



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 26 April 2010

Lundi 26 avril 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 April 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 avril 2010

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait extrêmement plaisir de vous présenter, dans la galerie ce matin, M. Stewart Kiff et M. Benoit Mercier. Benoit est le président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have with me today individuals from one of the oldest football clubs of Europe. Sporting Clube de Portugal was founded on July 1, 1906. With us today is Augusto Pires, president of Sporting Clube Português of Toronto; José Eduardo Bettencourt, president of the directive of Sporting Clube de Portugal; Rogério Brito, vice-president of Conselho Directivo, Sporting Clube de Portugal; and, of course, Coach Mário Lino, one of the greatest ex-soccer players of Europe. He won a number of awards, and he is here with us.

Remarks in Portuguese.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm delighted to introduce some friends and family members of our page from my riding, Andrea Strathdee of St. Mary's. We have today in the member's gallery their friends Mike Payne, John Bullen, Zoltan and Andrea Horcsok, as well as Andrea's grandmother Diane Furtney, and then her family: her mom, Gloria; her brother Billy; her sister Rachel; and her dad, Al, who was a page here just a few years ago.

Mr. Dave Levac: Today I would like to introduce, in both the east and west galleries, the National Trade Contractors Coalition of Canada: the NTCCC. They are here today to speak to the members of the Legislature during their lobby day. I would like to remind members that the cocktail reception will be hosted between 4 o'clock and 7 o'clock in the legislative dining room.

They're led by the administrative assistant, Sonia Cool, and the executive director, the former member from Brant from this House, Mr. Ron Johnson. We welcome them here today. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have the pleasure to introduce page Aliyana Hirji's family, who are visiting Queen's Park this morning: Mrs. Tazin Hirji, her mother; Mr. Naushad Hirji, her father; Mrs. Habiba Hirji, her grandmother; Mrs. Gulzar Murji, her grandmother; Jenna Hirji,

her sister; and Adam Hirji, her brother. Please join me in welcoming page Aliyana Hirji's parents and family.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today I'm pleased to introduce and welcome ONA nurses from Peterborough hospital: Dale Dixon, Carleen Johnson, Louise Flaherty, Jill Staples, Allyson Langworth, Julie Sokolowski and Markus Knerr, as well as Carolyn Edgar, RN from North York General; Faye Loverock, RN from Toronto East General; Andy Summers, RN and ONA VP for region 3; and Lawrence Walter, government relations officer for ONA.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I'd like to introduce the family of page Mitchell Erickson from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex: his parents, Brad and Heather Erickson; his brother and sister, Brock and Jill; and his grandparents, Marie and Wayne Erickson.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Today I'm pleased to introduce Rick Fiedoric; his wife, Michelle Chatten Fiedoric; and her sister Erin Chatten, as well as a Rotary exchange student from Germany, Marieke Loening, who are here in the east gallery, enjoying the day here at Queen's Park.

Hon. John Wilkinson: A last-minute addition: Also joining page Andrea Strathdee is their friend Alexa Horcsok. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Notwithstanding he was already introduced, I do want to take this opportunity to welcome Ron Johnson, the former member from Brantford from the 36th Parliament, back to Queen's Park today. Welcome back, Ron.

I take this opportunity to welcome my brother Joe Peters to the Speaker's gallery today. Perhaps he could grow a moustache and trade places with me sometime.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CURRICULUM

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Acting Premier concerning Dalton McGuinty's controversial changes to the sex ed curriculum, which would start sex ed classes as early as with six-year-olds—a policy, by the way, soundly rejected by the vast majority of moms and dads across the province of Ontario. I ask the Acting Premier: Why did Dalton McGuinty simply sit in his seat last Wednesday after the Minister of Education said, "We have consulted with parents" about teaching these sex courses at the age of six years old, when in fact the Premier knew that you had not?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: In fact, we have consulted quite extensively on this document. Those consultations have been under way since 2007. What we have heard, however, from the people of Ontario, particularly parents, is that we need to do a better job; that we need to do more consultation. That is what the Premier committed to do last week. He said, “We’ve listened and, as a result of that, we are going to act,” and I can assure the people of Ontario that we will most definitely be bringing forward a plan that will engage more parents.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Sadly, when the minister talks about consulting, she is talking about so-called experts and elite insiders. We stand with moms and dads across the province of Ontario.

