their jobs, and he now teaches at Algonquin College. He told me that union intimidation and campaigning is now common practice on our college campuses as well.

Does this government support intimidation of students as well as employers? Or is your idea of Open Ontario closing the doors on all employers and workers alike?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: What this government is fighting for is fair, balanced labour relations. That's what we have brought to this province: restored labour relations.

And yes, when businesses look to locate, they look for places that have stable labour relations. That's what we have here in Ontario. Our Open for Business plan is attracting business and we are working with our partners. When I say "partners" to the member, I mean all partners. I mean employers, labour groups, employees. We are all in this together, I say to the member. The member needs to understand that. This isn't about dividing groups. This is about moving Ontario forward, and that's what Open Ontario is all about.

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HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of Health. This morning, Torontonians learned that one of their most cherished hospitals is cutting staff. The Service Employees International Union was told that at least 25 front-line positions at Women's College Hospital are being axed. These employees keep the hospital running. They keep it clean and they ensure that patient care does not suffer. How can the minister justify these cuts as hospital CEO salaries continue to skyrocket and her government hands out billions of dollars in more corporate tax cuts?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I appreciate the question. I do understand that Women's College is constructing a new state-of-the-art building and, as part of the project, they're moving the final Sunnybrook programs back over to the Sunnybrook campus. Many of those positions are administration and management positions that may be able to move with the programs to Sunnybrook.

There are 3.1 FTEs that are nursing positions. However, 1.5 of these are vacant positions. We're talking about fewer than two nurses who are affected by this. We have 10,000 more nurses working in Ontario today than we did in 2003 and we continue to increase the role of nurses in this province. These changes are being put in place to—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If the minister listened to the question, she'd know I'm not talking about nursing positions; I'm talking about SEIU employees. These are workers in maintenance, people who do the cleanliness work that keeps those MRSA-type bugs away from hospitals. These are very important workers, and yet this is another cut in a long list of hospital cuts that we've been seeing across the province. Communities everywhere are realizing that they might actually be the next in line to lose local hospital services.

In Toronto, Toronto East General, St. Michael's, St. Joseph's and now Women's College are all coping with

cuts. Across the province, hospital services have been cut in Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Seaford, Northumberland, Burk's Falls and Cobourg. The list goes on and on. The question is this: Will the minister tell us how many more hospitals will be forced to make cuts in the time coming?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, I welcome the opportunity to talk about Women's College and I urge members who are concerned to actually make sure they understand that these changes—and they are changes—will not affect patient care. They will not impact services provided to the patients who turn to Women's College for their health care.

These changes are being put in place to become more effective. That's the important thing here. In health care we all have to be open to the kind of changes that will allow us to maintain a very high level of health care in this province. We've been very supportive of Women's College since the demerger with Sunnybrook. We've increased funding by almost 40%. We will continue to support Women's College Hospital. They play a very important—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you are aware, the recent economic downturn has had an effect on all Ontarians. I've heard many stories, from Welland to Toronto to Sudbury, including accounts from my own constituents who have been struggling through these tough times. The truth is, we're all facing difficult times.

I understand that the government has introduced many initiatives to help Ontarians in need, and one in particular is the poverty reduction strategy. This strategy is an important tool created to help Ontarians by providing long-term support needed.

In Scarborough–Rouge River and Toronto, affordable housing and rent supplements play an important role in the poverty reduction strategy. I'm hoping the minister would be able to provide the House with an update on these programs.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The question does touch on a serious problem that we have around the world, and certainly we're not exempt in Ontario, and that's the one of poverty. We are attacking that, however, head-on. To date, we have committed to creating and repairing at least 76,500 housing units across Ontario. In addition, the 2009 Ontario budget made permanent \$5 million annually to ensure stable funding for municipal rent banks across Ontario.

We're delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help make rent more affordable for low-income Ontario families. Rent banks have helped 23,000 families avoid evictions so far this year. On average, this means keeping 330 families in their homes every month.

The McGuinty government is committed to the first Ontario long-term affordable housing—

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Minister, I'm pleased that this government has decided to tackle this serious problem of poverty in Ontario. Your ministry is providing Ontarians with a very important service, and I ask that this service continue well into the future. I will be sure to take this information back to my constituents.

This year's budget recognizes health, education and economic development as key priorities for the government and laid out a plan to eliminate the provincial deficit by 2017.

The minister comments on the substantial commitments by this government in the affordable housing sector, but there is no mention of new funding for social housing renovation and affordable housing development in the 2010 provincial budget. I'm hoping the minister would be able to address the budget and how it will affect his ministry and, most importantly, the people in my riding and all Ontarians.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to inform the member that while the economic circumstances are challenging at this time and they've pinched our financial situation, our investment in much-needed affordable housing remains unchanged.

In 2009, the province, together with our federal partners, committed to investing \$1.2 billion over two years in affordable housing. This means that the second half of the affordable housing funding is being rolled out this year. That's more than \$600 million in funding for Ontario families in need.

Today, we're continuing to invest in housing through \$100 million for the 2008 budget, which has seen more than 62,000 units repaired; \$127 million for the DOOR program, to help create and repair affordable housing; and \$80.24 million for off-reserve aboriginal housing—

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

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and it concerns—I wrote the Premier and the minister back in January, and I can't believe you haven't changed this program. The program I'm referring to—honourable members may not know this: The Liberals have a three-year program for apple growers that subsidizes by 50% the purchase price of new, petroleum-based, plastic, American-made apple harvest bins, but they won't level the playing field and subsidize the 100% Canadian-made wooden bins that have been used for centuries by apple growers.

I ask the minister, is this what you and the Premier mean by Open Ontario, that it's open to Americans but closed to Ontario businesses?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Thank you very much for the question, and I really do appreciate the question.

I want to clarify just a few things. In fact, for the sourcing of the bins, it's entirely up to the business. The

decision is made entirely by the operator of the business. If they choose to buy American or they choose to buy Canadian, that is strictly up to the business.

We have provided funding, and that is through the food safety and traceability, and the apple growers have found that the plastic bins are easier to clean and certainly much easier to work with for storage of their apples. That is why they're moving away from the wooden bins.

But if they choose to move to either keep the wood or move to the plastic, that's up to them. That's a business decision that they make.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, that's ridiculous. It shows what lack of knowledge you know about business and small business. You're—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I reminded an honourable member earlier about not bringing our questions or answers down to a personal level. I remind all members of that.

1130

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, it is rather personal when you're driving fellows like John Finch in Clarksburg out of business. He makes wooden apple bins. Farmers won't buy the bins anymore because you're subsidizing by 50% the American-made plastic bins. By the way, plastic's not a renewable resource, the last time I looked, and good Canadian wood is. It's better for the environment. They've used them for centuries.

I got a form letter back from your ministry that made no sense. In my 20 years here, I—either you guys are stubborn, or you don't know what you're doing. The fact of the matter is, farmers don't have a choice now. If they want to be part of the program, they have to buy American-made plastic bins. Is this what you call Open Ontario?

I ask you again, why don't you level—

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

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I've got to tell you, to take lectures from that side of the House, when I come from a small business background and he doesn't, I think is actually quite laughable.

But I want to make it perfectly clear in my answer: The decision is up to the farmer. It's up to the farmer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members, it is Thursday.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not helpful, member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not helpful, either, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Minister?

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: One of the things that I wanted to further speak about—and it is an opportunity for me to talk about this—is the understanding of agriculture from this side versus that side. There have been some—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock, please. I try extremely hard to be patient, and I try to be the referee who does not lose his cool, and I'm biting my tongue. But to start making allegations of who's smarter and who's not smarter when it comes to a particular sector, an important sector in our province, is not helpful. I trust that each member—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Simcoe–Grey, that's not helpful, either.

I think it's important for members to recognize that when the Speaker is standing, they should be listening to what the Speaker has to say. It is important work, what we do in this House, what I do and what you do as opposition and as government. You can criticize a program, you can criticize initiatives, but let's not bring it to a personal level.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. The Massey Centre in my riding provides residence and support to the most vulnerable: teen moms and their babies. It provides daycare; it provides a parent-child centre. This centre has not had an increase in its provincial funding in years. In the next day or so, this centre may be on strike. Those teen moms won't have the support that they need. The parents whose jobs depend on that daycare centre won't have the support. The parents and children who come in to the early years centre won't have that early years centre.

Will your government immediately sit down with the management of that centre and help them resolve the ongoing financial problems they face because of a lack of increases over the last number of years?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to recognize and acknowledge the good work done by the Massey Centre, an important organization here in the city of Toronto that has done work helping teen mothers find a better pathway for them and their children.

Our government has worked hard over the last number of years to make sure that we continue to put additional services in place to help those moms. Those are the very moms who will benefit from the Ontario child benefit. I was in my home community this morning talking about the importance of that benefit to mothers to be able to find a better footing for them and their children.

I know that the Minister of Labour will look forward to speaking in the supplementary to the specific issues associated with the labour dispute. But suffice it to say that we are very supportive of the work that has been done for many years by the Massey Centre. I invite any organization like that to meet with me, and I—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased that the minister recognizes the good work of the Massey Centre. That's a step forward. My hope would be that the recognition of good work and the critical nature of that work would be recognized not just in words here, but in money on the table to make sure that that good work can go forward and the workers at that centre can be paid decently.

Minister, the clients, the parents, the workers and the administration face conflict and disruption within the next 48 hours. Will you act now to help them deal with their financial problems so they can resolve this conflict?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for the question. As the member has heard from the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Massey Centre is very important to our community, as are all our centres that provide these social services. This work in our communities is vital.

When it comes to labour relations, at times, they can be difficult, but at the Ministry of Labour, we are there to assist. We're there to assist with our mediators and our conciliators to help the parties as they resolve their differences and whatever disputes that they may have between each other to find a way to move forward. That's how we help them.

We all know the great work that gets done in the community. We want to continue—

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

ANTI-SMOKING PROGRAMS

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, this past Monday, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published research from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. This shows that a smoking ban implemented in Toronto restaurants in 2001 corresponds with a decrease in hospital admissions for cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, specifically, heart attacks, angina, stroke and respiratory conditions, including asthma, emphysema and pneumonia or bronchitis. This study is a helpful tool in furthering the health promotion agenda, and clearly shows that preventive action is paying health dividends.

Minister, how has the government supported Ontarians and municipalities to reduce exposure to smoke?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to take this opportunity to thank the member from Ottawa West—Nepean for the question and also to publicly welcome him to the Legislature.

The ICES study is an important one that has garnered much positive attention. A report on the consequences of smoking is especially timely as this month is cancer prevention month. The report is significant because it identifies smoke-free legislation as a key contributor to reductions of hospital admissions for cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. This is in fact good news. These numbers prove the value of having a comprehensive smoke-free regime.

Due to the long-known dangers of second-hand smoke, this government acted boldly and brought forth the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which has built upon the good work done by municipalities by creating one of the most comprehensive province-wide tobacco strategies in North America.

This government will continue to address the very important issue of protecting Ontarians from tobacco-related illnesses.

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

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

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Dalton McGuinty has launched an assault on community pharmacies. The Liberal government's changes represent a serious cut to front-line health care services, particularly in rural and small-town Ontario. This is an attack on the viability of rural pharmacies and the availability of pharmacy services in my riding of Simcoe—Grey.

For the past six years, Ontarians have paid \$15 billion in the Liberal health tax, yet they are receiving less and less in return. At the same time that we uncovered the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle and huge amounts of money being wasted at local health integration networks, small-town pharmacists are being driven out of business and being told to close their doors.

In Simcoe—Grey, people are already getting the short end of the stick when it comes to public health care: doctor shortages, small hospitals and lack of transportation, just to name a few of the issues. Now Dalton McGuinty wants us to pay more and travel further to get the medication we require. This is unacceptable. I know many of our local pharmacists, and I know them to be upstanding and generous members of our communities.

Dalton McGuinty's assault on these professionals is unwarranted and unbecoming of the Premier of Ontario. I'm committed to defending rural Ontario, our small towns, our farmers, our schools and our health care. In doing so, I support our local community pharmacies and the good work that they do. If this government doesn't change course, my constituents can expect to drive further, receive less service and face new user fees.

MIHIR GHOSH

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mihir Ghosh, a dear friend of the people of East York, passed away recently. Mihir had been a long-time volunteer on the board of the East York Race Relations and Multiculturalism Institute, a community group committed to promoting healthy race rela-

tions, multiculturalism and Canadian citizenship. Without the long-standing contributions of Mihir Ghosh in the last 18 years, the good work of the institute simply would not have been possible in the past, nor would it have the foundation to continue in the future. For many community members, Mihir was simply referred to as “Mr. East York Multicultural Day.”

Mihir inspired and motivated others by personal involvement. He committed himself selflessly to the worthy causes of building positive relations among diverse ethnic communities, and in turn, rapport was established towards the better good of the community.

Mihir was an accomplished promoter and was able to quickly create confidence in the different volunteer service roles he had undertaken, such as his volunteering with the Leaside Lions and the South Asian Health and Heart Society.

Mihir is going to be sorely missed.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. Pat Hoy: Our government's recent budget made an important investment for the health and well-being of our children in Ontario. We are investing \$9 million per year to support 20 children's treatment centres. In addition, we are making an investment of \$2.5 million to help 12 of these centres update their record-keeping systems. This funding will help ensure our children get the treatment they need faster and closer to home.

The Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services estimates that about 3,600 children and youth will benefit from this investment. Currently, Ontario's system serves more than 58,000 children. Some of the services they provide include physiotherapy, rehabilitation and speech-language therapy. They help children and youth with conditions such as cerebral palsy and Down syndrome to reach their full potential. They also support children with special needs, such as those with autism and learning disabilities.

Children in my riding will also benefit from this investment. I was very pleased that Minister Broten came to Chatham last week to personally deliver this good news and tour the centre.

The Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent will receive an additional \$216,000 in 2010-11. This important investment will strengthen our response and service system so that we can better serve children, youth and families with special needs.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Norm Miller: On March 24, I had the pleasure to meet with representatives from the YMCA. During that meeting, they expressed their concern over government Bill 242, the full-day learning bill, and the disastrous effects it will have on the not-for-profit child care programs already in place in Ontario.

The bill prohibits schools from partnering with child care programs already in existence. This will be more costly to implement and will lead to the duplication of

services. Furthermore, it will mean that those existing programs will lose many of the four- and five-year-olds, diminishing the funding that helps pay for operating costs. This, in turn, will mean higher costs for parents of children in other age groups.

With early childhood educators flocking to fill higher-paid positions in school boards, the not-for-profit child care providers will be unable to compete. As a result, children in other age groups will lose the qualified expertise of trained ECE practitioners.

The YMCA is concerned with this government's program and has laid out specific amendments for Bill 242. One of those amendments asks the Ministry of Education to allow schools to partner with the not-for-profit community providers and to partner with these providers for the delivery of extended day programs—that's before and after school—for children aged six to 12 as well.

It is my hope that the government will listen to both the concerns and suggestions of the YMCA in an effort to improve Bill 242.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: Our planet is getting warmer. The impacts of climate change could be disastrous. Those who will suffer the most will be our children and grandchildren. Increasingly, it will be them that we look to for leadership.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with more than 150 high school students in my riding at an event I host annually, the Climate Change Challenge. This was facilitated by Mary-Lou Maisonneuve, a parent who has led the environmental support at the high school level in Orleans. The event was held at Gisèle Lalonde high school.

In addition to my own remarks, the students were addressed by Mark Leahy of ecOrleans and Omri Stern of Zerofootprint.

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, also gave an excellent presentation in which he clearly distinguished between natural and human causes of global warming, and clearly showed our role in making the planet warmer.

I want to thank all of those who worked very hard to make the event a success. I was stirred by the enthusiasm these young people showed. This will be the challenge of their generation, but it should also be ours.

This government has taken leadership in greening Ontario. I hope that Canada's federal government will follow our lead.

St. Peter, St. Matthew, Cairine Wilson, Gisèle Lalonde, and Louis-Riel were well represented at the event.

If the students I met with last week are any indication, they will show the leadership that our generation is so lacking.

POLISH COMMUNITY

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to pay tribute to the memory of the late president

of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Lech Kaczynski, and his wife, First Lady Mrs. Maria Kaczynski, who, together with 94 of their most trusted friends and colleagues, died tragically on April 10, 2010.

On this, which is a national day of mourning in Canada, His Grace Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, will celebrate a memorial mass at St. Maximilian Kolbe church. We join with all who gather there in expressing our collective sorrow and sincere condolences, and to celebrate their great achievements on behalf of their country and its people.

This past Sunday, I had the honour of attending a wreath-laying at the Katyn monument in Toronto. And yesterday I was joined by my colleague MPP John Yakubuski at the Polish consulate to sign the book of condolences, together with many grieving members of our Polish-Canadian community.

1310

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, and on behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the people of Poland at this difficult time as we remember the words that inspired President Kaczynski throughout his life:

Remarks in Polish.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm proud to stand and speak to the commitment that this government has made to move Ontario forward into the next phase of power generation. This government is committed to renewable energy through the initiatives outlined in the Green Energy Act. Part of this vision for Ontario is designed around creating a culture of conservation. Using less energy is the smart strategy for our economy and our environment. Energy conservation allows the province to simultaneously create green jobs, improve productivity and reduce emissions while at the same time helping Ontarians to manage their energy costs.

The Green Energy Act will continue to make energy conservation a priority in the province through establishing leading efficiency standards for households in North America and by creating new financing tools to help consumers manage costs of renewable projects, and also by setting electricity conservation targets for local utilities and helping them to deliver effective programs to households and businesses and requiring targeted conservation measures to protect low-income Ontarians from increases in energy prices.

By creating a culture of conservation through the initiatives in the Green Energy Act, we will help to steer Ontario to a greener future through renewable power generation.

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: National Volunteer Week is celebrated from April 18 to April 24 this year, and I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers in Etobicoke

Centre who donate their time and energy to many of our community services. This includes our local hospice, sports, recreation, cultural activities, the arts, schools and faith communities. Every year, I recognize our rich and long history of volunteering by presenting community recognition awards to people who have been nominated by friends and colleagues and who have truly made a difference.

The 2009 recipients are: Katy Anderson, for her work with the Parent Education Network; Mary and Fiona Campell, for their work with a local ratepayers group; Richard Graves, a competitive runner who raises funds for charity and carried the Olympic torch for us; Elisabeth Grinstead, for her work in therapeutic touch; Valentina Kuryliw, for her efforts to promote the Ukrainian cause to both Canadian Ukrainians and the broader economy; John Pomponi, the neighbour we would all like to have; Cheryl Stoneburgh, who has created Basketeers, which provides tangible support to hundreds of men and women; Margo Verdis and so many others—Mary Austin, Roy Cunningham and our 22 Division community police liaison committee for their work in building bridges between our police services and our community.

Truly, all of them make a difference. They are the heart and soul of every community, and I would like to pay tribute to each and every one of them.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Dave Levac: Our government has long held that education as a priority for our province is something we've been striving for. We understand that a strong, publicly funded education system is vital to Ontario's prosperity and future. In our recent budget, we increased funding to school boards to \$20.2 billion for the 2010-11 school year. The funding ensures our continued progress in reducing class sizes, helping students reach higher achievement levels and raising the graduation rate. I'm sure those are things that everyone can agree are appropriate and laudable goals.

These investments are making a difference. Since our government was elected, we have seen a 13% increase in grades 3 and 6 students who met or exceeded the provincial standard on province-wide tests and an 11% increase in the student graduation rate.

But that's not all we are doing to support education in Ontario. This fall we will start rolling out the full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds in Ontario until it is fully implemented in 2015-16. Early learning has proven to have many cognitive and social benefits later in life. Research over the years has told us this, and we will be confirming that once we've implemented the program.

These are just some of the important investments in education in our recent budget, and we will keep doing the investments to build on the progress we're making today for the future of our children tomorrow.

We thank all of the stakeholders and partners as we attempt to do the best we can to get the best out of our children for the prosperity of the province of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT (PUBLIC TRANSIT EXPENSE TAX CREDIT), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR DÉPENSES DE TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu afin de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les dépenses engagées au titre des transports en commun.

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. John O'Toole: Public transit is an important part of the public good for Ontario which this bill intends to promote. It encourages people to use public transit by giving them a tax credit at the discretion of the Minister of Finance to encourage the use of public transit, which is good for our environment and our quality of life.

PETITIONS

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

"Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

"Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

"Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people's complaints about children's aid societies' decisions; and

"Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman's office;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and

investigate complaints concerning the province's children's aid societies (CAS)."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to read this petition into the record.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

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

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be."