We understand that Dalton McGuinty believes that he knows best what is best for our kids; we believe parents do. One day they say they consult and the next day they say the opposite. The Premier in fact said he consulted for two years and then on Thursday, in a spectacular flip-flop, said, “Oh, we’ve listened to parents the last 24 to 48 hours and now we’ve changed our minds.” And Minister Papatello was hung out to dry when she stood here in the Legislature and said, “We prided ourselves on including parents in every step.” That pride was short-lived.

Minister, what changed for Dalton McGuinty to flip-flop in—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: There’s no question that we did consult broadly. What the people of Ontario told us was that they needed more consultation, and that they wanted more parents involved with this. So what the people—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We are less than three minutes into question period and I’m finding it very difficult to hear the minister’s response.

Minister.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Part of the consultation that we had under way: We consulted 700 students. We received feedback from 2,400 individuals who provided us with their ideas on this curriculum. I can say that that is far more than we typically get when we review curriculum documents. It was put on the website, and as a result of that, the people of Ontario told us what they thought about that. As a consequence of that, the Premier of Ontario has said that we need to do a better job and that we need to engage parents in a better way. We are committed to doing that.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: It is hard to imagine who they consulted with, because they came out with a policy that was so out of the mainstream public opinion that it was soundly rejected by moms and dads across the province of Ontario. We stand with moms and dads in the province as making the best decisions for their kids.

We know we have a Premier who obsesses about micromanaging our homes from what we can put on our

lawns to what snacks the kids can bring to school, and now he actually wanted to begin sex education classes with six-year-olds who are just learning to tie their shoes. We rejected that approach. Ontario families rejected that approach.

The Ontario Liberals said that anybody who took issue with this was “living in the Dark Ages.” Does that mean to say that you believe the vast majority of moms and dads are living in the Dark Ages? Will you stand in your place and apologize to parents across the province for suggesting that those who oppose these plans are somehow living in the Dark Ages?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I can say is that I can thank the parents of Ontario for providing us with their input, and we believe that going forward we will work with them to build the very best physical and health education curriculum that we can.

I think that it’s also important to remind the people of Ontario that we have the kind of subject that the members are referring to in our curriculum already. I was a parent and a school board trustee in a school board that implemented the Fully Alive program. Fully Alive, in a very important and sensitive way, delivers this information to students.

We have gone through an exercise where we have reviewed how we deliver the program. What the parents in Ontario have told us is that we need to do a better job, and so we have committed to them that we will do that.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the same minister: Minister, I’d say with all due respect, as a trustee, as a public official and as the Minister of Education, you should stand in your place and apologize to Ontario parents who your party said lived in the Dark Ages when they rejected your controversial change of sex ed classes beginning at a time when kids are learning to tie their shoes, at a time that kids are learning the alphabet.

But this isn’t the first time that we’ve seen Dalton McGuinty take this attitude that Dalton knows best when it comes to how to teach our kids: Dalton McGuinty’s ill-conceived plan resembles the approach he took in the sham consultations with parents when it came to full-day kindergarten.

I ask the minister: Why did you have Charles Pascal consult with parents over Early Years education to make recommendations that you went and put on the shelf and completely ignored?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Dr. Pascal has played a very key role in providing us support and direction around how we move forward with our full-day learning initiative. I’m very excited to say that that is going to begin in almost 600 schools in September this year.

I meet with Dr. Pascal regularly. I can say to the people of Ontario that he is very supportive of the plan that we have in place, very excited by it, and he continues to provide us with advice in terms of what we need to do,

how we need to co-operate with our partners in education so that it can be the most successful educational experience for our earliest learners in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: We know that the nanny Premier, Dalton McGuinty, is taking a very paternalistic approach when it comes to our children's education. The minister knows full well that parents told Dr. Pascal they preferred their children spending only half days with kindergarten teachers, other times with ECEs. An overwhelming majority told the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education the exact same thing. But Premier McGuinty tossed aside Dr. Pascal's recommendations and chose the most expensive option of putting kindergarten teachers in the class the entire day.

I ask the minister again: What makes Premier McGuinty so smart? Why is he so much better at deciding what's best for our kids than moms and dads in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Our government has a record of consulting and working co-operatively with our partners in education and, as a result of that, we have delivered a plan that will support the earliest learners in our school system. We've certainly relied on Dr. Pascal and on educational leaders from around the world to provide us with support.

I think it's important that the members on the other side of the House appreciate that we have jurisdictions from around the world looking at our early learning initiative to understand how we are doing it. They're very complimentary. Just this morning, I met with global education learning leaders. They're very interested in what we are doing and want to understand the work that has gone into it. They are also very interested to see when it rolls out this fall—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: On page 14 of Pascal's report, Minister, you know that parents told him they wanted the option of sending their kids to kindergarten for either a half day or a full day, but once again the nanny Premier knows best. Now, we're seeing school boards sending out letters to parents telling them that if they don't want the half-day kindergarten, they can transfer their kids.

Let me put this straight: If a mom or a dad wants to have their kid there half a day and half a day somewhere else or in informal care, you're telling them, "too bad," that Dalton McGuinty knows best, that if you don't like it, take your kid out of school and send him or her somewhere else.

We reject that approach because we know that parents make the best decisions for their kids. I'll ask you the same question my deputy leader asked on Thursday: Why are you so bound and determined to take parents out of these crucial decisions for the well-being of their sons and daughters?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, nothing could be further from the truth. Parents play a very integral role in determining what program they want for their child.

When they go to register, if their school is providing full-day learning for their children, they can decide if they want to enrol them. If they do, they can decide if they want to have their child in the class for the full day or not. That has always been their choice.

We are offering a full-day program. We know that you are opposed to the full-day learning initiative. We know you're opposed to it because it's costing money. We know you don't understand why it is so important to invest in our earliest learners. We are committed to doing everything we can to enable the success of our students. We are moving forward with this. We have consulted with parents. The response—

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

1050

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. According to a report by Ontario nurses, 2,045 nursing positions have been cut across the province over the past year. Does the Acting Premier believe that Ontario can lose more than 2,000 nurses without a devastating impact on front-line health care in this province?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me begin by reiterating our commitment to nurses. We know that nurses are in fact the backbone of our health care system. That's why we have almost 10,000 more nurses working today than when we took office in 2003. By increasing the number of nurses who are working in our system, we're improving patient care and we're strengthening the entire health care system.

We've done other things for nurses, too. We are the first province to have a nursing graduate guarantee, so that when nurses actually complete their formal education they're guaranteed a full-time job as they enter the labour force. More than 8,000 nursing graduates have that.

Our commitment to nurses remains. There are changes in health care that will affect all of us, but nurses will remain the backbone.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Over the past year, Ontario hospitals cut more than four million hours of nursing care—four million hours. That means patients and their families are seeing their local cancer screening programs disappear; they're seeing less support for the elderly, less support for people with mental health issues. How can the minister still claim that these cuts aren't impacting front-line care with statistics like that?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would recommend that the member opposite actually check some of those statistics. What we are doing is moving services wherever possible from hospitals to the community. That's actually a way to improve health care.

We have a serious challenge in our health care system that actually goes to the core of our health care system.

Unless we make the kind of changes that improve patient care but take pressure off the costs, we will not have our precious universal, single-payer health care system when the time comes for our children and their children to access health care.

These are difficult times in health care, but we are committed to continuing to improve, by metrics that matter to patients, the quality of health care in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nurses from Peterborough are in the gallery today. Last week, they were told that their community could get by with 121 fewer nurses. Those cuts mean a quarter of a million hours of lost support for Peterborough families. Is the minister saying that these nurses weren't providing front-line care, or will she admit that the families in Peterborough are losing health services that they rely on?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The situation in Peterborough is one that has been pretty serious. That's why a peer review team was sent there, led by Dan Carriere, the CEO of Southlake Regional hospital. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their work. They very clearly indicated, through 60 recommendations, that this is not a revenue issue at the Peterborough Regional hospital. The issue is that there are some serious management and governance concerns. The LHIN has asked the hospital to come back with a hospital improvement plan by June 30 of this year, which must include a balanced budget by 2012. The Peterborough Regional hospital has been running a deficit for the last 13 years. Clearly, that is not the best use of our taxpayers' dollars.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nurses are being thanked with pink slips in this province. That's what nurses are being thanked with.