I agree with this petition and will sign it and send it to the table with page Andrea.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on July 1, 2010 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," and a few examples include coffee, magazines, newspapers, gas for the car, home heating oil, electricity, Internet service, haircuts, dry cleaning, personal grooming, home renovations, home care services, veterinary care, pet care, legal services, the sale and resale of homes, and funeral arrangements; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election"—however, we all recall that in 2004 he brought in the dreaded health tax, which costs upward of \$600 to \$900 per individual, and now he's raising taxes again;

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

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

I am pleased to present this to Avery, who is the page from my riding of Durham.

1320

ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I have 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 support this petition, I affix my signature and send it to the desk with page Max.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here, signed by what would appear now, from the number of times I've presented this petition, to be almost every constituent in the riding of Oxford.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature, as I wholeheartedly agree with this, and I will give it to page Tara to present it to the table.

TAXATION

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

“Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

“Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

“Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

“Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers.”

I attach my signature to it and I will pass it Georgina.

WIND TURBINES

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

“Whereas the health and well-being of the people of Ontario should be a priority for government; and

“Whereas wind farms are being considered by the McGuinty government throughout Ontario, even though there are no independent, science-based studies on the health effects of wind turbines and their transmission systems; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is forcing municipalities to build these turbines without any local say or local approval; and

“Whereas over 50 municipal councils in Ontario have voted to ask the McGuinty government to place a moratorium on new wind developments;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop all new wind developments until it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the health, safety and environmental impacts of wind turbines have been addressed and satisfied.”

I agree with this petition and I'm going to sign it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—it's from Cairine Wilson, and three of the kids who signed it are Kevin Munro, Kaytie Picard and Eric Backstrom.

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and

irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

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

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

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

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

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208,” or presently as Bill 6, “An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I will sign this petition as I agree with it, and I will send it up to the desk with Owen.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the members of the provincial Parliament of Ontario to enact legislation in support of the Ombudsman of Ontario to have the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I sign this in support of vulnerable children in the province of Ontario.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Pat Hoy: “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 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 have signed this petition, and I hand it to page Andrew.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people in Port Elgin. I believe that’s in the riding of Huron–Bruce, but they asked me on their behalf to present it in the Legislature.

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I will affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the people of Ontario expect its Legislature to be a model of decorum and respect; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario expect members of the Legislature to conduct themselves”—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is that stamped?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: No, it’s not. I apologize.

CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

M. Phil McNeely: J’ai une pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario. Ça vient de l’École secondaire

publique Gisèle-Lalonde. Elle est signée par Katrina Legault, Gabrielle Savoie, Mafouze Al-Sharrife et d'autres.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que dans son rapport de 2007, le Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat des Nations Unies a conclu que, sans des réductions dramatiques au niveau des émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables à des activités humaines, les changements climatiques pourraient avoir des « effets soudains et irréversibles sur les océans, les glaciers, les terres, les littoraux et les espèces »; et

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« Attendu qu'aucun groupe, pays ou continent n'assume la responsabilité des changements climatiques mais que tous les êtres humains sont collectivement responsables d'y apporter une solution; et

« Attendu que la production de gaz à effet de serre a augmenté de 27 % au-dessus des niveaux de 1990 au Canada; et

« Attendu que nos chefs élus ont la responsabilité de rendre compte aux membres du public de leurs gestes pour enrayer la problématique des changements climatiques par égard pour la redevabilité; et

« Attendu que les jeunes en particulier, héritiers éventuels de cette Terre, notre seul demeure, démontrent un intérêt spécial pour cette question;

« Nous, les soussignés, adressons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative pour demander que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario adopte rapidement le projet de loi 208, la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

J'envoie cette pétition avec Kate. Merci.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Mr. McNeely moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change / Projet de loi 6, Loi visant à augmenter la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: Some 55 million years ago, our planet grew warmer. We don't know for sure what caused it, but we do know the results: global temperatures rose an average of six degrees; ice melted; oceans rose; entire islands were swept under the sea; and this was the last mass-extinction event in our planet's history,

all because of a rise in temperature of six degrees. That happened, according to the scientists, over a period of 20,000 years.

Scientists say we might see the same six-degree rise in the next 90 years. If thousands of species died because of climate change over the course of 20,000 years, how many more will die as our planet warms at a rate 200 times faster?

While we may not know what caused our planet's climate to change 55 million years ago, this time scientists are nearly unanimous. This time the culprit is clear: It is us. That means it's our responsibility to fix it, and it won't be easy. It will take political wisdom and courage.

The legislation we are debating today is a small call for action. This private member's bill, if passed, would name April 21, the day before Earth Day, Climate Change Awareness Day. But it would also ask the Minister of the Environment to produce a report card illustrating indicators of climate change. I have produced one for 2009, and this is just a report that tells it as it is. The report would be similar to the one that I have produced. It would be delivered to students across our province in grades 5 through 12 by the Minister of Education, and all that material is already available through our ministries.

This might seem like a small thing, but great things have small beginnings. By naming April 21 Climate Change Awareness Day, we would be setting aside a day of the year to consider the causes and consequences of climate change and to confront our own role in that climate change.

Our polluting industries and polluting activities emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. At the same time, deforestation blackens the lungs of the planet, making it less capable of recycling carbon dioxide into clean air. Increased concentrations of these gases in our atmosphere trap the sun's heat.

Temperature increases are concentrated at the poles. Thirty years ago, Arctic ice, at its smallest annual extent, covered an area the size of Canada. Today it's the size of Canada less the area of Quebec. Quite a bit of the ice is already gone—the summer ice. Thirty years from now, there may be nothing left, and it may happen faster than that.

As the Arctic's reflective ice melts, more and more blue ocean water absorbs heat, accelerating global temperature change. The ice reflects about 80% of the energy from the sun; the water will absorb about 80% of the energy, so it's a complete reversal, and global warming will accelerate. This is the most vicious of vicious circles.

Consider the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. For tens of thousands of years, it was at about 285 parts per million. In 1776, James Watt installed the first modern coal-fired steam engine. As more and more coal was shovelled into more and more furnaces, our atmosphere grew more and more clogged with CO₂. As time went on, the change grew faster. By 1930, we hit 300 parts per million. In 1950, it was 310. In the 1980s, we surpassed 350 parts per million, which

many experts called a safe and more stable limit. Today, we're at 387 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. We'll hit 400 in as little as five years, and we may reach 450 in 20 years. Many scientists consider that to be catastrophic.

What does it mean? It would mean large portions of our oceans become dead zones. It would mean mountain glaciers vanishing and many other ecosystems at risk. It could mean we've reached a tipping point beyond which the Antarctic and Greenland ice shelves melt and oceans rise. Even a one-metre rise could leave half a billion people homeless. But it's the things we haven't thought of that might end up being the most disastrous.

This is a man-made catastrophe, and it's one that can be stopped. We must carry on the fight every day of the year, but by designating April 21 Climate Change Awareness Day, we would give concerned Ontarians a date to rally around. It would be a time for ordinary Ontarians and community leaders to put their heads together and come up with solutions. Great things have small beginnings.

This legislation, if passed, would also, as I've mentioned, produce an annual report card on indicators of climate change, distributed to all students in grades 5 through 12. It is this younger generation and the generations to come who will be the most profoundly affected by climate change. We must do what we can to lay the groundwork for them. In return, they must hold us accountable, and this would help. It would be nice for our kids to be seeing our report cards.

The report would measure the amounts of greenhouse gases being produced globally, being produced by Canada and being produced by Ontario. This would be from each year since 1990, the Kyoto year. It would report on the amount of carbon dioxide already in our atmosphere. It would rank the 10 highest-polluting countries on a per capita basis, a list I'm afraid Canada figures prominently on. We're up there with Australia and with the United States as the worst polluters on an individual basis. It would indicate the lowest annual level of the Arctic sea ice, and it would show any new species added to Ontario and Canada's list of species at risk. Finally, it would track polar bear populations in Canada, along with any other indicators the Minister of the Environment feels are relevant.

Collecting all this information in one place would allow students to get an overall picture of the health of our global environment. More importantly, it would allow students to hold their political leaders' feet to the fire. It will take political wisdom and courage because there are costs to fighting climate change, and those costs can't be ignored.

A recent report sponsored by TD Economics and based on the analysis of M.K. Jaccard and Associates, suggests that aggressive policies such as carbon pricing and emissions regulations might leave Canada's economy between 1.5% to 3.2% below what it would otherwise be by 2020. That's over 10 years. Canada's growth rate might slow from about 2.4% per annum to

between 2.1% and 2.3% per annum, but that small loss is offset by so much gain. The longer we wait to take action, as Paul Krugman says, the more expensive a solution will be. If we attempt none, the damage to our economy and our entire planet will be vastly greater than that caused by a 0.1% slowdown in economic growth.

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Business as usual is not just unsustainable, it is unfair. Greedy polluters like big oil, big auto and big consumption are pushing the cost of doing business on the rest of us. The dire costs of climate change are not showing up on their balance sheet and not showing up in the price of their products, giving them an unfair advantage over environmentally responsible business.

Greenwashing also leads customers astray. This is a strategy used to downplay negative impacts of corporate decisions on our environment. Clear-cutting, coal mining, oil drilling: All of these can be spun by clever PR people into things that somehow look good for our environment. Just one recent example: Shell Oil has made, and is making, large investments in the Alberta tar sands. About a month ago, they took out a full-page ad in the *Ottawa Citizen* and sang their own praises about protecting the Athabasca River and the boreal forest. But nowhere in the ad did they mention the 29.5 million tonnes of greenhouse gases released into the air at the Alberta tar sands every single year. Nowhere did they mention the huge costs this incurs; costs that are being transferred to our children.

Let's make corporations pay what they owe. Let's make them pay for the destruction they cause. Let's reward companies that are really environmentally responsible, and the same goes for governments. Jaccard's report suggests that Ontario's economy will grow at a faster rate the more aggressively climate change is pursued. This is because of the province's many non-polluting industries. This is also because of the government's commitment to going green.

As climate change forces the world economy to transform, Ontario is in a fantastic position to reap the rewards. We have invested millions in green energy, and we've committed to reducing greenhouse gas production below 1990 levels: 6% below by 2014, 15% below by 2020 and 80% below by 2050. We are closing Ontario's coal-fired generating stations, our province's biggest polluter, by 2014. This will reduce our CO₂ production by 30 million tonnes annually. Too bad that reduction is being matched by the annual pollution I mentioned from the Alberta tar sands.

The fact is that our federal government has not shown the kind of leadership our provincial government has in combatting climate change. It has not shown the kind of leadership we so desperately need. Our federal government blocked meaningful change at the 2009 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. Our Prime Minister and our country won the most Fossil awards of any nation in the run-up to that convention, honouring Canada's dirty and destructive impact on our planet's climate.

Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have increased 27% since the Kyoto base year of 1990, and according to Environment Canada, we're now 33.8% above our Kyoto commitment. There's no surprise when our current Prime Minister said in 2002: "We will oppose ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and its targets. We will work with the provinces and others to discourage implementation of those targets. And we will rescind the targets when we have the opportunity to do so."

As recently as three weeks ago, this was repeated by Mr. Paradis. He's going to leave climate change to the provinces.

We cannot afford such myopic leadership. The sacrifices we need to make will demand political wisdom and political courage. We must prepare the next generation to take the steps we don't have the wisdom or courage to take ourselves. It's a call to action. Our young citizens must know that things can change. With our help, they can do better; with their help, we can do better; and with small beginnings there may yet be time to do great things to grow.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Actually, it wasn't too long ago—just before Christmas—that we debated, I'm assuming, the identical bill, the Climate Change Awareness Act, and I don't think much has changed as far as the proposed legislation is concerned. Our position hasn't changed on this as well, although there have been some developments since Copenhagen.

I give the member credit: At least he's talking about the climate change issue. His government doesn't seem to want to talk about it anymore. We've really heard nothing from this government since the cap-and-trade legislation was passed. So again, we're not hearing much from the government on this issue, and I'm not sure what's going on there.

One thing that has been pointed out by our Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller—I hope that was not a career-limiting move on his behalf. He pointed out that the province of Ontario is nowhere near meeting its emission reduction targets. Other than Mr. McNeely, perhaps the members opposite just kind of shrug their shoulders on that one.

A cynic may question why one would set those kinds of emission target reductions in the first place if you're not prepared to meet them. A cynic may suggest that some of these initiatives do oftentimes look good on the 6 o'clock news; I do give you credit for that. But we do need a bit more substance. One cannot just continue to merely talk about this issue and strive to acquire those green-friendly headlines.

With respect to this bill, it's an awareness bill. What's wrong with publicizing climate change awareness? My concern is, we get caught up in the talk. There are no concrete measures from this government. You're not part of the three or four other provinces and the federal government that have moved forward on carbon dioxide

capture and sequestration, for example. You're not putting any money into it.

In calling for this Climate Change Awareness Day—and I've done this before—I question to what extent we need yet another environmental day designation. Many years ago—it would be the early 1970s—Earth Day: Now, that just knocked it out of the ballpark. That did very well and continues to garner attention right around the planet. I'm just concerned that if you add yet another day, if it's overkill, at best you are essentially diluting the message, perhaps confusing the message, and, in the end, losing some of the impact with respect to—certainly the impact of previously designated days could lose their importance. How many of these days can we fit into a week?

Much like Copenhagen, where the issue of climate change obviously was front and centre on the international stage—people came from around the world. It's a global issue, it requires a global solution. To what extent are we limited, as a provincial jurisdiction, to the same extent that a state in Brazil would maybe be limited in any impact that they would have as well, operating on their own? We do know that Mr. McGuinty sent his Minister of the Environment to Copenhagen and he ended up bad-mouthing Canada on the international stage. That's the kind of publicity we don't need. I am glad that Mr. McGuinty did not send John Gerretsen to Vancouver to embarrass us at the Olympics. But beyond that, we do know that Copenhagen, in many views, has been seen as a failure. It did not lead to a meaningful accord where any direct action was taken. Some of the dates that were set have been delayed by both the developing countries and the developed world. There was a lot of talking, yet again.

There has been talking about this issue since the early 1950s. I have a Globe and Mail article from 1951 or 1952 that talks about global warming. We've been talking about it since the very early 1950s. We continue today.

The developed world: A number of those countries did set reduction targets at Copenhagen. Before the United Nations, they set January 31 as a date, as did some of the developing nations. However, only about a week afterwards, both India and China reversed their positions. UN officials subsequently postponed that deadline. That deadline has been postponed indefinitely. Negotiators failed to make any real movement towards emission reduction targets. Frankly, I think in setting those kinds of hurdles other minds come into play with respect to the economic impact and the realization that in many ways, in different forms, this is essentially a tax on the citizens of whichever jurisdiction goes forward on this locally to try and deal with a global problem. And how many countries are willing to sacrifice the basic living standards of their citizens to attempt to solve a global problem?

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Another real concern for Canada: There are two US cap-and-trade bills before the US jurisdiction. These will result in the imposition of tariffs, levies, fees or

restrictions with respect to the border to protect their own trade-exposed industry. This is the kind of thing we hear a lot these days from the Obama administration, and those countries that are out of sync with the United States will pay the price.

So it's not hard to see why, since Copenhagen, national leaders have been reticent to talk about this. I think it's in today's Toronto Sun that Lorrie Goldstein makes reference to this as the mother of all tax hikes: "Pricing carbon dioxide emissions, whether through a carbon tax or cap-and-trade market, means creating a new national sales tax"—another, as he describes it, "tax on everything," a new GST.

Again, that's of concern. We're in the midst of the HST debate presently in Ontario, again on the heels of Mr. McGuinty's \$15-billion—to date—so-called health tax. Despite all of this, the talk continues, the ongoing discussion with respect to a global emission pricing plan. I'm not sure if it was Goldstein—I have a quote here from James Kanter. I think this was last Sunday's New York times, and I'll read the quote with respect to emissions trading. We are "on the cusp of generating mammoth amounts of money for governments—money that could start flowing just in time to help nations emerge from the worst financial crisis in a generation.

"The prospect of those earnings is one of the key reasons that nations are determined to stick by carbon trading, despite the setbacks and scandals."

In the meantime, there's another statement—I think this was in a Fraser Institute document. The environmental law group of Blake, Cassels and Graydon noted "a continuing patchwork of regulatory initiatives at the provincial and regional levels, resulting in the need for companies to comply with competing regulatory requirements." We've seen that over seven years and perhaps—I'm losing count—seven environmental bills, legislation that's been passed by the present government. It does have a cumulative effect.

This kind of regulatory competition was discussed in Copenhagen. The Premiers of Quebec, British Columbia, Manitoba and Nova Scotia were in attendance, not the Premier of Ontario. As I mentioned, Ontario's environment minister was there, and the mayors of Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. Yet again, lots of talk, not much in the way of action.

There's no question that the member opposite's heart is in the right place. Unlike his government, he's certainly, as we are now well into the new year, again more than willing to continue to talk about this. I'm just concerned that a Climate Change Awareness Act—designation, report cards—somewhat misses the mark. Money resources would be required for additional report cards. I don't know whether kids and their parents want more report cards. I'm just not convinced on any discernible impact of these kinds of initiatives. Advocating for report cards is also important, and that's obviously an awareness tool. I think it's important to continue to let people in this country know—I think of steelworkers in my area—of the cost and the impact on manufacturing, on

industry and on agri-business; the impact on the steel industry. I have a steel mill right next to a major coal plant. I think you made mention of shutting down the coal plants. I'm just not sure how many windmills it would take to run that gigantic steel mill down in my riding.

Let's have a report card with respect to documenting, as requested by Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller. Let's document the failure of this government to meet its own greenhouse gas target standards. That would be worth a report card on its own.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. I want to thank the member for raising the issue and bringing it back to the floor of the Legislature. It isn't often—I wish it was more frequent—that we have the opportunity to talk about climate change and talk about the issues that it brings with it; talk about the opportunities that are out there to address climate change; and talk about the opportunities: environmental, economic and social. That's before us today.

The Liberal government—Dalton McGuinty—has much to answer for on this file. Awareness is a good thing. My hope is that more students are aware of the state of the world, and the consequences for them and their future if action is not taken on climate change. But I have to say, Speaker—and you will know, as a member of this House—that if you actually look at the climate plan that was brought forward by the McGuinty government—one that does not have any costing in it, so we don't know what the measures will be—frankly, that's a big difference from the plan put forward by the province of Quebec, which actually has a budget annually for the measures that it's going to take to deal with climate change.

If you look at the report that was brought forward by the Minister of the Environment just before Christmas, that report—and it was a very glossy report; it was a very good-looking report—had a very powerful message, and that's that this government will not meet its climate change targets. You could go through and see smiling pictures of the minister. I think there were a lot of pictures of greenery in that report. But the numbers told a very grim story, and that's that this government was not going to meet its targets based on the plan that was presented.

Frankly, those targets don't even meet the weak standard that was set in the Kyoto Protocol. I will say it's a weak standard because, having gone to attend the negotiations at the session in Bonn and having talked to climate scientists, everyone recognized that what was being put forward in the Kyoto Protocol was the absolute minimum. It was the basement. It was the lowest common denominator. The hope was that we could at least meet that. Frankly, as the member who had put forward the bill knows, when we're talking about 2020, increasingly the talk is of cuts to greenhouse gas emissions in the 20% to 40% range. This government's plan is a 15% cut. That is

inadequate. But piled on top of that inadequacy is the reality that there is no plan in place to meet even those weak and inadequate targets. That's of consequence.

When the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario looked at the plan, noted that it wasn't going to meet its targets and noted that it was very vague in terms of exactly what steps would be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, one of the things he talked about was the fact that transportation was a critical issue. It is a positive thing that coal plants have been ratcheted down and may or may not be shut down. We will see. We hope they are shut down. In fact, according to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, they could be shut down this year, given the lack of demand for electricity and the state of Ontario's electricity system. That would make sense to me. As the demand for electricity goes down, I don't know why the coal plants are being turned on. Nonetheless, they are.

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But I will go back to the Environmental Commissioner. If you want to deal with transportation, you have to deal with sprawl, you have to deal with transit, and you have to be willing to change the way we make cities happen in this province. That's not what has happened. The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe sees 60% of the new development that is going to happen in this urban area take place on greenfields. That will be extraordinarily costly: costly in terms of new infrastructure, costly in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, and costly in terms of congestion and all the economic fallout that comes from that.

This government has not made the commitment to cut or curb sprawl in a way that would actually make a difference. That opinion is not just mine. That's the opinion of the Pembina Institute when they reviewed the plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe, of the Neptis Foundation, and, frankly, the most recent report from the Pembina Institute talking about the need to take action on sprawl and transportation.