My next question is back to the Acting Premier. It's not just Peterborough families that are losing important front-line health services. Nurses have been axed and services have been gutted across the entire province. At Toronto East General, more than 125 nursing positions have been cut, affecting services for children, for people with high, complex-care needs and mental health patients. In Windsor, cuts are being made to care that cancer patients receive, to those who need surgery and to high-needs elderly patients.

Will the Acting Premier be making a YouTube video or will the Premier perhaps be making a YouTube video publicizing these cuts, or was this government hoping that nobody was going to notice?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the first question, nurses are at the core of our health care system. In fact, if you were to check Workopolis today, you would find almost 500 advertisements for nurses on Workopolis today. There is significant work out there. There is a real demand for nurses.

As we move toward creating a more sustainable health care system, we will continue to rely on the superb work that nurses are doing. Our commitment to nurses, I think, speaks for itself. We've got nurse-practitioner-led clinics across the province, and we're planning more. We've got more nurse practitioners; we've almost doubled the number of nurse practitioners in this province.

I wish the member opposite would actually understand the challenges in our health care system and know—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would agree that nurses are indeed the core of our health care system. Unfortunately, this minister is hollowing out that very core. The cuts are being felt in southern Ontario and in northern Ontario. In Thunder Bay, stroke victims and dialysis patients are losing the nurses that they rely on. In Sault Ste. Marie, families are seeing cuts to nurses in intensive care and surgical units.

Is the minister telling families in northern Ontario to expect less from their health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No. The Minister of Health is saying that people in the north can expect more from their health care system. Moving services from hospitals into the community actually results in better care for people. We know that too many people are going to hospitals and are staying at hospitals who don't need to be in hospitals. They would have better service, they would have better care if those services were moved into the community.

Dialysis is a perfect example: People who have to go a long distance and pay the parking at hospitals to receive dialysis three times a week would much rather have that dialysis in their community. As we strengthen our health care system, part of that strengthening will be more services outside of hospitals in the community.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Even the Minister of Health's hometown wasn't spared from cuts. At St. Joseph's hospital in London, there's less support for new moms and their babies and patients who need surgery. At London Health Sciences, families have seen cuts to the breast cancer screening and cancer programs. How can the minister justify these widespread cuts that will have a real, true impact on patient care in this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me share some of the jobs that are available on Workopolis today for nurses. The Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre has a job available. William Osler hospital is looking for nurse practitioners. Toronto East General is trying to hire nurses—Rouge Valley Health System, Hamilton Health Sciences, the Niagara Health System and Humber River Regional Hospital. These are just examples of the hundreds of jobs available for nurses in our health care system.

Change does mean that some jobs move to outside the hospital. That does happen. That does result in layoff no-

tices, but there are many, many jobs available for nurses, and there will continue to be.

CURRICULUM

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Acting Premier. When the self-styled education Premier announced he was backing down on the sex education plans, he never explained why he did not announce the policy in the first place. He didn't say what made him think he could get away with consulting only so-called experts and not parents or even his own caucus, or why he made his education minister answer for his ill-fated policy when the matter was first raised in the House, or how he could humiliate his Acting Premier by not telling her he was scrapping the policy before she aggressively defended it.

What makes the Premier think he can get away with it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have this opportunity to explain to the members of the opposition that when it comes to curriculum in the province of Ontario, we have a living document. Curriculum is regularly being reviewed.

I'll give you two other examples. We are reviewing curriculum for financial literacy. We review curriculum to infuse the most recent up-to-date environmental information into our curriculum so that what is presented to our students in the classroom is current and relevant for the world that they are growing up in.