Today, in question period, the Premier was asked how much money would be saved by cutting Transit City. It was an interesting question because, frankly, all along we've been told by the Premier that there was no cut to Transit City. But when asked how much would be saved, he said \$4 billion. Four billion dollars is the cut that was announced in the budget; \$4 billion is what he expects to save.

If this government has a climate plan that already is not meeting its targets, is counting on Transit City investment to meet part of those inadequate targets, and then further cuts or—let's be generous—delays the investment, then its ability to meet the targets that it sets is further reduced. Greenhouse gas emissions will go up. More children and more elderly people will get sick and die from air pollution, and more future generations will have to live with the greenhouse gas emissions that we pump into the atmosphere. Transportation is a big issue.

There is another issue, and that is the whole question of the transformation of our electricity system. We have seen some reduction in the burning of coal, but what

we've seen on the other hand is a very substantial investment in gas-fired peak power plants. For those not familiar with it, in midsummer, at noon, when there is the greatest demand for air conditioning, the demand for electricity goes above its base level. You can satisfy that in a variety of ways. You can make a lot of different investments, some less costly than others. This government decided to make a very costly investment that also produces very large volumes of greenhouse gases. That was a mistake. It was a policy mistake; it was an environmental mistake; it was an economic mistake. It would be much cheaper and much more effective to invest in efficiency and conservation.

The investments we've seen so far from this government on electricity show that conservation and efficiency are side issues: not central, but side issues. Instead of having them as the central strategy for dealing with electricity needs here, we've seen a focus on nukes and gas.

We get smart meters. Smart meters are to conservation and efficiency what eHealth was to electronic health records. In other words, we needed electronic health records; what we got was a project that was a mess. With smart meters, instead of investing \$500 million or \$1 billion in energy efficiency, we get an investment in meters that in most cases are not going to lead to any reduction in consumption. They will lead to an increase in cost. What that means is resistance to investment in other green opportunities. There is not infinite fiscal room. If you want to invest to save this planet and this society, if you want to put in place the green energy that we need, you can't go around wasting half a billion to a billion dollars on low-value or no-value projects. That's what we have: a government committed to nukes, to gas, and to low-value or no-value investments. That's a huge problem.

We need to recognize that this society, North America, is engaged in a clean energy race. In China, Japan and Korea, countries that are fossil fuel importers and understand the impact of that importation on their economies and their long-term security, there is large-scale investment going on in renewable energy. It's happening in western Europe, too. But right now China is rapidly approaching a level of investment in renewable power that will challenge the United States. China is spending multiples of what the United States is spending on renewable energy, and the United States is spending multiples of what we're spending here.

Often I've heard cited Al Gore, a guy for whom I have a lot of respect, talking about Ontario having an advanced program for investment in green energy. Well, the bar is pretty low in North America right now. My hope is that the Obama administration will make the investments necessary to give us a solid foundation in North America for green energy. But we, here in Ontario, are not doing what we have to do and not doing what we could do.

I'll just give you some numbers. For those who are watching this, I know you can get lost in numbers, but we

spend \$40 billion a year on energy in Ontario. About a quarter of that goes to electricity. Only about 10% of that electricity is going to be new renewable power. So out of the \$40 billion we spend on energy, only about \$1 billion will go to new green power. That's far below our potential to make the transformation, but it also means that the market we create for the manufacturing is very small compared to what you need to establish the broad range of industry and research and development to make a transformation, to make sure that we're competitors in the 21st century. If we want to take on climate change, if we want to have an economy that is actually going places, then we have to make sure that we make the strategic investment and commitment to a very different path forward. That's what we don't have.

I appreciate the fact that this bill is on the floor here for debate today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to these issues. But I have to say that there are consequences in failing to act. There are consequences that are environmental, which were mentioned earlier; there are consequences that are economic in terms of our viability as a prosperous industrial state in the future; and there are social consequences because when you fail at the first two, you get populations that are angry, frustrated, cranky and divided. There's a broad range of future scenarios in the balance right now, and we have a government that is not putting the right weight in that balance, that is not putting the right emphasis, that is not putting the right priorities forward. I appreciate the opportunity to make people aware, but we need to go far beyond awareness.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the residents of my riding of Richmond Hill to speak on Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change, brought forward by my friend and colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

I wanted to begin by first applauding my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing forward this bill. It's a most significant and much-needed bill, given the environmental crisis that the world may face in the future.

Climate change has become a global issue and requires full co-operation across provinces, countries and, of course, continents. I am sure everyone in this House is familiar with the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement which was signed in 1997 by a total of 184 nations as part of an international initiative to address climate change. The agreement aimed to combat global warming by significantly reducing the member nations' greenhouse emissions. This agreement was a significant moment in our history, one that I hope will guide our society as a whole toward a more green-friendly culture.

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Here we are now in the year 2010, 13 years after the signing of the Kyoto Protocol. How much has changed?

Where are we now in Canada? I'm saddened to report that we are in no better position than we were when the agreement was signed. Our greenhouse emissions increased by 27% from 1990 to 2004, and continue to rise. Our federal government has continuously ignored their obligations and have gone as far as ignoring the private member's bill which was successfully passed by the House of Commons in February 2007, a bill which was set to ensure that Canada takes effective and timely action to meet its obligation under the Kyoto Protocol and help address the problem of global climate change. It also set for the government to prepare a climate change plan on an annual basis—again, another provision that has been ignored by our federal government. This continuous ignorance on the pressing issue of climate change must stop. We must move forward and help prepare the next generation for the challenges awaiting them.

This takes me to my next point. I would like to particularly commend the member for the attention he has brought to the importance of public education with regard to climate change. Protecting the environment by passing laws and bringing forward legislation is all well and very good, but education is the key, particularly the education of our younger generation. We have an obligation to educate our children. With the ever-increasing availability of technology, by such knowledge children can find information on any topic which they are interested in. From Google to Facebook, the new wave of information technology has given us a great tool in educating our children and the young generation.

However, it seems that the topic of climate change is not a very popular subject among our children. This must change, and I am certain it will change with the passing of this bill. The issue of climate change is a non-partisan issue. The threat is very clear and is becoming more and more present in our daily lives. I hope that everyone in this House can look past political lines and support Bill 6. We must take the threat of climate change seriously and make the necessary changes to ensure the safety and the health of future generations.

I just want to make a few comments about the numbers, basically. The Ontario annual CO₂ emission, or carbon dioxide emission, was increased, actually—in 1990, it was 170 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. It reached its peak in 2004 with a figure of 210 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, and then was reduced in 2010 to something around 180 million tonnes, which is back close to the amount we had in 1990. This is mainly due to the policy of our government in Ontario, where we have shut down already two coal-fired plants and we are investing in protecting the environment. Renewable energy and the Green Energy Act, which was brought forward before Christmas in 2009, are going to help us to reduce greenhouse emissions to our environment.

The atmosphere has a limited volume. The more we pump in pollutants to the environment, of course the more we create thicker, heavier pollutants, and also we are going to increase the greenhouse effects. This is an established science. There is no myth about that. Sometimes people talk and say, "Mother Nature will take care

of it.” This is not true. This is not science. The science says that by polluting the environment, we are actually increasing the temperature of our planet, and this will give rise to so many problems for the future generations.

Again, I thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing this bill forward.

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It’s my pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon, to speak on Bill 6 to the honourable member from Ottawa–Orléans, to join my colleague from Richmond Hill in the discussion and to welcome Claudine VanEvery-Albert. She’s on the Six Nations Council, is also a member of the working group on financial literacy and is here today in the gallery. Thank you for joining us.

I wanted to start with a little story, a narrative perhaps. A wise man once said that narratives are what shape us and who we are, so I thought I’d share a narrative that involves my 11-year-old son, Benjamin. Benjamin came home from school the other day and said, “Mom, I have to do a project on social responsibility.” So I said, “Great, Ben, what are you thinking about doing?” He kind of cocked his head to the side and said, “Well, climate change, of course, Mom.” I was a little taken aback, because he’s a keeper in soccer and is always concerned about the violence, the players who take the falls and stuff like that; I thought he would go into conflict in sports. He just shook his little head and said, “No, Mom, climate change. That’s what we need to look at.”

I said, “Can you tell me more, Ben?” He said, with passion and commitment, “We need to be able to explain what each of us can do to help climate change and deal with it.” I said, “Okay, what else?” because at this point I didn’t clearly know what a good answer would be to that, what each of us could do. So he said, “Each of us needs to be able to explain what will happen if we don’t participate.”

At that moment, it was an epiphany for me, because here was a child, a youth, looking at me, another generation, saying, “You know what, Mom, this is imperative. We must do this.” Which brings me to my next point: that the youth really are the key here. The member from Ottawa–Orléans has explained this to us over and over again—and I thank him for that—that the youth need to be engaged. The member from Richmond Hill said that as well: It’s an education piece. So we engage the youth. But I think this one is a little bit of a 360 in that it’s the youth who are teaching us what must be done in order to deal with the issues of climate change.

Youth are adapting to new technologies every day. They’re learning new ways of doing things. They’re learning new ways of thinking. For heaven’s sake, they have 40 applications open on their computer at once and their minds are going in all different directions dealing with it. Really, this is what it takes. This is a complicated topic. There are lots of issues involved. Certainly, Ben asks a good question: How do we do this? The member from Ottawa–Orléans today, with Bill 6, has given us a

great start in how we begin, where we begin and what it is that we need to do, so I thank you for that.

Ben is not alone, however. We have the upcoming Earth Week, where communities across Ontario are engaging in activities, neighbourhood litter cleanups, different plantings and community challenges to reduce disposal items and keep them out of landfills. As well, the McGuinty government continues to take action on this front, phasing out coal-generated electricity by 2014, which of course we know is the largest initiative in Canada to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When we’re talking about air and water, we’re transforming energy supply to cleaner sources, reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases and protecting our air with 59 new or updated air standards and new programs for recycling household hazardous waste. Of course, all of this is part of the bigger picture; it’s part of the Open Ontario plan, which focuses on water conservation for more jobs.

I did want to focus on the preamble of this bill. I see I have just a minute to do so. In the preamble, it states that, “No single person, community, country or continent alone is responsible for the degradation of our natural environment, and no single person, community, country or continent alone can act to reverse it.” In the 40 seconds that I have, I want to say that in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga in Waterloo region, last year I introduced a resolution in the House to eat local, live fresh. I was shocked when I looked at the research on the greenhouse gas emissions that we are emitting: the statistics are really quite shocking. In order to import food from where we do, within the 100-mile challenge, 72,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were emitted, and the kilometres traveled to get the food there were over 5,000. It’s shocking; it’s incredible. I think it’s an “aha” for all of us, an awareness.

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I thank my 11-year-old for his passion and bringing it to my attention, as well as the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Ottawa–Orléans, Mr. McNeely, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I’d like to thank the members of Kitchener–Conestoga, Richmond Hill, Haldimand–Norfolk and Toronto–Danforth for their contributions to the debate.

I would like to initially mention that Ontario is proceeding with closing coal, and 40% of the coal has been reduced already. This is a marked improvement in our environment.

The Green Energy Act: We’ve just, in the last two weeks, announced 2,500 megawatts of new power with green energy, so Ontario is a leader in this. Conservation for a 20-year period is set at 6,300 megawatts, which is about 20% of the power that we’ll be using in 2025. Ontario is a leader, and an acknowledged leader, in North America in green energy. Quebec is doing very well and BC is doing very well, and other provinces, but what we

need is leadership. If we're going to meet our targets, we're going to need leadership on the federal level.

We had our cap-and-trade legislation passed last fall, and those limits of greenhouse gases are now being established for that.

I'd just like to go and talk about the reason I think it's so important that we have a report to students each year. The New Energy Future is a full-page ad in the Citizen, and it says, "A six-week Canwest special information feature on climate change, in partnership with Shell Canada." It's the type of thing that we get, an ad that the UK's Advertising Standards Authority ruled was misleading and out of order because there's nothing about the tar sands that is sustainable, so they had to bring back their ads. Well, this is the type of ad we get—we've got a full-page out. We have to get to our kids and give them the real truth. We're not getting it from our federal government when the Prime Minister says that we're a green energy superpower. We are not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. We'll vote on Mr. McNeely's ballot item in about 100 minutes.

TOM LONGBOAT DAY

Mr. Mike Colle: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim June 4 of each year Tom Longboat Day in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Before I begin, I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Chief William Montour, the 54th elected chief of the Grand River. Welcome, Chief Montour of the Six Nations. I'd also like to welcome council member Ava Hill; council member Claudine VanEvery-Albert, who also helped collect petitions in support of this initiative; and Matt Jamieson, who is the director of economic development for the Six Nations. Welcome.

Also with them are a group of supporters of this initiative from the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, which is held every year along Toronto's waterfront and as part of the Canada Running Series. I would like to welcome Bonnie Taylor, Jessica Isadori, Lena Theodoru and Thomas Taylor. Thanks for being here.

Professor Bruce Kidd, who wrote a book about Tom Longboat, also would have been here, but he has another commitment. He sends his support.

I would also like to mention that my colleague here, the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Peter Fonseca, being a former marathoner himself—I think he still is—and representing Canada in the Atlanta Olympics—I think his time was 2:11, which isn't bad—is also a great supporter of this initiative and was involved with the Scotiabank marathon, which two years ago honoured the 100th year of marathoning. One of the persons honoured, Dr. Bruce Kidd, gave a dissertation on the great accomplishments of Tom Longboat at that time.

I would like to give the members here, and certainly our pages, a feel for this incredible member of the Six Nations, an incredible Canadian, an incredible athlete, Tom Longboat, who really still stands heads and shoulders above athletes even 100 years later with his incredible accomplishments. Tom Longboat is someone that's very close to my heart, being a bit of an amateur runner myself, and also I found out in my research that Tom Longboat actually lived in north Toronto for a number of years and in his retirement he worked for the city of Toronto for about 20 years. He lived on Erskine Avenue in the city of Toronto and was an outstanding member of the city of Toronto's workforce for many years, where he did very, very good work.

Perhaps no Canadian athlete has been so acclaimed, and sometimes so defamed, as Tom Longboat. The most heralded of all Canadian marathon runners, Longboat was to his sport in his time what Tommy Burns was to boxing, Maurice Richard or Wayne Gretzky was to hockey, or what Marilyn Bell was to swimming. His stature extended beyond his achievements—beyond the borders of sport itself. He became something more. Rarely does an athlete become a legend. Many become stars, a few remain memorable, almost none attain the status of legend. Tom Longboat was the exception.

Tom Longboat was not only known as a great runner at the turn of the century in Canada, and in southern Ontario where he came from, the Six Nations, but he was known all over the world as this incredible athlete who raced against the best runners from every country and invariably beat them all at marathon running.

Tom came from a very humble background, but he was an incredible, honourable person, an incredible, dedicated person. He overcame many adversities and never stopped being a gentleman, always persevering, always finishing the race.

The exhibits on Tom Longboat can be found at Six Nations. There's the sports museum there. In fact, this June 21 they have their annual Tom Longboat run, and on Toronto Island every year they have the Tom Longboat run. This year will mark the 30th anniversary of the Tom Longboat race at Toronto Island, and that's a great tribute to Tom Longboat.

Tom Longboat began racing competitively in 1906, making his debut in Hamilton's Around the Bay Road Race, and that Around the Bay Road Race is still run today. Longboat continued to race and he continued to win. He broke records wherever he went. Just 10 days after the Around the Bay race, Tom Longboat won the 15-mile Toronto road race by three minutes. He won the annual Christmas Day 10-miler not long after. At 19, to everybody's shock and horror, he won the Boston Marathon, which is the race of races for marathoners. Here is an unknown young lad from Six Nations, from Canada, whom nobody knew about, and he beat the best in the world at the Boston Marathon in 1907 and broke the record by five minutes. Most of these marathon records are broken by a 10th of a second, sometimes two or three

seconds. But can you imagine? He broke the record by five minutes. He was becoming a Canadian legend.

His next big competition was in the 1908 Olympics in London, where the race was arranged to run from Windsor Castle outside of London into Wembley Stadium, where there were over 100,000 people waiting for the victorious marathoner to enter. This race was very unusual in that, sad to say, it was an extremely hot day and in that race, at about the 19-mile mark, Tom Longboat collapsed and could not finish the race.

1430

The person who was first into the stadium was an unknown baker from northern Italy, Dorando Pietri. Dorando entered the stadium at Wembley and started running the wrong way. You can imagine the gasps of the 100,000 people. He collapsed and then was picked up by a couple of attendants and directed the right way. He became the darling of everybody in England. In fact, he was disqualified, but the Queen of England at the time gave him a special cup. He became this incredible international celebrity. In Italy he's one of their great national sporting heroes.

Later on, Tom would race against Dorando Pietri and beat him in races all over the world. But anyways, there was another great marathoner that Tom was also able to compete against.

Longboat's journey to success was not an easy one. Despite his wins, despite his fame, despite his contributions towards having marathon running recognized as a national sport, he was still faced with ridicule and discrimination based on his aboriginal heritage. He was often called names and was even at times pressured to deny his heritage. But he never did. He was always proud of his Six Nations roots—and very proud, at that. Many of his fans were often condescending and very prejudicial, but he overcame all these obstacles.

Tom Longboat is known as one of the pioneers of the training method which is used by top athletes who compete today. His training methods were criticized by some of the so-called experts, but actually, the training methods used by Longboat a hundred years ago are now used today.

Longboat hit the peak of his career around the time that the First World War broke out. Out of a sense of duty to his country, what Tom did at the height of his career was sign up and volunteer to fight for Canada in World War I. His running talents were immediately put to use and he became a dispatch carrier for the 107th battalion, based in France. Longboat's duties were to run between dangerous battlefields, delivering messages from one military post to another. He ran bravely through flying bullets, deep mud, barbed wire and bombs exploding around him to deliver important messages which helped our brave soldiers communicate throughout the war. He is reported to have delivered messages around some of the most treacherous battlefields of Canadian history: Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge. Tom was there at Vimy Ridge; we just celebrated that last week in this House. In fact, if you were to visit the

National War Memorial located in Ottawa and enter the exhibit of the battle of Passchendaele, you would see a large photo of Tom Longboat in uniform during the war on the wall just as you enter, to your right.

Tom was shot and wounded twice, and despite the reports of his death, he survived and returned home. He returned home to Toronto, lived in Toronto, as I've said, and then went back to Six Nations.

Tom was so dedicated to his country that when World War II broke out, he volunteered again. Being on in years, he became a member of the Canadian Veterans Guard during the Second World War. He was stationed at a military camp near Brantford while his two sons, Thomas Jr. and Theodore, also enlisted to serve with the Canadian Armed Forces for the first time.

Tom was one of many First Nations Canadians from Ontario who volunteered to serve during these two great wars. Despite the challenges they faced, thousands volunteered to serve their country. Hundreds perished and many earned military decorations for bravery in action.

Though 100 years have passed since Tom Longboat's career peak, his legacy continues to live on today. He has been an inspiration and a role model for Ontarians of aboriginal heritage throughout the province and throughout the country. He is also revered because to this day annual runs, as I've said, are held. I think in Cornwall they have a Tom Longboat run, along with the ones in Toronto and the ones in Six Nations. In Toronto there is even a school named after him, the Tom Longboat Junior Public School, which my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River will talk about. I hope you get a flavour of this exceptional Canadian, exceptional son of the First Nations, an athlete second to none who overcame incredible obstacles and is an incredible inspiration to us as Canadians as we go ahead recognizing where our roots are and who made us such a great country.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to thank the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing forward the motion we are debating in the Legislature this afternoon. I also want to extend words of welcome on behalf of the PC caucus to our guests who are here from Six Nations. We're delighted to have you here for this debate.

The motion reads as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim June 4th of each year Tom Longboat Day in the province of Ontario."

I'm privileged to serve as our caucus critic to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. In this capacity, I have learned a great deal about the accomplishments and successes of our First Nations communities. But today we speak of the individual accomplishments of a great Canadian and a great Ontarian who happened to be of First Nation heritage.

I want to speak in support of this motion. It provides another opportunity for us to recognize and remember someone who achieved great things, and it's a chance to remember our history.

It's a fitting motion for the member for Eglinton–Lawrence who, as he said in his opening remarks, is himself a lifelong runner. According to his biography, he has run three marathons—

Mr. Mike Colle: Four.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Four. You'll have to update your website.

Now, I've run in five provincial elections, which I think is something akin to running in five marathons. But in all seriousness, I'm proud to say that I completed a 10-kilometre Terry Fox run in 1990, just after my first election. Ten kilometres is about six miles. A marathon, however, is 26 miles, 385 yards, a much longer distance and a much greater feat of endurance. It of course is the distance between the ancient city of Athens and the city of Marathon, where the word "marathon" comes from.

Tom Longboat was one of Canada's, and indeed the world's, most renowned runners of his day. Having won many races here in Ontario, he went on to win the Boston Marathon in 1907. It was an impressive achievement, made even more spectacular as he cut almost five minutes off the previous record even as he ran uphill in a snow squall.

It was an impressive moment for Canada, for Ontario and, in particular, for the Iroquois First Nations, which had a proud tradition of achievements in running. That tradition was instrumental, history tells us, in the Iroquois Confederacy's historical dominance in the Great Lakes region.

History also records the heroism of men like Tom Longboat, who later served on the Western Front during the First World War. He was assigned the dangerous job of dispatch runner, running orders between units. Although wounded twice and once feared dead, he survived the Great War to return home to Canada in 1919.

Tom Longboat's life continues to inspire First Nations people and all of Canada. The Tom Longboat Award, established in 1951, recognizes achievement in support of physical activity among First Nations athletes.

David Blaikie, in the book *Boston: The Canadian Story*, is persuasive in describing Tom Longboat's effect in sport and in the life of our nation.

"Perhaps no Canadian athlete has been so acclaimed and defamed as Tom Longboat. The most heralded of all Canadian marathon runners, Longboat was to his sport, in his time, what Tommy Burns was to boxing, what Maurice Richard would become to hockey, Marilyn Bell to marathon swimming.

"His stature extended beyond his achievements, beyond even the borders of sport itself. He became something more. Only rarely does an athlete become a legend. Many become stars, a few remain memorable, almost none attains the status of legend.

"Longboat was an exception. His is a name that, generations after his time, is still a thing of magic, evoking an era. Longboat was larger than life, the shining best of a shining period in Canadian athletics.

"There is also a tragic side to the legend. Tom Longboat stands too as the symbol of the fallen idol, a

man devoured by his own greatness, a hero who went from rags to riches and back to rags again.

"Legend depicts Longboat as achieving great fame only to squander it.... The image is inaccurate, a distortion of the real Tom Longboat, but it has somehow lived on.

"Such is the way of legends. Legends are fashioned less by those they commemorate than by others. They are gardens in which common men plant impossible dreams and harvest crops of make-believe. Good and bad are magnified, half-tones overlaid.

"Legends, by their very nature, consume the facts from which they sprang. The subject becomes greater or smaller than the fact, finally not even its shape. And those whom legend most immortalizes are those it most obscures."

Today's motion by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence highlights the singular achievement of a Canadian hero a century after his greatest exploits. Too soon do we forget our past and its most glorious moments; too soon do we forget to acknowledge those who overcame obstacles, adversity, even prejudice. Too soon do we forget our First Nations. This motion serves to remind us of all those things and more, and it is worthy of the support of the House this afternoon. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I certainly want to welcome our guests on behalf of the New Democratic Party. Chief and councillors, welcome, and those who are associated with the Scotia marathon. It's a marathon I've also run. I've run a couple in my day, much, much slower than Tom Longboat, but still enough to know what goes into running a marathon.

I appreciate the member from Eglinton–Lawrence's motion this afternoon. Of course it's one that we'll support wholeheartedly. Make no mistake: What we're talking about here when we're talking about Tom Longboat is one of the great Canadians, a singular great Canadian—first and foremost because he was a great athlete but also because he was a great human being. He was a war hero, among many other aspects of Tom's life. This was a man who in a sense outran the racism around him. He outran residential school. He outran the myths that plagued him: that he was an alcoholic, that he wasn't up to much etc. This man overcame so much in his life and did it with such aplomb and such grace. The stories abound, and I'm going to share just a couple of them with you because they are so delightful.

But I also want to acknowledge that we have a great runner in the House. As I said to the Minister of Labour, we may find ourselves at odds politically about the labour file from time to time, but we will never find ourselves at odds about his ability as a runner. Certainly, when I first came to the House I felt honoured to sit in the same room with him because of his incredible achievements as a runner. So to the Minister of Labour,

one of Canada's great runners here and now, acknowledgments to you.

I like this story about Tom. It's a story that was told somewhere in France during the Great War. A British general being led to the front by a dispatch runner grew irritated with the pace set by the man and ordered him to slow down. "For God's sake," he complained, "who do you think I am, Tom Longboat?" The dispatch runner, a tall man in his late twenties, slowed and answered, "No, sir; that's me." True story.

This young man who came from, again, humble origins—and I think both of the other members who have spoken to this have alluded to the racism as part of his background. But I think as part of the mea culpa that we all have to do as Canadians—and we're all Canadian immigrants, those of us who are not native Canadians—we have to be a little bit more specific about the kind of racism, the kind of horror that Tom literally waltzed through with aplomb. These are some of the things that were said about Tom by our major dailies, so this wasn't just backroom racism; this was on the front pages of newspapers. They described him as lazy, the original dummy, stall-fed, Injun, stubborn, Redskin. These were all epithets used to describe Tom by the newspapers. Again, remember that Tom was one of the most famous athletes in the world, not just in Canada. He was one of the most famous athletes in the world. There was a cigar named after him, Longboat.

You heard the member from Eglinton–Lawrence talk about that apocryphal race in England where he collapsed. Again, there is a lot of mythology around that collapse, that perhaps he was drugged and perhaps there were bets. There was a lot of mythology around Tom's ending too, that he ended as an alcoholic; that he ended in rags. But all of that is really just a symptom of the racism that he faced throughout his life.

Here's another one: A Boston headline after his great win in 1907 said, "Hills Held No Terror for Redskin." Again, this was common language used by the major dailies of the time. When talking about the residential school experience that Tom had, and he had it briefly because he left—he outran that too—he said—remember, this is way back before residential schools were common knowledge and on the front pages of our papers: "I wouldn't even send my dog to that place."

Other things used to describe him: "Big Chief"; "Heap Big Chief"; "Old Tom," when he was in his 30s. This is a local reverend, John Morrow. He said, "Because the physical and mental makeup of the Indian is so foreign to any other athlete's and his disposition so hard at times to understand ... I can safely say that no other man ... could have managed Tom Longboat but Flanagan," who was his manager, and a manager, might I say, who was quite disreputable and who in fact sold Tom, as Tom himself described it, as if he were a racehorse.

Over and over again, you find the press describing Longboat as if he were an animal. That's how they described him. Yet through it all, he never objected, hit out, lashed out at the press. In fact, the very people who

managed him—or mismanaged him, as some might say—were the ones whom Tom was inevitably gracious to.

He ended his life—again, not complaining—as a humble garbage collector for 19 years for the city of Toronto—one of Canada's greatest athletes, one of the world's greatest athletes.

When you look at his time, the two hours and 24 minutes—my friend, the Minister of Labour, did 2:11, it was said earlier, to run a marathon, but remember when that was. That was 1907. My best race, to give you an indication of what mere mortals run it in—if I were to qualify for Boston, I would have to run in four hours. I think my best race was 4:15, almost two hours longer than Tom ran his race. So it gives you an idea of the incredible skill and ability of this man.

His training methods were mentioned, for which he endured no end of abuse. The reason that some of these quotes were made was because he was incorrigible, because he wouldn't listen to his trainers and his managers. But in fact, the training system that Tom Longboat used to train for his marathons is exactly the training system that is now used by elite athletes and recreational runners like myself; and that is, you intersperse days with long runs with days of rest. In the days that Tom ran, the thinking was that you should run flat out every day; you should run flat out all the time. In fact, in Tom's day they didn't even stop for water in some of those races. They thought that—

Mr. Mike Colle: And the shoes, the shoes.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, and the shoes they were wearing were very different from the shoes that we're wearing now. So think of the adversity. You imagine that a Tom today could probably easily have bettered his time simply because of the way we do things, the way we run races these days.

This is what this man was up against. This is the backdrop to his incredible fame. This is the backdrop to his incredible achievement.

I absolutely agree: Of course we should honour him, but we also have to, in honouring him, take a look at ourselves as a nation, take a look again at ourselves and our legacy of racism and hatred in which Tom grew up. We can't ignore it. We have to put it out there. I'm not alone in being a child of immigrants who also experienced racism. I remember, particularly in the athletic field, my father talking about a story—he was a semi-pro boxer, an Italian immigrant. They would only allow him in the back door of the club he fought for, not the front door, because he was an Italian. That is, in our family, one generation back.

Folks, we've got to acknowledge this. When we talk about these people, when we talk about someone of the status of a Tom Longboat, we have to talk about what they were up against and we have to talk about our own background, our own history, and that history's complicity in all of the adversarial moments of their lives.

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To get back to the original motion, to get back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, what a wonderful

Canadian story. What a wonderful Canadian hero, a Canadian hero that every schoolchild—and there are schoolchildren here—should know about, that every schoolchild should understand. Every schoolchild should also know the history of the background that really met our First Nations people as they grew up, and the absolute, unconscionable racism that's also part of the history of this nation. We have to admit it; we have to say we're sorry. We have to do more than say we're sorry; we have to start addressing the wrongs and move on.

I think that, apart from a day celebrating Tom Longboat, what would be really appropriate in his honour would be that perhaps we could start—from federal government to provincial government—settling some of the land claims, start looking at some of the issues of First Nations people, start listening and start acting rather than simply start naming days. But hey, I'm a New Democrat; I ask for a lot.

Suffice it to say, today it's enough to just honour and to really uphold this life, this man, all he stood for, all he fought against, and look forward to, I hope, this bill passing. It's a no-brainer. I'm sure the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, if he brought it forward and asked for unanimous consent, we'd give it on the spot. Ring the bells; let's get it passed. Let's honour Tom Longboat and let's make it much, much easier for all the Toms in the future. That's the true legacy.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I apologize for interrupting. I just want to recognize in the members' east gallery the Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister Otaala from Uganda. High Commissioner Abola is also here from Uganda. And from the Federation of Uganda Employers, Mrs. Ssenabulya, and Milton Turyasiima, also from Uganda.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It's not a point of order, but welcome to Queen's Park.

Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm certain that in spirit in the chamber, perhaps in the empty section of the visitors' gallery in front of us, is the spirit of Thomas Charles Longboat enjoying, if a century after he thrilled this city with his feats, the attention that we're going to give him that is so much overdue. There are a number of things that my colleagues have said; I echo all of them.

There are a few things that I want to add in just a few short minutes on Tom Longboat. Anyone who has trained for a sport like running—in my case, swimming—can grasp one attribute that Tom Longboat had. When he began to race competitively, one of the things that he developed was the ability to sprint just before the finish line, or as my coaches used to call it, “Just pour it on.” The ability to do that isn't found in too many people. It is in every way the hallmark of a champion.

Tom Longboat wore his aboriginal heritage with enormous pride, and throughout it bore himself with a dignity that made us proud as Canadians and proud as Ontarians. In having the courage not to strike back and to show people exactly what the character and the courage

of a First Nations runner was, he in fact contributed to the century of progress that we have made.

Tom Longboat was able to draw crowds of upwards of 100,000 people in that era a century ago. By comparison today in the GTA, that would be like drawing a crowd of two million people to watch you perform.

I'm very proud to support the member for Eglinton–Lawrence in his endeavour to immortalize Tom Longboat with this measure, and he'll certainly have my vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm proud to join in this debate on the motion to recognize a great Canadian, Tom Longboat. I just want to congratulate my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing forward this particular motion to recognize this great Canadian and, if I could say, a great Ontarian from our First Nations community.

I just wanted to join the debate on one very important point. The Toronto District School Board, back in 1978, saw it as appropriate to name one of their newest schools in the Toronto area as Tom Longboat Junior Public School. This school is located in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River in the community of Malvern. The school today has a student population of just over 400 students, and many of these students truly reflect the diversity of this great city of Toronto.

Let me tell you that, on a daily basis, the students enter this school, go through the doors, and they're reminded of this great Canadian and his accomplishments from way back over 100 years ago. To the students, this is very important because the majority of these students have arrived here on our doorsteps from another part of the world where they faced the same type of adversity etc., but they go to school in my community and actually participate with each other very peacefully on a daily basis. That speaks a lot of how far this country has come from the adversity that Mr. Longboat faced way back when.

Chief Bill Montour is here today, and I understand that he would be very interested in some form of a partnership between the people in his community—and the young people especially in his community—and this school community in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. I believe that this would be a great opportunity for new Canadians at this school to learn more about Mr. Tom Longboat and his community here in Ontario, especially his accomplishments as a Canadian and the adversity he faced way back over 100 years ago, and how far our country has come and how many differences we've made in terms of the prejudice that existed way back when.

This would be very, very worthwhile to these new Canadians because a lot of them need to learn about Canadian history. They need to learn about the great Canadians who have come long before they arrived on our doorsteps. I would say that this resolution is an attempt to honour and remember a legendary athlete, a remarkable Canadian who is a great role model for all of us; a Canadian who has worked hard to achieve his

dreams; who continued to strive for his best and who beat all the records despite all the challenges and prejudices he faced.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to add to the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: First off, let me commend the member for Eglinton–Lawrence—my colleague, my friend, a former teacher of mine, a marathon runner, historian and a coach at St. Michael's College School. Mike Colle embodies the spirit of Tom Longboat—his perseverance, his commitment, his caring. Mike Colle is a quiet hero and brings great pieces of legislation to this House.

Tom Longboat was an amazing Canadian. He was somebody who won races, both literally and figuratively. Wow; this guy won the Boston Marathon. That's amazing. As somebody who has had the opportunity to run in marathons like New York and Boston and the Olympics etc., I can't even fathom what it would be like to win that. He is somebody whom all kids, all Ontarians, all Canadians, should look up to as an incredible athlete, but not only as an athlete; as we have heard here today, as a humanitarian, as someone who's an inspiration to all of us.

Tom Longboat broke racism barriers, broke prejudice barriers. When it comes to training, he also broke the way that athletes train. He created a new model and ways of being able to train. He is somebody who is an innovator and, as I said about my colleague, a quiet hero. This is what we are, I believe, as Canadians, and what we look up to: individuals who go about doing work or great things in the community and for our province, for our country, in wartime, in any time.

1500

So congratulations. It's wonderful to be here with the leaders from the Six Nations and the Scotiabank marathon group that's with us here today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to congratulate the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Colle. He does represent his people and this House with a reasonable amount of dignity and decorum. This bill really reflects a lot of that genuine spirit that he brings.

In respect to the Tom Longboat legend, I think it's important to put it in perspective. This is a person who, between 1887 and 1949, achieved so much with so little support and, obviously, recognition that was often after he had passed. But the remarkable thing is, it's a statement or a testimony, if you will, to Tom Longboat, but also all marathon runners. I can tell you that it reflects a certain spirit of the individual that is really the celebration of life, that life can conquer all things with this type of courage. It's the courage, tenacity and commitment that I think has endured in almost all—certainly marathon, because it's a long and lonely activity. To persevere, often without the right training or the right—I often think of the people who come from Uganda or

other countries who win most of these marathons today. They are from countries that haven't got a decent pair of running shoes and we're whining about having \$200 Nike Air shoes. These are the very people who have the courage and tenacity to conquer all the adversity.

It's so remarkable a message that our young pages here should really hold on to: With the will and the wishes and inspiration, you can conquer all. I think it is a testimony. To think that he served in the First World War, serving Canada, was wounded twice, and persevered—I would say probably all his life. It's an inspirational story, and I commend Mr. Colle and the family for being here today, or at least the relatives, who recognize what one person can achieve with so little support. Thank you very much, Mike, for bringing this forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Levac: First let me start by acknowledging and thanking my friend Mike Colle from Eglinton–Lawrence, who, with a great deal of passion in our private conversations, has brought forward this resolution regarding Tom Longboat.

Let me paraphrase from him and grab from the discussion that has been happening today the essence of what we're debating. We're not talking about the actual factual details of an individual who has performed, because that's on record, and that is deserved credit. But what we are talking about that has come to the attention of this House and therefore to Ontarians is that we have a man who has refused to abandon his aboriginal heritage, despite enormous pressure to do so and all of the bigotry that went with it in the 1900s. That's number one. Number two: We saw a man who was very proud to wear the maple leaf on his chest as part of the nation. Number three: a man who put his money where his mouth was by serving the country in time of war.

So we've taken the three important parts of who this man was and we're celebrating them. But what we're next celebrating, I hope, is the respect, the acknowledgement, the relationship, the friendship that comes to us from our guests today, who represent the nation, and that is the 54th elected chief of the Grand River territory of the Six Nations, Bill Montour; Councillor Ava Hill; Councillor Claudine VanEvery-Albert; Councillor Levi White, who had to leave early; and Matt Jamieson, the director of economic development for Six Nations of the Grand River territory.

This is a new day, but what the culture tells us is, they never forget the past: seven generations back, today, and seven generations in front. So today what we're celebrating is a generation back to ensure that we never forget, as an entire province, that the man did those three key things for us. He never abandoned his native heritage. He wore the maple leaf proudly. He served this country, as many veterans from First Nations have as allies.

I want to say very strongly that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence knows that and in our conversations described that and the awe that he felt about people in

that era, particularly Tom Longboat, who was able to capture the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people by his ability and his talent, but also, I dare say, by his determination to be who he was, and to represent the nation that he came from and also the nation that he was an ally to. So I want to thank Mike for bringing that forward.

I want to thank all the members for approaching this in a way that celebrates Tom Longboat, in a way that celebrates the relationship that he had with Canada, and the relationship that he continued to have.

By the way, in my riding of Brant are the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Mississaugas of New Credit. We were able to celebrate, and we continue to celebrate, those great individuals in our riding when we introduced the Brantford Walk of Fame, and Tom Longboat was one of the first inductees. I would say to you, respectfully, that there are many more to go, and we've already inducted several.

The greatness of these people, in the chief's words, is that there is greatness that can come from believing in yourself. The formation of our relationship, the formation of who we are as friends, and the deep respect we must hold for each other is captured by this resolution. I ask us to support this resolution.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to stand today to say that I'll be supporting this as well. I want to congratulate the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing it forward. I think, day after day in this Legislature, we tend to forget some of the very positive things that can happen here. Usually the debate shows opposition versus government, but when you come up with a project like this, where we have basically unanimous consent—as someone said here, it's a no-brainer—I think that we should move forward on this. I hope that it will become law.

I want to welcome the visitors here today to witness this. You're actually witnessing a little bit of history, because we seldom agree on anything in this Legislature.

As a member of the Legislature who has two First Nations in my riding, one being the Chippewas of Rama and the other one being the Beausoleil First Nation, we have a very, very proud heritage.

I want to just reflect on a couple of the comments that were made, one by the member from Brant. Not only do we have someone as famous and as loyal as Tom Longboat, but I think there's something that a lot of Ontarians and a lot of Canadians don't realize, and that it's our job to make sure we can protect that so that other Ontarians do realize this: the tremendous contribution of our First Nations brothers and sisters in the Great Wars. Each and every year I go to both a Remembrance Day service on Christian Island and I also attend one in the community of Rama. It never ceases to amaze me how many, particularly young men, gave their life for this wonderful country. I don't know, on a per capita basis, how many people actually understand and realize that. In

terms of the number per capita, I would say, compared to most nationalities, that it's two to one or three to one. I can tell you, we have seen that and are very, very proud of that in our community.

So I'm happy today to take part in this debate. I'm really pleased to see so many people supporting this.

We heard a couple of times about the Boston Marathon running, and I wanted to say that—the Minister of Labour mentioned what an accomplishment it is to win the Boston Marathon. We have two residents in our riding right now, one lady is 62, and she has worked very hard to become a marathon runner and has qualified. I think the marathon is on this weekend, is it not? The Boston Marathon is this weekend, I think. I'm not exactly sure, but it's either this weekend or next week.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: It's Monday.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's on Monday? Okay. So on Monday, Deb Stone is competing in that. She trained for years to get to that point and qualify. Another friend of mine, Ross Sallows, wanted to be able to compete in the Boston Marathon by the time he was 50, and he's made that as well. So in my community, we have two people going to Boston to compete in that marathon. They just want to finish. They're not planning on beating those guys from Ethiopia and Kenya. They just want to finish and say they were part of that. I believe there are 26,000 or 27,000 people in the marathon.

1510

Congratulations to Mr. Colle for bringing this forward. I think it's a great private member's resolution. I hope we can pass this as soon as possible. I think we owe it to Mr. Longboat, to the city of Toronto, to the province of Ontario and, of course, to all of our First Nations brothers and sisters.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Colle has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Mike Colle: I really do appreciate the heartfelt comments by my colleagues from Wellington–Halton Hills, Simcoe North, Mississauga–Streetsville, Durham, Parkdale–High Park, Brant and Scarborough–Rouge River.

After being in this place for 15 years, like some of you, you sometimes get a bit frustrated or a bit off this place. But days like today make you reflect on how you can make a difference sitting here in this Legislature and make Ontario a place that respects people like Tom Longboat.

Sure, this is a resolution, and we're speaking to it as part of a debate. But this will hopefully be a catalyst so that children will honour the memory of Tom Longboat and governments will honour him, because you can see the power of athletics.

We've got people here from Uganda. They know the power of athletics and the great accomplishments—incredible achievements—that African runners have brought to the world of running. We saw that in Vancouver. The whole country was mobilized by athletes. The whole world was watching in peace and harmony as athletes brought the world together.

That's why we can't underestimate the power of the spirit of someone like Tom Longboat and the good he could do for future generations. His spirit does live on in his accomplishments. Maybe out of this resolution we can help keep that torch going and pass it on and do better things with our children and our First Nations.

You've got to remember the roots of Tom Longboat: He came from the world's longest-living participatory democracy, the Six Nations. It's no wonder he came from that background, which is still very rich today and still offering so much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will vote on Mr. Colle's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE
AND ELDERLY PEOPLE
FROM ABUSE ACT
(POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES
ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES
CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS
(PROCURATIONS)

Mr. O'Toole second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui en ce qui a trait aux procurations.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I hope that 12 minutes is enough time in this arena where we get to express our comments with respect to issues we believe in.

I want to acknowledge a couple of people who have joined us today: first of all, Tammy Rankin, who is the chair of the Durham Elder Abuse Network. Welcome, Tammy, and thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Also, two constituents of Frank Klees, Risha Gotlieb and her husband, Philip, have taken the time to share their personal story of the potential abuses that can occur when families and others aren't protected with the proper law.

To put this in context, if people want some history on it, I want to make sure that members here today on all sides of the House recognize that I did debate almost the identical bill, I might say respectfully, for the Substitute Decisions Act—my voice is not because I have an emotional reason; it's just that I need a glass of water.

The intent of the bill is quite sincere and genuine, to the extent that it wants to encourage the education of all members to the growing challenge of an aging population and the many challenges that surround that. I expect all comments should keep that in mind. I don't think we have the definitive solution here, and I'd be the first one to admit it.

The bill is intended to protect seniors and other vulnerable individuals from the possible abuse of power of attorney. I should start by saying, what is the power of attorney? The definition is a good place to start. There are several definitions of the power of attorney. It's a document, in this case, that's initiated by the province of Ontario, by the Attorney General. There it is. It's a document that gives a person the right to make binding decisions for another as an agent, and it's a pretty powerful document. We don't realize that. You're signing these, and the circumstances that people sign them in is really what's at issue here.

There are a variety of definitions. I think of it in a simple way. If you look it up in the Webster's Dictionary, it says that it's the power to act for another person in legal or financial matters. Now, that's a pretty significant—we should pause and reflect on that. The power of attorney itself—this is the kit that you can download from the website, which I did this morning. It's a fairly comprehensive and instructive little document here. But at the end, when you get to it, it's about a two-page document where you put the person's name who is the grantor, and the person who is the signature on it has been granted the authority to act as power of attorney.

It's very important, to stop and think—often, it's done when the person is at their most vulnerable. They're already showing signs of—the capability issue comes up. I guess I'm suggesting in the overall remarks here that, in the debate, I would like to see some structure put around that. I don't want to make it mandatory. Do you understand? Mandatory means that you have to go and get a lawyer, legislate that people go and get a lawyer and get a power of attorney drawn up properly. That's a pretty foreboding challenge which I would not support.

But I do think that there are occasions and interventions where the family and other significant individuals, be it a doctor, a clergy member or whatever, could give them advice and be trained, of course, to give that advice, to say, "John"—I'm using this in a gesture, a reference—"you're showing signs of memory loss or whatever else it is. It's time that you completed a power of attorney." Say it's the doctor and they're giving me a dementia medication or something. I'm using myself as an example. Of course, this isn't the case—that I'm aware of. Did I already say that? But anyway, the doctor might take the time to say what a power of attorney is and how it could be exercised. It could, in fact, be a doctor, a nurse, one of your children or a person whom you respect that you want to look after certain decisions.

I'm suggesting—this is not in the bill—that this will start the discussion, given the climate we're in with the baby boomers moving along. Next year, they become the seniors of the future, and there are growing challenges in all aspects of our society. We need to make sure that they're not abused or neglected. In that context, we all should think about this, not in the partisan way but moving forward. That's how I would put it.

But that's what the power of attorney does, and I say that there are lots of people working around the province. I want to acknowledge that there are people who have

worked and helped me and brought this to my attention, actually. That's where it comes in. I'd have to say that I have met with constituents—Brenda and Alan Hoyne and Alan's sister Lorraine Hoyne—and they told me of a family situation which I just couldn't believe. Later—I won't recount that. Perhaps Mr. Klees or others will bring to our attention the—

Interruption.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you. I have enough water here. I could actually have a swimming pool.

Risha Gotlieb and her husband, Philip, brought a story forward as well which is rather wrenching. Detective Sergeant John Keating, who is a seniors' support co-ordinator with the Durham regional police, has also shared, along with Tammy Rankin, some of the stories of situations that they deal with. In fact, they deal with them every day, and I thank them for their service to our community. They're professional and compassionate people, and I think we need to have more of that in our communities.

1520

I would say that even if I look around—there's Detective Phil Lillie as well with the Durham Regional Police. I know other officers are being trained and sensitized to this issue of intervening in family situations. That's really what's quite troubling here. Often, I hear that people go to the police not knowing how to deal with it, where some abuse is taking place, whether it's physical or financial, and the police feel powerless. They sort of think it's a civil matter and they shouldn't intervene in the family affairs. You get into how the sensitivity of this issue is extremely important, knowing the rights to intervene and how to intervene, and that's part of what this bill does.

I'll give you an example of what could happen today. I actually have said this 50 times in here. I'm in a nursing home every week. I have power of attorney, through one of these forms, for my mother-in-law. She's 92, mostly with it, but not always—a wonderful person. I've met other people within that nursing home who I know have no visitors and have a quality of life that is not something I would look forward to. But the point I'm making is that many of them would be easily taken advantage of. If somebody came in and said, "You sign this form"—and they put it in front of them—"so I can get you a rollator or a walker," once that's signed, they could actually clean out your bank account. That's the issue: the trust in that relationship.

I'm suggesting that these people generally should, at a certain point, get the power of attorney filled out. Think of who you would want to do it, have a chat with them—even designate different people. But what my bill does is it would require that the witness could not be a member of the family. It also requires that there would be registry with the public guardian and trustee office. That registry would mean that you, as a family member or other, could find out under certain conditions who in fact has the power of attorney. Otherwise, one of the sisters or brothers or other relatives could show up in the nursing

home and say, "Sign this. I'm going to get an elevator put in the home." They sign it; now who's the real power of attorney? Because there's no registry. I mean, whoever shows up at the bank with one, technically, unless somebody's going to question it—and who do they question? Do they question the person who has granted the power of attorney or the person who's suggesting they have it? "I've got it here. John signed this." It's very, very poorly structured.

In my little bit of time left here—I wonder if I could get an hour or so on this. Anyway, here is the issue, though: There's probably a suggestion in here that there should be two or three types of power of attorney. I'm certain that someone who has a trust fund or has amassed certain assets in their life probably has had experience with a law firm, a financial advisor, maybe even other significant individuals. They should probably not have one of these. This is grade 1; this is very minor. It suited the purpose for this point in time. Someone of modest means, sort of like myself—I mean, just a step above poor—probably should have some other independent person's oversight advice, whether it's from the bar or whether it's from a trusted, knowledgeable individual.

We're drawn to the fact that if you do something in a family, it becomes a division point. "If I gave it to my son Ernie, my daughter Mary might be upset." Once they start to find this out, it creates interventions in the family that just aren't necessary. Do it when you're in firm control of your resources and faculties with suggested third party advice, be it legal or otherwise, and the registry that this bill provides.

I'm asking members to give this bill a chance to go to hearings and listen to the experts, some of whom are here today. Listen to their testimonies as well as their suggestions. I think we will be doing a service to people as they move forward. Think of the bill that we're dealing with in the regular course of business, Bill 21, which is the retirement home provision. That would be a good time, with those persons in long-term care, administrators and others, and in retirement homes, to intervene, straighten out this power-of-attorney business so that we have the right person with the right authority at the right time in the right place to make sure that the individual, elder or otherwise, who's vulnerable is protected. That's the intent, and I think we could all do the right thing and not be viewed as partisan. I'd call on all parties and all members to look to the future. It could be your parents that you're helping.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: First of all, let me compliment the member opposite for the intention and the motive behind his introducing this bill. The member opposite, like all members of this chamber, really does have the best interests of the vulnerable in mind, and so I compliment you for bringing this forward.

Having said that, there's the other side of the coin to consider. I do bring some history to this issue. For many years in the 1990s—four or five years—I was the president of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. Before

that, I was the president of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. I particularly remember the debate around the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992. This issue that the member opposite has put before the House today was, in fact, thought about, talked about, and debated. At the time, the informed decision, the best decision that all of the legislators and expert witnesses and so forth could come to was that the ideas proposed by the member today were not going to go forward. Why weren't they going to go forward? Here is the argument against what you've proposed.

First of all, my comments will be around the two principal points in your bill: the issue of notification; that is, when someone has granted someone a power of attorney, the public trustee has to be notified that the person has received a power of attorney. That's one issue. The other big issue in this bill is the issue of the public trustee maintaining a registry of everybody in Ontario who has given a power of attorney and to whom that power of attorney has been given.

Therein presents the problem that was of such interest to everybody in 1992, and that is, there was a clear feeling among the people who were not vulnerable but were concerned that at some point they would become vulnerable, and they wanted to give one of their children or a friend or a lawyer or whoever a power of attorney. One of the things uppermost in their minds at the time they granted that power of attorney was a sense that they wanted to keep that decision that they had given someone a power of attorney, and to whom they had given the power of attorney, a private matter. That was their private business, like their income tax return, like other things in their life.

Why would they want to keep it private? Because I remember in the debates asking people, "What's wrong with somebody knowing that you've given so-and-so power of attorney and that if you become incapacitated, that power-of-attorney person is going to step in?" Interestingly enough, the answer was—and it was typically in a family situation: "I've got two or three or four children. I've got brothers and sisters and so on. For a variety of reasons, I don't want the others to know that I've chosen one child to be my power of attorney but not any of the other two or three," or, "I've chosen my sister but not my brother," and so on. They felt that the potential there for discord, particularly in a family setting, was troublesome. They said, "If I give my daughter rather than my son, or my brother rather than my sister, power of attorney, and I want the rest of the family and the rest of my friends to know about that, let me have that decision to tell them, 'You're my power of attorney,' and to explain to my other children or other brothers and sisters why I've not asked them to do it. Let me make that decision. I know how to handle that issue."

1530

If, as this bill proposes, I'm required, if I give someone a power of attorney, to call up a bureaucrat, the public trustee's office, and say, "I've asked so-and-so to be my attorney," and I've got to file various papers and, not only that, the public trustee has to maintain a public

registry where everybody is listed, who has power of attorney and so on, that is an invasion of my privacy. I'm quite capable of taking that decision at the same time I create my power of attorney, because, by definition, I can only create a power of attorney when I'm fully capable. So I know who I want to know who has my power of attorney.

That is what the debate centred around. At the end of the day, at that time, the decision was taken to respect or, if you will, side with that argument or those people who said, "Look, when I'm getting to that stage where I'm thinking about a power of attorney, let me make the decision who I want to be informed, how public I want to go with it. Don't require me to notify a faceless bureaucrat who will then maintain a faceless technical registry and everybody will know about it. Grant me that dignity."

For that reason and the fact that we debated the issue at length in 1992, although I understand, and I respect and compliment the member for bringing this matter forward, I will not be able to support this at this time.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very happy to stand and speak on Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney. There are two or three of us who are going to say a few comments on this bill.

What I wanted to mention more than anything is the effort my colleague Mr. O'Toole, the member for Durham, puts into his job. I can tell you that most people will understand by the amount of time he spends here in the Legislature that he's one of the more active members of this Legislature, and he has had a tremendous number of wins as far as private members' bills go. I'm thinking of things like the Irish heritage bill, which he worked on a number of times with some of the other folks here and had it passed; the vintage car bill; and, of course, many people in this Legislature will recall the number of times Mr. O'Toole worked on the cellphone bill. It was defeated by the government and actually frowned upon on a few occasions, until eventually the province of Ontario made it a law, and many other provinces in the country have followed that.

People should understand that when you have a member like Mr. O'Toole, he understands the issues in his riding and he works hard to get some of the private members' time that he's allotted. He spends a tremendous amount of effort to make sure that he brings forward valuable legislation that will mean something to the citizens of Ontario. That's why I give him so much credit. Every time I see those signs on the highway that say, "No texting," or "No handheld devices," I think of John O'Toole because I know the effort he put into the cellphone bill.

That being said, why did Mr. O'Toole bring Bill 3 forward? He has seen a need in his community. He understands his community. He understands the tremendous problems we have with elder abuse in the province of Ontario and the fact that there is not enough

being done about it. Do you know what? He probably knows that this government won't support him in this. They'll find some reason not to support a bill like this. However, as someone close to his riding, he works the riding on a daily basis, and he knows all of the events that are held in his riding. He works with seniors groups throughout the community, and they're telling him there's a problem here. He is responding in a very positive manner and looking at private members' time to bring this forward and bring this debate to the floor. Do you know what? If you defeat him on it, he'll come back again with it, until eventually it will probably become some kind of a law or the government will respond to it.

What I'm saying here today is that not enough has been done. There's more work to be done with all forms of elder abuse, whether it's financial, domestic or whatever it may be. The reality is, there is a problem. He understands that problem from the people that he works with in his riding, and that's why the people in his riding will pat him on the back this weekend. They know that even if the government defeats this bill, the reality is, it's good legislation and he's trying to do something on behalf of all of the seniors that are in his riding.

As we know, the age of seniors, the demographics are increasing in the province of Ontario, and we have all kinds of issues around it. We won't even start down that path today because there are so many issues around long-term care and community care access centres.

But I'll give him a word of thanks for bringing this bill forward, and I hope that, whether it's today or at some other point, the government will adopt this bill or adopt the intent of this bill and give Mr. O'Toole another win.

Thank you very much, and I appreciate the opportunity.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: First, I want to make it clear that we're supporting the bill on second reading. We think it should go to committee. But, as Mr. Zimmer is wont to say, having said that, I want to raise some questions and concerns about the proposition of the member for Durham. Wanting it to go to committee—I think it's high time that this whole issue was addressed by a committee, with appropriate inquiries, because there are, no doubt, problems.

I want to make one thing very clear, and I disagree with the member from Durham vehemently in this regard: I could never tell an Ontarian, somebody here in this province, in good faith, to rely upon a do-it-yourself kit or anybody other than a qualified lawyer—when I say qualified, I mean a lawyer who's experienced in this area—when preparing a power of attorney. This is complex stuff. There are all sorts of variations that could be incorporated, and a competent lawyer has the initial responsibility of determining the capacity before she or he has a client sign or grant a power of attorney. Similarly, she or he has the ability to discuss with a client, the grantor of the power of attorney, all of the options available to him or her. This thing can be as simple or as complex as somebody wants it to be. It can

have exclusions, because it doesn't have to be broad-based; it can be very specific and narrow. It can address particular issues or it can be broad-based.

It appears—and if others have more experience in this regard, help me—the power of attorney can explicitly state that it only becomes effective once the person loses capacity. You can have a power of attorney that doesn't require on that event to happen first. I can give you a power of attorney right now to deal with my banking in Welland, should I wish. I don't have to be incapacitated to give that you power of attorney. There are circumstances wherein people don't pass the test for incapacity or simply—to demonstrate the fact that I went to law school some long time ago—to demonstrate that they are not non compos mentis.

Section 8, “Capacity to give continuing power of attorney,” lists a number of qualities. The act is very specific: the inability to manage one's property is, in and of itself, not an incapacity. A person could be infirm, not incapacitated in terms of the mental capacity. A person could be home-ridden or bedridden and have all of the mental capacity necessary to make decisions around his or her affairs and do it in a very astute way, yet still want to grant a power of attorney to somebody. Or a person could want to grant a power of attorney in anticipation of that point of time where they become incapacitated. It doesn't necessarily have to be as a result of aging. Being a victim in an accident where one is left, for instance, unconscious: a very specific circumstance wherein somebody very much wants a power of attorney—and, quite frankly, in my view, wants a power of attorney prepared by a competent lawyer who knows the law around powers of attorney and who can provide all the safeguards, at least all the safeguards that are available.

1540

I am troubled, as are some other commenters on the bill, about the disclosure of the identity of attorneys in the registry that's proposed by the sponsor of this bill. The disclosure is far more relevant if it's a power of attorney that takes effect only upon the grantor becoming incapacitated and if the disclosure only occurs after this incapacitation. In other words, it would be valuable, if I become incapacitated, for those people who might have an interest in my affairs to know who my attorney is or whether or not there is one. It's of no value for my family—and, to be fair, the drafter or the sponsor of the bill is very specific in terms of identifying spouse or partner, children over 18 etc. I don't know why they have to be 18 to get this information. Think about it. Why should they? A 16-year-old or a 15-year-old has as much of an interest in knowing who their mother's or father's attorney is, in the event that that attorney becomes effective, and in the case of a conditional power of attorney—that's when the person becomes incapacitated—or in the instance of a non-conditional power of attorney; that's whenever.

I don't understand the rationale for providing this information. Either it's public or it's not, and it's not. There is an interest, once a person becomes incapacitated, for certain people to have access to information

identifying his or her attorney. Let's say nursing staff in a hospital who may be unfamiliar with my personal situation, family, friends, what have you—there I am, stretched out, unconscious, comatose, certainly not compos mentis—want to find out if anybody has my power of attorney. That seems to be a perfectly valid rationale for letting them inquire. But that would clearly be after I become incapacitated, and there is a need to know who the power of attorney is.

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, this gaggle of bureaucrats whom Mr. Zimmer describes as faceless—he's the parliamentary assistant, and he described them as faceless. Mr. Zimmer, I suspect, knows this bureaucracy. I know it, too. I'm not sure I know it as well as Mr. Zimmer; perhaps I know it more. But I would never describe these people as faceless. They're arrogant, they're supercilious, they're heavy-handed, they're brutish, and they're insensitive to the point of crassness when it comes to dealings with persons who are incapacitated and/or family members and others who have an interest in the welfare of that person. Of all of the bureaucracies in this province, that is the one that has caused my office the most grief. It's a mindset, a culture over there that I find unpleasant, that I find incredibly unhelpful and that I believe to be a betrayal of the spirit of public guardianship and public trusteeship. I find it very troubling.

Bring it on. My email address is public. Go to the Queen's Park web page, and you will find it there. Every time I say something like this about a particular group, I get a whole pile of emails from all sorts of members of the public across the province who are inclined to agree.

That's why I'd be interested to have this bill go to committee: because we could talk about some of that culture. It's a dangerous culture, I tell you, parliamentary assistant. It's one I find particularly bothersome. Nobody's acting illegally. Nobody's acting improperly. It is, as one officer of the assembly stated it, perhaps just a matter of rule-itis. I can't recall who that officer was at the moment, but one very effective officer of the assembly referred to it as rule-itis in dealing not with that bureaucracy but with another.

That's one: legal advice. What that means is, we have to make it easier for people to get legal advice. In the total scheme of things, it's not horribly expensive, but it is expensive. I had a power of attorney prepared for me before I went in for that surgery in January and I used Rodney Kajan, a good friend of mine and a very, very competent lawyer who primarily does solicitor's work. He knows his law in regard to wills and powers of attorney. He's the sort of guy—I urge people to give Rodney Kajan a call if they're in Welland, or any other number of capable solicitors, people who know the law and who don't take anything for granted, don't assume anything. I mean, Rodney Kajan, even though he's my friend—I've known him for 35 years, however long, and we work closely on so many things—took me through the steps so that he could be satisfied, as a lawyer, as the person simply preparing the power of attorney, that I was

fully aware of all of my options and that I was capable of entering into one.

(1) Get a lawyer and (2) understand that if you don't have a power of attorney—and there are two types: dealing with property and dealing with the person—you can't forget that. Wise people would have both of them because anything can happen at any time. Have it prepared by a lawyer. Understand, if you don't have a power of attorney, you can have the people in the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee be dealing with your affairs, and they are described as anything from faceless—it's the most benign description we've heard about them yet today, the kindest description of it: faceless. We haven't heard anything more generous than faceless yet. Perhaps Mr. Klees, when he talks to this bill, will sort of balance the scales a little bit. We've had them described as anything from faceless to arrogant to supercilious. Understand that if you don't have a power of attorney, it's the public guardian and trustee.

I have concerns about adding the provision that one family member can be a witness. I would question why, and the committee would be an excellent opportunity for the author of this bill, the sponsor, Mr. O'Toole, the member for Durham, to explain, along with others who may agree with him. I think it's horribly important to make sure that that document is pristine and that its integrity is unimpeachable. It seems to me, then, that in view of the fact it's family members who might have an interest in the administration of an attorney or the exercise of it, the witnessing of it—especially when you want to make sure that the person signing it has the capacity to sign it. That's the most troubling part: that grey area where undue influence can be imposed upon people who are starting to waver in their capacity. You need the witnesses. The witnesses are witnesses not just to the signature, but witnesses also in fact—perhaps in law, and I'm not clear on this in my own mind, but certainly in fact—as to the capacity of the person to sign at the time they sign. A family member who may have an interest—perhaps it shouldn't just be family members; it should be anybody who has the potential to have an interest in the administration of that person's affairs. But that's subject matter for committee.

I'm also concerned about the fact that this bill turns the power of attorney into a public document, at least with a certain class of people, before that's in any way necessary, and violates the fundamental privacy of it.

We will be supporting it. I'm looking forward to it going to committee. Thank you, Mr. O'Toole.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: First, I'm honoured and privileged to stand up and speak on An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney. First, I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Durham for his determination. I think he's bringing this bill for a second time. I don't feel bad about bringing it again and again because it's happened to me, too. I brought my bill this week again, actually, after it died on the order paper. It's the way it goes. It's a private

member's bill. You suggest and you come up with a bill with ideas to reflect the voices and the concerns of your constituents.

I've listened to two able lawyers, the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and the member from Welland. They've explained the complexity of the issue. To many people around this place, and probably many lawyers across the province of Ontario, this bill is not new. I guess it was being debated and discussed in 1992 and raised so many different concerns from many different legal specialists in this area. As my colleague the member from Willowdale, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, mentioned—and he said it many different times—the people in their goodwill choose a person to represent them when they get ill or sick or they go somewhere, and they want them to represent them in their weakness. They choose that person carefully to represent them because they have a trust in that person.

1550

When we force people to register the power of attorney, as the member from Willowdale mentioned, we put it in a bureaucratic system and we bring the government and bureaucracy to the system to intervene between family members, which will make the issue more complex and bring the government into family business.

I think many people across the province of Ontario, especially seniors, don't want to see the complexity of the issue. They don't want to create more of a burden on the person who, in his or her choice, represents them in their weakest time or absent time—to be also put in jeopardy in a difficult time.

Therefore, I think the member for Durham has good intentions and believes passionately in this issue. He probably listened to many different seniors in his riding. That's what he mentioned, and that's why he's bringing this issue for the second time to this House, with hopes for it to pass and go to committee and become law in the province of Ontario.

But as a result of advice from the Attorney General and my colleagues, both lawyers, I think it's very complex; it's not as easy as you think. We're going to create more layers of bureaucracy. We're going to make it more difficult for seniors to act alone, independently, if we force them to register the power of attorney. According to all the professionals in this field, they said to me—and I read many different analyses about this bill—that it will make it more difficult for seniors to act.

As a matter of fact, if we pass this bill or if it becomes law, it doesn't mean the abuse of seniors or the power of attorney will be eliminated; as a matter of fact, it will not. It will make it more difficult and more complex. As I mentioned at the beginning, and as my colleague mentioned when he spoke before me, it will make it more complex because it will go into the bureaucracy of the legal system in the province of Ontario. As everybody knows, some issues sit on the desk of the court for many years, not being touched due to the complexity of the issue, due to the number of legal issues being dealt with in the courts.

I wish the member from Durham all the luck, but I found it difficult—as I found it difficult in the beginning when I entered the debate a year ago, when he introduced it for the first time—to support this, because to me, it does not make sense. To me, it has a good heart and a good intention to serve seniors, but as a matter of fact, by introducing it in the way he introduced it here, it will make it more complex and more difficult for seniors to manoeuvre and have flexibility in choosing the person to represent them in their weakest time or in their absence.

Therefore, I think this bill does not serve seniors well. I'm here in this place to support my seniors in London—Fanshawe and the seniors of the province of Ontario to create the laws and regulations to make it easier for them, to make it more flexible for them to be able to choose the person they want without any burden, without any complexity, without damaging any relationship between family members.

Again, I'm not going to vote for this bill, not because I don't like the member for Durham—he's a great member—but, hey, it does not fit with the direction of the legalities. As both lawyers mentioned, it's very complex. So that's why—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Send it to committee.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I don't want to send everything to committee and have the committee deal with it. It's a matter of understanding the complexity, and I think it's not going to serve seniors. Therefore, I'm not going to support it.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to say at the outset that certainly I'll be supporting this bill. I too, as has been expressed by some of my colleagues, have some concerns about specific aspects of the bill, but we'll discuss those in public hearings. I think that's the purpose of having public hearings.

What is absolutely confounding to me is to hear the member opposite say that he's voting against it, that he doesn't want it to go to a public hearing, that he doesn't want it to go to committee. I do hope that the public is listening and heard what this member said. Why would the government of the day want to keep a bill such as this, which has the purest of intentions and can only benefit the people of Ontario, from having a fulsome discussion in committee through public hearings, to have people like Risha and Phil Gotlieb come forward to the public hearing and tell us their story, tell us what their experience is?

I sat with my constituents and I listened to what happened to them, and I believe that every member of the Legislature should have that opportunity. This bill goes a great distance towards addressing the concerns that are represented by the Gotliebs. I can say to you—and as we heard from my colleague Mr. O'Toole what he's hearing from police services in Durham alone, the number of complaints that the police services deal with on a daily basis that relate to elder abuse.

This is not a technical discussion here. It's not a matter of saying, "We're going to save the clerks some

time and so we'll keep this bill out of committee." What are you going to do? Are you going to go golfing? What are you going to do with your time? We're here to deal with important legislation, and we have an issue. Don't you hear from people in your ridings, in your constituency?

You've heard Mr. O'Toole and you've heard Mr. Kormos say that we have recurrences every single day in this province, which tells us we have an issue. We, as legislators, have a responsibility to put in place legislation and laws that protect the most vulnerable in our society. Who's more vulnerable than the elderly who cannot make important decisions about their financial affairs, about their personal affairs? Shouldn't we be putting something in place to protect them and their families?

I'm so disappointed that, notwithstanding all of the efforts of Mr. O'Toole, we now have had two members from the Liberal government in this province stand in their place to say that they're going to vote against it. What that means, typically, is that this private member's bill has obviously been whipped by the government, and the result of that will be that it probably won't pass. We'll see.

We have other members. Dr. Jacek is here representing the good riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, someone who, as a former medical officer of health, no doubt has experienced the concerns that Mr. O'Toole has brought forward as well, and I'll be interested to know if we have your support on this bill.

I'll take this opportunity to appeal to the other members of the Liberal caucus. Put aside the cajoling that you've had from the parliamentary assistant, who's given you a very technical reason as to why he doesn't support this bill. Put aside the whip that you've heard and perhaps felt from your chief government whip. Put aside the memo that you got from the Premier's office that says, "Don't you dare vote for this because we don't want to have this exposed." Listen to the parliamentary assistant when he himself talks about the faceless bureaucrats in his own ministry.

Mr. Peter Kormos: And we know what that implies.

Mr. Frank Klees: And we know what that implies: That implies that there are people there who don't care what happens here.

I just want to add my comments to Mr. Kormos's about the Public Guardian and Trustee. Here's what I have found in my dealings with that office, and that is, it's all about the letter of the law and it's not even coming close to the spirit of the law. There's nothing there that we would expect to have as a guardian or a trustee that has a responsibility to consider the broad circumstances and do what's right for the person within the framework of the law rather than trying simply to protect yourself and to have done your job at the end of the day, punch the card, leave the office and forget about the problems that the individuals have that they're supposed to be looking after.

1600

I look forward to this bill going to committee. I believe that it's important, that there is an accounting on the part of powers of attorney as to how they are dealing on an annual basis with the affairs of the estates. One of the issues that was brought to me by the Gotliebs is in fact that a power of attorney has no obligation to keep records as to how they've disposed of the assets of an estate or how they've spent that money. At the very least, we have to keep our records for seven years for Revenue Canada. Someone with a power of attorney has no obligation under law to keep any records of any kind as to how they have administered that estate. That's fundamentally wrong. The government doesn't even want this bill to go to committee. Shame on you. Come on; this is about dealing with important affairs. It's about us stepping forward and saying, "Let's protect vulnerable people in our province and let's do our job as legislators."

We'll see what happens in the vote. I do hope that we can meet again in committee and we can actually have the good intentions of Mr. O'Toole realized by the passing of an appropriate bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Durham, Mr. O'Toole, has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. John O'Toole: Quickly, I'd like to thank David Zimmer—I'm disappointed, but I do thank him—and Mr. Kormos, and I thank him and I'm confident that he'll see the clarity of going to committee on this, and the member from London–Fanshawe. It's clear that he's been whipped by the party to vote one way, as I hear their comments aren't sensitive to the needs of the elderly. This is private members' public business; this is not a partisan issue. This is not going to become law. I fully understand this. This is about continuing debate, moving forward.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora, a very highly respected and esteemed person here, I think has it right in terms of: It's a debate that needs to happen. I'm sure some form of response will develop over time.

I'm not criticizing others, except to look at it. Why I introduced this bill: You have to remember that Premier McGuinty prorogued the House. When he did that, this bill was already referred to committee. It had passed second reading—identical bill. So I rushed because of prorogation and reintroduced it, and that's why we're debating it again today. It passed unanimously the last time and it was before committee but never called.

What this opportunity is for you is to show some independence and vote in support of it to move it to committee. I say to you that without the prorogation by the Premier, this thing would have been heard by committee eventually and they would have held public discussions.

But in the minutes that are left I want to quote from Sergeant John Keating. He said of the power of attorney kit, "It's easier to get a power of attorney document than to get a licence for a pet."

I've got a letter here from Risha Gotlieb and her husband Phil. It says, "It is the province's current legislation that facilitates and enables abuse" that is referred to in this legislation. Tammy Rankin has said to me that she deals with this every day in her 17-year career working with the elderly adults in our community.

If you have any compassion, you'll support this bill so we can continue to discuss in it committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

CLIMATE CHANGE
AWARENESS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. McNeely. I ask members to take their seats, please.

Mr. McNeely has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.

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

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'd ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? So ordered.

TOM LONGBOAT DAY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot number 8.

Mr. Colle has moved private member's notice of motion number 22.

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

Motion agreed to.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE
AND ELDERLY PEOPLE
FROM ABUSE ACT
(POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES
ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES
CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS
(PROCURATIONS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 9.

Mr. O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney.

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

I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1606 to 1611.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I ask members to please take their seats, and I do apologize, but we're going to have a vote.

Mr. O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

DiNovo, Cheri	Klees, Frank	O'Toole, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Kormos, Peter	Witmer, Elizabeth

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Balkissoon, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kular, Kuldip	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	Pendergast, Leeanna	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 6; the nays are 23.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS
DE RETRAITE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes/ Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, which was introduced on March 29 of this year. Also, I want to compliment the critic, the member who is responsible for the seniors' secretariat, the member from Cambridge, for the work that he has done on our behalf

in getting some of our concerns and support for the bill on the public record.

I think it's important to, first of all, establish what is going to happen once this is passed. It will establish a self-governing regulatory authority that's going to educate, license and inspect retirement homes to ensure they meet prescribed standards. I think most people would certainly support that. We want to know that the homes where these individuals are going to be living, obviously, are up to the standards that they should be.

It will also ensure government accountability and oversight of the regulatory authority, and there are going to be reporting and accountability mechanisms.

It will establish a residents' bill of rights that includes the right to participate fully in any decision concerning any aspect of his or her care, to be informed about the cost of care services and any increases in charges for these services and to receive information about and access to external care providers, including publicly funded providers. It would also set province-wide safety and care standards appropriate to the services provided in each retirement home, and it would establish safeguards for residents by requiring homes to protect residents against abuse or neglect and defining employee screening and training requirements.

We're talking about a retirement home being defined as a residential complex or part of a residential complex consisting of rental units that is "occupied primarily by persons who are 65 years of age or older ... in which at least the prescribed number of persons reside who are not related to the operator of the home, and ... where the operator of the home makes at least two care services available, directly or indirectly, to the residents."

On the face, there's nothing wrong with this, but when you start to take a look at the changes that are being proposed within this legislation, you could almost arrive at a conclusion that the government is proposing that these retirement homes, which will be paid for by the men and women who occupy them, will, in some respects, make up for the lack of long-term-care beds that are available in long-term-care facilities.

There is a little bit of concern because, of course, currently in the province of Ontario, we have a crisis when it comes to long-term-care beds. This government has never, ever developed a long-term plan for long-term-care homes. The last time a long-term-care plan was developed for these homes was in 1998, when, after 10 years of no new action, no new construction or anybody building new long-term-care homes, our government made the decision that we would construct, after doing a thorough analysis, 20,000 new long-term-care beds because we needed the spaces. This government was very happy, the first few years after 2003, to attend the opening of the homes that we had actually announced were going to be built. In fact, to this day they continue to try to take credit for about 3,000 beds that opened after we were no longer in office.

Since that time, despite that fact, the demand for long-term-care beds has increased to the point where there are

now about 25,000 or 26,000 people waiting in the province of Ontario, and that is up from about 12,000 in 2005. There's just no space.

In some respects, you can take a look at what the government is trying to do in regulating retirement homes, and you can come to a conclusion that perhaps this is the government's way of responding to the crisis—in other words, the shortage of long-term-care beds—and if we can regulate these retirement homes, we can put people into them. In a long-term-care home, of course, people are subsidized by the province. In these retirement homes, people would be using their own dollars in order to access the residence and also to access the services.

I think there's a little bit of suspicion about what might be part of the motivation behind the regulation of the retirement homes because we haven't heard the government announce yet any plan to build more long-term-care beds. As I said, we are short 25,000 to 26,000 beds.

In fact, the government's unwillingness to come forward with a long-term plan for new long-term-care beds in the province of Ontario has contributed to a very serious problem in our hospitals. Currently, 17% of our hospital beds are occupied by what we call ALC patients. These are alternative-level-of-care patients who would more appropriately belong in a long-term-care home or at home if this government were able to provide the services at home that it has indicated it would, or maybe they would be somewhere else in respite or complex care.

1620

We currently have a government that is perhaps trying to deal with accommodating our senior population but is doing it in a way that seniors will continue to have to pay for this accommodation and for any services that are provided to them. It doesn't appear that there's any willingness on the part of the government—we're now in 2010, and since 2003 they haven't announced any new plan for any new long-term-care beds, so this could well be the solution. People will be paying for their accommodation.

We know that, just as the shortage of long-term-care beds has increased from about 12,000 to almost 26,000 today in a period of five years from 2005, the boomer tsunami that is hitting us will simply continue to provide us with an even more desperate need to provide for our aging population.

What we're seeing here, in some respects, is an attempt by the government, through the back door, to not provide the publicly funded long-term-care homes but to introduce a form of privatization of long-term-care facilities. Of course, it would also help the government meet some of the challenges within our health care system, and that's what is so regrettable.

We all know there's a challenge: The system as we know it today is simply not sustainable. Yet this government, despite the promises it has made, has never since 2003 come out with a long-term plan for health. George Smitherman stood here many times indicating that he

was going to introduce a long-term strategic plan for health. When the LHINs were introduced, they told the LHINs, “We know you don’t know where you’re going or what you’re supposed to do, but we are going to introduce a provincial long-term strategic plan. It will identify what the objectives are, what the needs are that we must address. We’re going to speak, in the 10-year plan, to how we’re going to achieve those objectives,” and then the government was going to measure whether or not they were meeting their goals.

That was in 2007, and we’re now in 2010. The 14 LHINs continue to operate without any plan, and we know that about half of them didn’t even identify a few years ago, when they were doing their surveys, that seniors were going to be a priority for the LHINs. So again we’ve got 14 bureaucracies, all operating independently, that aren’t really aware of what the government is going to do over the long term. Obviously, it’s very wasteful to be spending money and trying to put out fires without a long-term plan.

Now you’ve got the government moving forward with these retirement homes. Maybe it’s like what they’re doing with pharmacists. Do you know what? They want to cut costs, but they don’t have an overall strategic plan. Of course, we’ve now heard them talk about what they’re going to do to hospitals: reduce some of the funding that currently goes to hospitals.

I would say to this government that rather than attacking or focusing on one group or one area, why don’t you do what you were going to do; that is, show us and show the public—they deserve to know—how you are going to ensure that the health care services that are needed for people are going to be available to them over the long term?

Your finance minister and your Premier have both said that if changes don’t occur, we’re going to be spending 70 cents of every dollar on health care in the not-too-distant future. We all know that’s not sustainable. But at the same time, you’ve also said, “We’re not going to increase taxes, and we’re not going to allow privatization,” but you’ve done both. In fact, the first thing you ever did was introduce a new health tax right after the 2003 election, after your Premier said he wasn’t going to raise taxes. You’ve now got in your general coffers about \$15 billion that you have collected from the pockets of the people in the province of Ontario, despite the fact that you said you weren’t going to raise taxes. Then, of course, when it comes to privatization, again you said, “Oh, no, we’re not going to privatize.” You know what? Physiotherapy services were eliminated, and we certainly know that chiropractic services were eliminated from the public funding.

So again, the government has not been forthright with people in the province of Ontario. In this case, retirement homes: This may well be your attempt to privatize for those people who have less complex needs, and more or less force them into retirement homes, where they’re going to have to pay for living if they no longer think that they can live independently at home. Of course, part of

the reason people can’t live independently at home is, despite the promises that were made about aging at home, being able to live at home, having community services available, you just have to call up the CCAC in your community and you will find out very soon that there is no help available to you.

In fact, I know a woman who last week had been in the hospital for a week and a half. She was told she could have community care services. Guess what? When she was ready for discharge, finally this week, she was told no, that there was not going to be any support, but she was going to have to find somewhere else to live because she couldn’t yet go home. She’s now in a retirement home, and she is going to be paying a tremendous amount of money out of her own pocket because, despite what the government said about community support and help being available in your own home, that is simply not happening. I learned early this morning when I got a call from the family that they have been able to find a private home where she can go. She will be paying about \$3,000 a month for respite until she can return to her own home.

So I think this government needs to be honest with people. The health system isn’t sustainable. We’re going to have to be creative, but we’re also going to have to identify a long-term strategy for the health system because I think the public is losing confidence in our health system. The government has so often said one thing and done another. Maybe the public understands that many of our services have always been privatized. They’ve had to pay for them, or they’ve been delivered by the private sector. They’re probably way ahead of us, but don’t keep saying, “We don’t allow anything but public delivery of services.” Look at the silly thing you did with the MRIs that were being operated when you came into office by private individuals but were publicly funded, and some of the silly games that you played. Take a look at the P3 hospitals. Oh, you were going to do away with them. We all know what happened. It’s not true.

Be honest with people. Acknowledge that there are problems with the health system. We probably can’t be all things to everybody. Let’s have an honest debate, because everybody realizes that 70 cents on the dollar is not sustainable. So when you take a look at this piece of legislation, which, at the end of the day, is going to make sure that people are provided for within retirement homes and that our retirement homes are regulated, I hope that you’re not doing it with the intent of somehow addressing the shortage of long-term-care homes. You need to realize that people today are living longer, and people today have much more complex care needs than ever before. You are going to have to make sure that there is accommodation available for them. But at least be honest. If you want people to pay for it themselves, say so, because at some point maybe we’re going to have to have the debate that the system, as we know it today, isn’t sustainable.

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But it’s like the pharmacy and what you’re doing there. People are going to be forced, for example, to pay

for the delivery of drugs. Again, it's the way it has been approached. I think your government had an opportunity to sit down and engage in some consultations with the pharmacy players and the association, but again the government seems to have unilaterally made some decision. I don't know that people really understand what's at stake here, but the unfortunate reality is that patients are now suffering the consequences of a war that seems to be being waged between the government and between some of the pharmacy players.

The only one who's hurt at the end of the day is the public. They don't know what the government is trying to do. You're telling them you're trying to cut costs, but they really don't understand what's going on. As I say, some older people now who won't have drugs delivered to their home any more or who have to pay a bigger fee—you know what? They can't afford it. But be upfront with them. What are you trying to do? Why didn't you talk to the people in pharmacy? Why didn't you reach some sort of a compromise, some sort of solution that everybody could live with? I think everybody understands that the cost of drugs—it's expensive. What can we do to somehow deal with that issue?

Unfortunately, the way it has been dealt with has meant that the one person who is going to be suffering is the person, probably the older person who uses a lot of drugs, and it appears the other person who is going to suffer is the small pharmacist in rural northern Ontario or somebody within my community who simply has a pharmacy, doesn't sell the groceries, doesn't sell the makeup and everything else that goes with it.

It seems that this initiative to go after the players in the pharmaceutical field seems to have hit a lot of unintended targets, and I think that could have been addressed if the government had sat down and had a conversation with some of the people involved.

I will be supporting the bill that we're debating, Bill 21, but I'll wait and see whether or not this is simply a back door to replacing some of the long-term-care facilities and making our seniors pay for their own beds and residences in the future.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to Ms. Witmer, and although I heard her say that the Conservative caucus is going to support this and the New Democrats will not be opposing it—let's note that this is on second reading only; it's in principle. There's a whole lot that has got to be done with this piece of legislation in committee before it becomes anything that the government purports it to be.

I'm going to have a chance in just a few minutes, perhaps eight minutes, to speak to this, and I've highlighted some of the areas of the bill that I want to focus on.

There are shocking omissions, and indeed parts of the bill create an impression that something is being done when, in fact, nothing is being done. It's lip service, less than lip service, to the rights of seniors living in these homes.

Let's understand what the bill is about, and this is simply the way it is. This bill is the foundation of the growth and expansion of seniors' care by private, for-profit corporations here in the province of Ontario. Let me tell you, I come from down in Niagara. You know that. The American and American-style for-profit residential and care providers are lined up over at the border, over at Buffalo there, down Highway I-90, three or four miles long, waiting to come into Canada and reap the profits at the expense of our seniors and send those profits back to the Cayman Islands, where those people hoard their money.

This bill has some very dangerous qualities to it, and I look forward to the opportunity to expand on those in short order.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: I'm very pleased to add my voice in support of the bill and to compliment the minister responsible for seniors for bringing this forward.

I hear what the opposition is saying. I heard from the member for Kitchener-Waterloo that she's willing to support the bill—I'm pleased to hear that—and expressing some concerns at the same time.

The fact is that, yes, we have been dealing with these issues for a long time, but it is here. Call it a first step. Call it an important step with, yes indeed, some more to go. But the fact is that the bill is here today, and it deserves support and deserves that we send it forward so we can provide seniors and their families with peace of mind in the type of care they need and support. The government recognizes that, and again I compliment the Minister of Health for doing that.

We have some 800 homes in Ontario with some 40,000 occupants. I think we all know that in the next 15 to 20 years, one quarter of the Ontario population is going to be 65 and over. I think it is time that we give seniors and their families peace of mind to know that there is protection.

The bill does exactly what the opposition is looking for: It establishes mandatory care and safety standards. You may say, "Why didn't we do this before?" Well, we are doing it now. It includes a required emergency plan, infection control, prevention programs, assessment of care needs and care planning, and police background checks and training for staff. It establishes very important things they've been looking for for a long time. Residents' rights are included, and the right to know what type of care and how much it costs, which is part of the government saying all along that we need transparency in all we do. This is a big first step.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I commend Minister Phillips, the minister responsible for seniors, for bringing this forward. I have discussed this bill. In fact, Bill 21 is something that's probably long overdue. But it does have a downside; that is, it could be the slippery slope of privatization of long-term care. Retirement homes aren't

long-term-care homes, and they are not regulated today, but they should be regulated.

Once you start introducing such things as a care plan but there's no government money, unlike long-term care that has government money attached to those regulated beds—I just want to add, in respect to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, that she has great insight, knowledge and suggestions. I would encourage the minister to send this to committee and work with people like Ms. Witmer and others.

I want them to reconsider my Bill 3 today, which was really another small method that had been agreed to unanimously by the Liberals, the NDP and the Conservatives to go to committee prior to prorogation by the Premier. I ask them, in their legislation, to look at the power of attorney issue in those homes. It might be assumed, or it could be signed by these private home operators, that they have assumed a power of attorney role for personal care. Do you see the slope we're getting on here? I think they're missing the boat on some of the opportunities to deal with elder abuse and elderly decision-making or support of elder living in an era when we have the baby boomer cohort moving along.

There's not enough strength in the current protections for our seniors in this province, and this is one more case where the government is failing seniors. I don't say it in a malicious way; I say it as a warning to take the time to strengthen it. My bill is only a structured piece to give you the tools or the mandate from our side, from our leader, Tim Hudak, and our deputy leader, Elizabeth Witmer—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It will be my honour and privilege as well to speak to this bill at greater length further on. Suffice to say, in reaction to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member from Welland, that certainly they're on to something, and what they're on to is what is not being stated in the spin on this bill but what is actually in this bill; that is, a kind of drift to privatization.

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I'm going to share with the assembly here some horror stories from my experience as a United Church minister with seniors in for-profit retirement homes, and, quite frankly, how this bill is not going to touch the horror of those stories. In fact, it would not mitigate them at all. I look forward to sharing some stories, stories that have plagued our community.

I also look forward to bringing forth the position of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, or ACE, which has grave concerns about this bill, which feels that this is, perhaps, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to actually do something about regulating for-profit retirement homes, and that it will be missed if the bill is not strengthened and if aspects that they have brought forward are not put in the bill.

So, yes, do we want to see regulation? Absolutely. Do we agree with the government on that? Absolutely. Do we think this bill fulfills the mandate for caring for our

seniors, for making sure that they're protected—for protecting, as the member from Durham said, not only their assets but their very beings, their lives? No, it doesn't, on a number of fronts. That's why it needs to go to committee, that's why it needs to be strengthened, and that's why the government needs to listen to people like ACE and other seniors' groups, registered nurses, fire chiefs and others who have very viable concerns that should be incorporated. I look forward to speaking to that at some length.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Kitchener–Waterloo has up to two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to thank the members from Welland, York West, Durham and Parkdale–High Park.

As I indicated, I do support the principle of the bill, and I have a lot of respect and admiration for the minister who has brought the legislation forward. I know that he has certainly done so in a manner to ensure that those people who are going to be living in the retirement homes are protected, are looked after and that their rights will be taken into consideration. I know this bill will probably go out to committee, and at that time, if there are concerns that the public has, which there will be—we know there are always concerns with all legislation—hopefully we can make sure that those concerns are addressed.

At the end of the day, as I say, I support this bill in principle as it is, and hopefully we can have legislation which will protect the public and will be as I'm sure the minister intended it to be.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: At the outset, let's make it clear that if one is very wealthy, one has little need for state-sponsored regulation of the retirement home industry. If one has all of one's faculties and is assertive and comfortable in the culture, then one has little need for state-sponsored regulation of the private, for-profit retirement home industry. I suppose that even if one has a strong family support or the support of friends or neighbours who will assist one while they live in a private, for-profit retirement home—once again, while one's own skills may have begun to weaken, that person can still rely upon the skills, the assertiveness and the advocacy of family, friends or neighbours.

I, like everybody else here, have been in many retirement home settings, public and private, for-profit homes. Down in Niagara where I come from, we have a very strong and historic system of public retirement homes. As a matter of fact, for the last 40 years I've watched Doug Rapelje, who is a director of those homes on behalf of the region, develop those homes and the programs in them. He is acknowledged internationally as a person with great expertise in geriatrics in general and in developing homes/housing for seniors. Now, is the capacity anywhere near enough? Of course not. And is the ability of the property taxpayer sufficient to invest the levels of

investment that we need, especially when one considers—I had occasion to say this the other day; we heard it said again today. It's 2010. In one more year, 2011—you do the math and allow nine months for the gestation period—the first of the baby boomers is going to be turning 65. That is an incredible population of Ontarians who are going to put demand on services for seniors the likes of which have never been seen before in any of our lives. These seniors, the baby boomers, are by and large the best-educated generation of Ontarians, and they are going to be the—to date—longest-living generation of Ontarians, except for Rahim Jaffer. With his drinking and cocaine habits, I'm sure he's going to die well before his actuarial death age.

So, as I had the opportunity to say the other day, we ain't seen nothing yet. It is inescapable. The observation is unavoidable that this legislation provides the foundation for a growing private, for-profit seniors' services industry, and this purported regulation signals that clearly.

It also signals to the private, for-profit—let's understand. Let's be very clear. Let's understand this from the get-go. The motivation in a publicly sponsored system—in the public homes that Doug Rapelje ran for so many years that now are being run by capable people, some of them acolytes of his—is to provide the best possible care for our folks or our grandfolks upon their retirement years when they can no longer live in their own homes. It's a very simple view, but I think it says it in and of itself. But let's also understand that—and we are no longer talking about the little mom-and-pop operation. It used to be, in years gone by—and you and I have both of them in our smaller communities where a couple, with or without expertise, with a large, older-style house, would say, “Look, why don't we bring in some seniors? We can take care of them and they'll help us stay in our home or help us pay the bills.” Some families decided to do bed and breakfasts; historically, some families decided to accommodate seniors; other families accommodated students, if they lived in college or university towns. That's the private retirement home at its most simple level. Again, some of those were very good and some were atrocious. That's understood as well.

But we're not talking about that. That's not the seniors' services industry that we're going to have foisted on us. We're talking about big corporations, publicly traded corporations, corporations that have their head offices far from Ontario and corporations whose accountability is not to residents in homes but to shareholders in terms of profits. It's not rocket science. You don't have to have an MBA to understand the fundamentals of making profit in that type of industry. You charge the maximum amount that you can for your services and you reduce your overhead to the least possible amount. That's how you maximize profit. That, too, isn't rocket science, but it does illustrate that the bottom line for the corporate, increasingly multinational, for-profit, profit-driven, seniors' service providers is profit, and that's what this bill deals with here.

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If this were a perfect world, if the market worked to provide quality care, we wouldn't need regulation, would we? We can see that the market doesn't work to provide quality care. The market can maximize profit, but they won't provide quality care, especially when you're dealing with seniors who don't fit into one of those categories that I first listed, although the list may not be finessed particularly well—the list of wealthy, capable or powerful people, people who have power in their own right.

People, as they age and acquire some of the characteristics of aging, sometimes lose their power. We had occasion earlier today, when Mr. O'Toole's bill was being discussed, to talk about folks with dementia, Alzheimer's, amongst other things, because you see, there are huge profits to be made for the private, for-profit corporate sector in caring for people with dementia and Alzheimer's. You need very little programming, from their point of view. Hell, you don't even have to have a bingo game.

Many of us who aren't familiar with Alzheimer's, although most of us have encountered it one way or another either in family or through our friends and neighbours—people, when they first encounter the wings, the parts of long-term-care facilities that care for people with Alzheimer's, even the very best of them, are shocked, taken aback by the conditions. I'm not talking about filth; I'm not talking about the locked doors; I'm just talking about the incomprehensible level of functioning, because there are levels of functioning. “The unsearchable” I suspect is the best term, perhaps, Mr. Levac, would it be?—the unsearchable level of functioning, because that's one of the frustrating things about relating to somebody with Alzheimer's: Something is happening there, but you don't know what it is. It's very hard, especially for untrained people, lay people, to connect in a way that you would like to. So there's an unsearchable level of functioning.

I've only got 10 minutes. Let's take a look at the act. Oh, the regulatory authority—Ian Scott, many, many years ago, long before he was the Attorney General of this province, wrote an essay that has been published, and I took great delight in reminding Mr. Scott, when he was Attorney General, of this article that he had written during the auto insurance debates, because Ian Scott proposed—and his argument was bolstered by all sorts of unavoidable facts and irrefutable facts—that the industry to be regulated soon acquires control over the regulatory body, especially when you've got a self-regulatory system. What can I refer to—the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada, the insurance industry and any other number of similar bodies.

What have we got here? We've got a bill that hands over the power right from the get-go. There's not even any pretending here. Nobody's trying to fool anybody, because the act, under “regulatory authority,” says, “The authority shall have a board of directors” which happens

to be nine, and that's, in and of itself, not troubling, but you turn over to subsection 12(5) and you see that the act specifically states that the public appointments to the board, the members of the authority that are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, "do not constitute a majority...."

Let's put that into real English: It means that the bill guarantees that the industry will always have a majority of representatives on that authority.

So Colonel Sanders is in charge of the chicken coop one more time. I've had far too many occasions to use that phrase here at Queen's Park over the course of, some would probably say, far too many years. We've got a government that guarantees that the industry is going to have control of its authority. No kidding. Does TSSA ring a bell? Does the Technical Standards and Safety Authority mean anything to you? Does Minister Takhar—now the Minister of Government Services—when he was minister of that ring a bell for you? This self-regulatory body, controlled by the industry that it purported to regulate, simply wasn't regulated. Hell, it wasn't even inspected. Now we have a dead young man and thousands of other Ontarians who but for the grace of God didn't die in the Sunrise propane explosion because the TSSA self-regulatory body—look, the industry has no interest in being tough with itself. If industry didn't need regulation, we wouldn't have to talk regulation. If we're going to talk about regulation, why are we talking about self-regulation? This bill guarantees that the industry will always control, will always dominate the authority that the government tells us is going to be responsible for regulating this retirement home industry.

Let's move on to section 51, the proposed charter of rights. Charter of rights? Holy moly, that leaves some sort of impression, good grief, of something that's superior, that should be up there on the altar being worshiped. What's the charter of rights worth if there's no meaningful way of enforcing it? Take a look at the charter rights: all broad statements, pretty fancy—oh, and it's going to be posted on the walls of these retirement homes. They could probably hire those people who make the fancy letter work—what do they call those people?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Calligraphers.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —calligraphers to make it look like some old British document like the Magna Carta; they could give the fake Magna Carta look to it.

If you take a look at subsection (3) of section 51, look what the enforcement standard is for the charter of rights: "A resident of a retirement home may enforce the residents' bill of rights against the licensee of the home as though the resident and the licensee had entered into a contract under which the licensee had agreed to fully respect and promote the rights set out in the residents' bill of rights."

Well, there are a couple of lawyers around here who know more about that kind of law than I do. How do you enforce a contract? You sue in the courts. You hire a lawyer. Good grief. It makes it quite clear that the authority doesn't have the responsibility for enforcing the

charter of rights; it's up to the resident to enforce it as if it were a contract. So you take \$10,000 as your retainer down to some law firm, if you can get down there, and then as disbursements happen, you pay \$10,000 and \$10,000 and \$10,000 more, and then you wait six years. These are people in retirement homes. These are people in the senior years. Do you know what the backlog is down at University Avenue there for lawsuits? The odds are you're going to be dead, because you're old to begin with, huh? Let's be brutally frank here: You're old to begin with. That's why you're in a retirement home. You're not young anymore; you're not serving as a page here at Queen's Park. You might be a member, but you're certainly not young; you're closer to dying than you are to being born.

Some enforcement—and no advocacy whatsoever. How does a person with Alzheimer's enforce their so-called rights under this bill of rights? How does a person who has lost their sight or their mobility enforce their rights under this so-called bill of rights?

1700

Why is there no advocate for residents in retirement homes under this legislation? Because the legislation, after even the most modest of scrutiny, is exposed as something of a sham. Oh, and there's—some of this stuff has the quality of a high school social committee, as if they're going to hang crepe paper and make those little flowers out of crepe paper or tissue paper or whatever for the school dance because, after all, the legislation allows for the creation of a residents' council.

I'm reminded of this government's legislation and the previous Conservative government's legislation—remember?—when it came to farm workers and their right to bargain. This government and the previous government tried to circumvent the rulings of the appellate courts by saying that farm workers can form workers' councils and they can talk to the boss. That's a far cry from collective bargaining, ain't it, Speaker? And the council can—this was just sweet—attempt to resolve disputes between the licensee and residents. Oh, let's get in a mediator. Oh, for Pete's sake. Isn't anybody embarrassed about that? They can attempt to resolve disputes.

This government is crowing about its bill of rights as if somehow they had written Magna Carta 2, like a bad Johnny Depp sequel, when they haven't even come close. As a matter of fact, your time would be better spent watching a Johnny Depp sequel than it would investigating anything in this legislation.

The offences, when you take a look at section 98, and I haven't had the benefit of committee hearings yet—nobody has—you've got operators without a licence, reduction in care service, ceasing to operate a retirement home, interference with an external care provider, protection from abuse and neglect, compliance with inspections. There's one section, section 60, compliance with care and safety standards. We don't know what those are, because they're going to be by regulation. Those are secret. How many baths per week were seniors promised

in long-term-care facilities by the wannabe mayor of Toronto, Rocco Rossi? No, he wasn't—it was George Smitherman.

We've seen this movie before. It was a bad movie then; it's a bad movie now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure to stand and join in the debate and the discussion on Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act, and to respond to a comment or two made by the member from Welland. In my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, we have 12 to 15 retirement homes, and it's of significant importance, this bill, to the people, my constituents in my riding and, in fact, my parents. There's a common saying that life begins at retirement, and it's important that we look at the importance of an act like this to make sure that that happens for the people of Ontario.

The member from Welland called the bill a sham, and I just want to go over some of the important things in this bill and be careful to establish that this is anything but a sham. In fact, it creates the regulatory authority, which he referred to, to license homes, to conduct inspections, to have investigations and enforcement, including financial penalties and revoking licences if necessary. It also establishes safety standards, and that is so important, safety standards that we have in schools that will now—emergency plans, infection control, prevention programs, background checks. This is a consistency that is so important for our retirement homes in the province. We need to provide safety standards and emergency plans and have transparency. The bill establishes residents' rights, including the right to know the true cost of care and accommodation. If families want to make informed decisions, there needs to be a transparency, and families need to know. You can't make informed decisions if you don't have all of the information.

So for this and a whole host of other reasons, it's an excellent bill, and I support Bill 21.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions or comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to stand. It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Welland. He keeps us awake: Let's face it: It's 5 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon. He's entertaining.

A couple of points he made which are far beyond entertainment about the charters of rights and about residents' councils: Quite frankly, as a United Church minister, I've been in and out of retirement homes and long-term-care homes for my entire working life, and I have yet to be in a private one that doesn't have a charter of rights and that doesn't have a residents' council. These are already de rigueur in private, for-profit homes. The best ones don't need them, and the worst ones are completely ineffective, just like the member said.

To get back to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga: Of course this all sounds good, but what the member from Welland talked about is that it sounds good, but how do you enforce it? Who enforces it? That's what he

was talking about. It's one thing to have a charter of rights; it's another thing to enforce a charter of rights. It's one thing to have a residents' council, but if it means that you're wheeling four people with Alzheimer's into a circle once a week and then wheeling them back to their locked-up rooms, it doesn't work.

The member talked about if your only recourse is through the civil litigation method, you have no recourse. We've seen this before. We've seen in it other self-regulated industries. We've seen with it disastrous results, as we have seen in for-profit retirement homes. The best one could expect in an industry that self-regulates is that the big dogs eat the little dogs, that the big, expensive, well-run places already drive their competitors out of business. That's really what you're setting up here. This has, of course, happened in other places.

What we're talking about here is having advocates on this regulatory body in the majority. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about not morphing into a private, for-profit health care system, which is also a possibility under this act. We're talking about the individual lives of seniors, at the end of the day. We need to keep them safe. This bill doesn't.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions or comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: Again, we do need a regulatory body. Seniors in retirement homes are looking for it and they've been asking for it. I would say to the House, let's move on with it.

To the member from Welland: passionate as always, but skeptical some of the time. Who can disagree with that? But the fact is, if you don't have a regulatory body, you cannot go in some of those homes and put your foot down. The last couple of months, without saying the last few years, I've been in and out of nursing homes, retirement homes, and I have seen good and bad.

With all due respect to the member from Welland, we cannot compare those homes where people can afford the \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000 a month. We are not comparing to those. We are looking for regulatory residences for everyone. If the rich ones want to go there, let them go. They will have to live according to it. But this aims to provide safety, security, and a good standard of care and living for all our seniors.

This has been a long time coming, friends. This didn't originate yesterday. The past two or three ministers responsible for seniors have been dwelling on this. Some 800 people have been heard on this. I was not part of the consultation, but I know that extensive consultation has been had on this particular piece of legislation. And I would hope that not only do we approve the bill as it has been presented, but that we are going to make it even better as we move it along.

On behalf of the minister, I hope that the House will move this forward today.

1710

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I had the opportunity to listen intently to the member from Welland speaking to this bill. I have to agree with him as he started off with suggesting, as was just mentioned by the member from York West, that this may be a good start but there need to be a lot of changes made to the bill to make it work properly.

I think one of the biggest challenges we see here as we move forward to regulate retirement homes as we regulate nursing homes is that we can't overlook the fact that government controls and funds the nursing homes, and the majority of the retirement homes are not institutions where people live institutionally. They're people's homes. They're not the same thing, so if you're going to put regulations in place, you have to put them in so the people who live there can make sure that the regulations and the things that they are guaranteed as they're going in are going to be available to them and that they can achieve them. I think that's what I got out of the presentation from the member from Welland, that it says, "Yes, we can set up all these rights that you have, but we're not going to provide you any way to have them enforced or to have them imposed." In fact, a lot of these people may not be in the position to even know that they have those rights, so I think that the government needs to do much more to facilitate the implementation of the standards that they want to set in these homes.

I think we have to remember that where we're starting from is that the standard is that they are like a single-family residence. These people live in their own residence; they just get some assistance from the landlord in their day-to-day living. We need to change that structure. If the government is going to regulate that, then they must have the ability to enforce it and it to oversee that these things are actually happening. I very much appreciate the comments and I advise the government that, as we will be supporting it, we will look forward to changes being made.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Welland has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Peter Kormos: If the mother of the member for Kitchener-Conestoga is watching, I simply want to say hello and I appreciate you watching.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Oh, she's in Florida, Peter.

Mr. Peter Kormos: If you're not watching, your daughter will give you a DVD of this afternoon and make sure you get it delivered wherever you happen to be on vacation.

Fact: We're going to have a huge growth in the number of retirees/seniors/elderly commencing next year because of the baby boomers turning 65. Fact: To my regret, there isn't the political will by this government to ensure that there's an adequate level of investment in public sector non-profit seniors' accommodations, seniors' residences. We believe that people have a right to choose to go into the private sector or not.

That choice won't be available for a whole lot of people, especially people of more modest means, because there won't be sufficient public capacity. *Prima facie*,

seniors' care is expensive—quality seniors' care is expensive—so it's about the huge growth in lower-priced seniors' care where the margin of profit becomes narrower and narrower and where the motivation to cut, cut, cut becomes stronger and stronger. Those are the people who are going to be most at risk.

This government doesn't regulate anything with this legislation. How do you regulate? You know how to regulate. You regulate by having a ministry responsible for the supervision of this industry, by having trained inspectors as law enforcement officers visiting these institutions on a regular basis, inspecting them and ensuring that there's compliance with strong standards. That isn't what this bill provides for. This is self-regulation. I repeat again: Remember TSSA and its embarrassing legacy, its pathetic and deadly legacy. One death in a propane explosion; there will be many more with this model of regulation of the seniors' sector.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise. First let me say that I have a great deal of regard for Minister Phillips. I have a great deal of regard for, I think, the impetus behind this bill, which is to do something. It's to do something that needs to be done, and that's to regulate an unregulated industry. But you know where I'm going to go, which is the same place the member from Welland went, which is that this is not the way to do it. Although we will be supporting the bill, because at least it gives us a framework in which to move forward, we hope to move forward in committee by listening to the people who weren't listened to, quite frankly, to get us to this point, people like the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. Let me read what they have said. First of all, about the consultation process, they wrote:

"I am writing to you to express our concerns in respect to the consultation on regulating the retirement home industry that has been conducted by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. Although we have long encouraged greater regulation of retirement homes, we do not believe that the present consultation and any proposal coming from this consultation will provide appropriate regulation of this industry or appropriate protections for the tenants who live in this type of accommodation."

They go on to say, "Originally we assumed that the consultation would be in respect to retirement homes in a continuum, but after attending a consultation, it would appear that the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and the retirement industry want to promote a particular understanding of 'aging in place,' which we take to mean that retirement homes could offer the same level of care services as long-term-care homes as long as the tenants were willing to pay privately for that care. If that is the case"—and I emphasize this because they wrote it in bold—"that would mean, in our opinion, that the government intends to promote what is, in effect, two-tier medicine." That's what the advocacy centre said.

Also, people who have not had responses to their concerns include the fire chiefs of Ontario, waiting for a

response from the ministry; seniors' organizations of a variety of sorts waiting for a response; SEIU, ONA, CUPE, OPSEU waiting for a response; Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, also waiting for a response. Clearly, whatever consultation went into where we're at right now in this bill was not extensive enough to include the very groups whose major mandate is actually providing this kind of care. They need to be listened to. They need to be listened to in committee and listened to extensively, and their recommendations need to be brought forward. I would assert that their recommendations fall under a number of generalized themes.

Before I talk about those themes, I want to tell you some stories, because, my goodness, it's 5:15 and we're tired. These are real stories that I've experienced from real seniors in my real care and others. I want to say, quite frankly: real kudos to ministry staff, and by that I mean pastors in ministry, in congregations, in faith communities, who often are among the only people—the only people—who walk into retirement homes and long-term-care homes on a regular basis, get to know the people in there, provide services for them—often mandated services—speak to them, visit them. Most people in retirement homes and long-term-care homes don't get visitors. That alone is a safety factor. If you speak to the pastors in your community, if you speak to the ministers and the priests who perform services in long-term-care homes and retirement homes, they will give you an earful about what they've seen, what they've witnessed and what's needed. In fact, there's another group that could be consulted and would be saying somewhat of the same things I'm going to say.

Let me tell you about Mary. Mary was a wonderful woman, a mother of five children, grandmother to 20 children, active in her church, active in her community, worked hard all her life. Her husband died, as so often happens, because remember, when we're talking about long-term-care homes and retirement homes, we're talking about a population that's mainly made up of frail women. So here's Mary. Mary was one of the lucky ones. Mary owned a house, and she owned a house in the High Park area, so the house was actually quite valuable—bought it when it wasn't, and it increased in value. Because she had her house, she was able to afford—not to pay the interest, but by liquidating the principal of her house, which means, of course, that money didn't go to her kids or her grandchildren; it went into her care—to pay for one of the best private, for-profit retirement homes. It's a wonderful home. It's in my riding. I used to do services there. Wonderful care, wonderful food, wonderful facilities—big price tag. I think the last time I checked, \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month is what is charged to seniors.

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Here was Mary's problem. Mary's problem, if you can call it that, is that she lived too long. She outlived the equity in her home. She moved, first of all, into a one-bedroom suite that was even pricier, and as her faculties

failed and she needed greater care, the price tag went up, needless to say. It didn't take too many years before the principal was gone of that primary residence.

Again, this is a strong woman, a smart woman—never any question that this woman didn't have all of her faculties. No issues there.

But what happened when she ran out of money, when she'd spent all the money in her home? She had to be moved to, again, another home that wasn't so good, that cost a lot less, where she was housed in a semi-private room with a person with schizophrenia. And guess what happened to Mary? Within six months, she was beginning to lose her faculties. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you, if that was your living situation? All night long she listened to the screaming and the yelling of the woman in the bed next to her. Maybe she got some care; maybe she didn't. Hard-working nurses and staff, but overworked, underpaid, couldn't get to her all the time in time—which is often the story you will hear if you go into places like Mary was in, retirement homes morphing into long-term-care homes, which is what we're talking about—and she passed away. The question is, would she have lived a little longer if she had lived in some degree of dignity? I and her family say, "Yes." It's sad.

Now think about the tsunami of boomers that we're faced with, the tsunami of Marys—and they're the lucky ones, again; they're the ones with some kind of equity that they can spend. What about the ones that go straight to the second-tier for-profit retirement home, that don't pass go, that don't get to stay in the good care, with the good food, with the good service, the good facilities? No, they go right into the room with the woman with dementia in the next bed yelling all night. What about them? And what about if those folks were your relatives or, in fact, maybe even you one day? That's what we're talking about here.

Let me tell you about Bob. Bob: great guy. I was down in Florida. I took a taxi to the airport with my daughter; we were just on holiday there. The guy behind the wheel looked awfully old to be driving a cab; made us feel a little unsafe. I started chatting to him about conditions down there; horrible conditions down there, as we all know, because of the recession. We asked him, "Bob, how old are you?" "He said, "82." I said, "Bob, what are you doing driving a cab at 82? You should be lying on the beach out there, walking down the boardwalk, enjoying yourself." Bob said, "I used to be a small business owner. Because of the recession, I lost the business. I didn't have any savings, and every retirement home around here charges. There aren't any beds for people like me. If I don't work, I don't eat."

We could go off on a tangent about pension plans—not such a tangent; it's very apropos to this conversation—but is that what we want for our parents? Is that what we want for ourselves—and I've joked in here before: the Freedom 95 plan? Is that what we want? No.

So this is the bill, our last little glimmer of hope here in this House to actually step in and do something for the folk in these homes. We're not talking about the first

home Mary was in; we're talking about the second home she found herself in. We're talking about the homes that most people in Ontario—think about it—might find themselves in. That's a really frightening thought. That's a frightening thought, because who has \$5,000 or \$6,000, \$7,000 or \$8,000 a month to spend on their accommodation when they're aging? Who has that kind of money?

Here are the problems, and I hope, I sincerely hope that at committee these problems are addressed. I live in hope. Mr. Phillips knows that about me: I live in hope. We live in hope that the right people, all those people haven't been heard yet in consultations—I listed them—all of those people who have not only a vested interest but a vested concern for seniors—that's their life work, seniors—should be heard.

Here's what they'll tell you, and I can tell you what they'll tell you. They'll tell you, one, that regulatory bodies, as you've heard from the member from Welland, need to be the voices of the consumer, not the voices of the industry that services the consumer. That's number one. And they need to be overseen. As the member from Welland said, you need a ministry to stand up, take responsibility, hire the necessary inspectors to go in and make the inspections, and then follow through on what they find. If you let the industry regulate itself, in what possible way is that any different from what we already have? That's what we have already: a self-regulating industry with the occasional residents' council. They all have their charter of the rights of residents up on the wall. Walk into them and find one that doesn't already. We not only have the example of TSSA, as the member from Welland pointed out; we've got Tarion. There's a great self-regulatory body. Talk to owners of new condos and new homes about how well that industry-based oversight committee works, and they'll tell you that it doesn't at all.

Who should be on as consumer advocates? Well, a whole list of people. You've got the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. There's an advocacy centre. There are a number of advocates for the elderly. Why shouldn't they be on the regulatory body? You've got CARP. Why shouldn't CARP be on the regulatory body? These people, whose very mandate it is to protect our seniors, should be on that body.

Then you've got the second concern, which ACE already outlined and that I hope isn't true—this is akin to a conspiracy theory. Let's hope it's not true, but members in this House have already pointed to it; that is, perhaps this bill is just kind of a smokescreen, a cover for the morphing into private, for-profit care for seniors in long-term care. Goodness knows, long-term care needs some work too, and we know that.

We on this side of the floor have long been asking for 3.5 hours per patient per day. They don't get it. I know you hear from your long-term-care homes. You hear from their staff. You hear how overworked their staff are, how they just can't make the dollars that they get stretch, how if Mrs. Jones down the hall is screaming and having a heart attack or a stroke and you're with Mr. Smith

down here, you can't be in two places at once, and she's not going to get the care or he's not going to get the care. This is the kind of choice they make daily. What a horrible position to put human beings in.

Long-term care isn't funded well enough as it is and doesn't have enough beds, as the member from Kitchener-Waterloo pointed out, and now, instead of addressing that, we're going to allow the private sector to come in and fill the void. I truly hope that that's not what's behind this bill; that it's not about the privatization of long-term care.

But here's a nagging doubt when I say that: We all know that when you move into a retirement home, you don't get younger; you get older. You don't get stronger; you get more frail. So what happens to the person who moves into the retirement home who starts to lose their faculties and starts to lose their physical health? Well, we have hideous examples that the advocacy centre has told us about where if they are shipped off to a hospital, they're not allowed back into their home because, "Oh, no, we don't provide long-term care." They're just evicted without even the rights of a tenant under the landlord and tenant legislation. There is a hideous example of something that has actually happened; it happens all the time.

Or does the retirement home then have a next tier of care, which, quite frankly, we know many of them already do? It's much more expensive, of course, much less regulated and really is for-profit long-term care. It's a health provision; it's not a retirement home. They're already doing that. We know that.

This bill doesn't address that, and in fact it raises all sorts of concerns that exactly that kind of service will not only increase, but in a sense, in regulating the retirement part of it, we're giving them some kind of ethical licence, if you will, to just continue to expand. That's scary. That's really scary. I hope that is not going to happen, but again, we need to hear from all these advocacy groups to make sure it doesn't. It has to be in the body of the bill.

I would really advise that every member here—I hope they already do; I know that some do—makes regular visits to retirement homes and long-term-care homes in their ridings and listens to those folk. I remember delivering stacks of petitions to this government from just those workers in those homes. I don't want to have to be bringing wheelbarrows full of petitions from them because of the now two-tier health care system, the privatization by stealth, that this bill might assist.

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Oh, Cheri, you're fearmongering.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's already happening. The Minister of Transportation says I'm fearmongering. I'm sorry. I can show you instances where it's already happening, that private, for-profit retirement homes are offering long-term care. They're offering it for a fee. The question is, is it good? Is it bad? We don't know. If you pay enough, presumably it's good enough. Right? But if you don't pay enough—and the member from Welland

was very right to point this out. If we're talking about that second tier of for-profit homes that are going to be, in a sense, the Walmart of retirement homes, they're going to sell for cheap and for less to those who can't afford it and are going to do that by what? Cutting corners in food quality, in care, in facilities, in the ability to run down the hall and look after Mrs. Jones. If they get into the long-term-care business, we're looking at a major potential catastrophe.

Quite frankly, with three minutes left, I haven't even talked about the fact that we don't have sprinkler systems in this bill. That's a no-brainer. Everyone's asking for that, sprinkler systems. Thirty-six seniors have already lost their lives in this province because of the lack of sprinkler systems in retirement homes, long-term-care homes. My goodness, can't that be in here? That's not asking for a lot. That's asking for a minimum level of care, but maybe in the Walmartization of the retirement business even that's too much, because that may be the profit margin. Who knows? We need to know: That's the answer. We need to know. We need to give some flesh to the skeleton of this bill, and the flesh that we need to give to the skeleton of this bill is some teeth—teeth and flesh—that will make it into something that actually might some day protect someone. That's all we're asking for in the New Democratic Party. That's all we're asking for.

I would highly advise those at home who have seniors that they are trying to find care for, and those who are perhaps seniors themselves who are moving into homes, to really write and call your MPP. Demand some assistance; demand some protection for our most vulnerable. These are the people who raised us. These are the people we'll become. This bill doesn't do it. As written, it doesn't do it. As written, this bill is not going to save one life. It doesn't even have sprinkler systems in it. It's not going to save one life. It's business as usual with a nice, sounds-good covering.

They already have residents' councils. They already have charters of rights. They are already self-regulating, some of the better homes. We want more. We're not asking for a lot more. We're not even asking, really, for what we think we should have, which is that the ministry step in and do what the ministry is called to do; that is, to protect our seniors by regulation directly from here, with inspectors who are sent out, just like in the Ministry of Labour, to look at the sites where these people live, check on what's going on there and report back. We're not even asking for that. We're asking that those advocacy groups that work with seniors every day be listened to and that their proposals be taken seriously at committee. That's all. That's enough, because if you do just that, which hasn't been done yet, clearly, from their writing, then we might have something that we all could be proud of and we might actually have something that might save someone's life. That's what we're talking about.

I say these words in honour of the Marys and the Bobs and in honour of the work that all of those various

advocacy groups do with seniors every single hour, every single day. Let's listen to it. Let's listen to them.

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

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's a pleasure to speak in favour of Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act. We all know that our seniors' population is expected to grow to nearly 4.1 million over the next 20 years. That's why, as legislators, I feel it's important that we put more of our efforts and resources into making sure that our seniors get the respect for when they retire and that the retirement homes that they do end up living in are safe and are protected.

It's for this reason that our government is proposing legislative protections for seniors living in retirement homes. We're taking the right steps to set standards, to license and inspect all retirement homes and to make sure that seniors are receiving the quality services that they expect and most definitely deserve.

How did we do this? We held consultations, where over 800 people participated, on the standards of care needed in retirement homes. The input came from the seniors themselves, their families and from the retirement home industry. We did this, as I said before, to protect seniors from any type of abuse by their caregivers, to give them the options and to have them know what the cost is for the care that they will be receiving.

This bill will, obviously, be creating a regulatory authority with the power to license homes, conduct inspections and investigations and enforcement.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member for Parkdale–High Park never fails to hit it right on the bull's eye. I appreciate her contribution to this debate.

It's difficult when you have a majority government that's hell-bent on passing a piece of legislation and isn't prepared to listen to the legitimate concerns, the bona fide concerns, of people who have serious interest in the impact that this is going to have on our seniors. Because once it's done, it's for a long, long time. It's not going to be readdressed any time soon. Once this bill passes, should it pass in this form or in any other form, it's not going to be readdressed. It's not going to be revived for reconsideration. It's going to be a long, long time before that happens.

As Ms. DiNovo capably pointed out, we already have industry self-regulation. When you talk about a regulatory regime protecting public interest, public safety, public welfare, it's in the public interest that that regulatory regime must be enforced. You can only do that when it's the state that has that regulatory power and the enforcement power, and this bill relinquishes that to the very industry that will be committing the sins.

So New Democrats will be insisting that this bill go to committee. New Democrats will be scrutinizing this bill with vigorous rigourism at committee. And, yes, we expect that the public will demonstrate a similar interest in this bill, both seniors and their children and grandchildren, because this isn't just a seniors' issue; it's an Ontarians' issue. It's a people's issue because, if we're

not seniors now, we're going to be, should we be blessed with living that long.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I think we're beginning to lose track of something here that's very important. In some 700 retirement homes across Ontario live 40,000 seniors. When I was the parliamentary assistant to the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, I actually got to attend some of those early hearings, and I listened to people ask for exactly what this bill delivers. I think it's time to recognize now that we need to get on with it. We need to get those licences issued to homes that meet the criteria and standards as set out in this legislation and regulations. We need to create that public registry. We need to begin those regular inspections.

I'm shocked and disappointed that my colleagues over in the NDP would propose to take a good bill and layer it with all manner of extra additions that pertain to the building code that have nothing to do with what this bill is there to do, which is to provide that regulatory environment, to provide exactly the things that the people who spent their days carefully deliberating in those hearings specifically asked for. They weren't asking for revisions to the building code. What they were asking for, and what this bill does deliver, is a regulatory environment that enables the good actors to know that their business is running well, and it also enables this province to clean up the bad actors. That's important to some of those 40,000 seniors who live in those 700 retirement homes in Ontario.

As some of the members have said, there are a lot of baby boomers in here. For every one senior out there, when we baby boomers become seniors, there's going to be two. For every person age 80 and above out there, when we baby boomers become octogenarians, there will be three.

This is an important piece of legislation. I think we should get on with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the member from Parkdale–High Park has two minutes for her response.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: In response to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, I just want to point out that these are the groups that haven't been heard and want to be heard: Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, fire chiefs of Ontario, seniors' organizations, SEIU, ONA, CUPE, OPSEU, Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Service for Seniors and a number of others. We're not talking about

just anybody; we're talking about groups that are intimately, every day involved with seniors. They want input into this bill. They don't feel they've been heard well enough yet. That's all we're talking about.

I'm also talking about the coroner's report—and I didn't have a chance to speak to it—that was released in September 2009. In that chief coroner's report, because of the death of an elderly woman in a retirement home, it says very specifically that, "Programs in private care or retirement homes in the province of Ontario providing care to frail elderly residents awaiting placement in a licensed long-term-care home should be held to the same standards for care and services as a licensed long-term-care home." He goes on to say they should be "subject to regulations, oversight, and regular inspection by a public sector agency."

Coroners and groups that work with seniors—come on, this is not just an NDP thing. This is from the very stakeholders that want this legislation, need it and want to have input into it. All we're asking in the New Democratic Party is that they get that input, that they get that time, that they get the committee hearings and that they are able, for this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance, to make this bill the strong bill it could be. We're trying to make it better. That's what we're trying to do.

Thank you for your input. Certainly, we will be watching the progress of this bill. We're excited to see how strong it could be, how protective it could be and how well this ministry could listen to the advocates for seniors in this province.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Wynne moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1743.

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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