1100

The document with respect to the physical and health education curriculum was posted online. There was a significant process. I think it's fair to say that when we talk about consultations, we did more consultation with that particular curriculum document—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: There certainly wasn't enough consultation. Premier McGuinty's sex education flip-flop is not the first time he thought he could get away with avoiding public consultation and then dumping on his ministers. He didn't consult Ontario families or his caucus on the HST, wind farms, pharmacy cuts and cancelling of public review of the LHINs. He made the member for Don Valley East answer for eHealth and put Michael Bryant out to peddle sharia law before hanging his former ministers out to dry when he met with resistance. He routinely dodges questions to him by passing them off. Is that why morale over there is so low?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm just going to go to the next question. That supplementary had nothing to do with the initial question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order on both sides.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

JARDIN D'ENFANTS À TEMPS PLEIN

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. We acknowledge that the French-language school boards have had successful full-day kindergarten programs for a long time. We recognize the uniqueness of the French-language education system. As you know, we proposed an amendment to Bill 242 so that the French-language school boards could maintain these programs. We requested full consultation with French boards in the francophone community over a number of years before any changes could be made. Why did your government, through your members in the committee, reject our amendment outright?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I want to say how very much we appreciate all of the input that we received at the committee on a very important piece of legislation, Bill 242.

The honourable member has identified part of the legislation where he's offered some improvement. We believe that going forward, with the French-language boards particularly and on this issue, we have been working collaboratively with them. We are committed to continuing to work with them to understand how we can move forward with our plan.

We know that there are challenges in the French-language system. We know that there is going to be a need to look for and do a better job of training French-language ECEs. We are committed to working with French boards so that ultimately, they will be able—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Je trouve ça un petit peu difficile d'être ici puis d'écouter la ministre qui me dit qu'elle travaille avec le conseil quand une démonstration d'unanimité sans précédent de tous les organismes œuvrant en éducation en langue française a exigé la flexibilité qui avait été préconisée par le membre du NPD. Les signataires de cette lettre d'amendement au projet de loi 242 affirment haut et fort que le projet de loi 242, tel qu'il est présenté, mettra le développement de l'éducation de langue française en Ontario en péril et menace la viabilité de nos communautés francophones. Votre gouvernement vient de provoquer une bataille linguistique qu'on aurait pu éviter et qu'on pourrait encore éviter.

Est-ce que votre gouvernement va accorder la flexibilité réclamée par les organismes en éducation de langue française en Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Our commitment is to provide an integrated full-day learning experience for our earliest learners, and we are committed to doing that in both English and in French. We know that French-language boards have ordered their kindergarten programs differently, and they have been doing an excellent job. We are committed to continuing to work with them so that we ultimately have the integrated full-day learning program in both the English-language and French-language schools.

We know that there are some challenges in getting there, particularly with our French-language boards. I've made it very clear: We want to work with them. We want to do whatever we can to enable them so that they will be able to offer the same kind of programming for French language students. We are highly sensitive to the significance of—

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

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and it's about diamonds and the diamond industry.

There's been a lot of talk about things happening in the mining industry in Ontario, but not nearly enough talk about the good things that are happening in the mining industry. Mining in this province provides thousands of people with meaningful employment and helps showcase to the world the natural wonders of Ontario.

Recently in the news, we've heard about the production of one very precious natural element found in Ontario, and that is diamonds. Since 2008, De Beers Canada has been extracting diamonds from their Victor diamond mine near James Bay.

Minister, the people of Ontario want to hear about the good things happening. Can you tell us the most recent developments in Ontario in the diamond industry?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I certainly thank the honourable member for the question, and I'm delighted to speak about the good things happening in the diamond industry in Ontario. Since the establishment of the Victor diamond mine near Attawapiskat First Nation, geologists and prospectors have been seeking out additional sites in the area to determine if there's any potential for more diamond mines. Of course, the first diamonds extracted from the ground here in Ontario were presented last year to the House in our new mace and will forever remain a part of our everyday lives here at Queen's Park.

Tonight, I have the pleasure of attending the unveiling of the first diamonds to be 100% mined, processed, cut, shaped and polished here in the province of Ontario. They are going on display here tonight, right in Toronto, before they're showcased to the world on an international tour next week. These are tremendous diamonds of extremely great value, and they each come with their own certificate showing just where they came from: the great province of Ontario.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you, Minister. This is great news. Yet there tends to be fear among people that when something good happens, we don't always see the benefits that come from the investment in this industry. With such a wonderful natural resource in the province, it would be a shame if the people of Ontario were not seeing the returns from the diamond business. The Northwest Territories, Canada's other diamond jurisdiction, has taken steps to ensure that they see more than just trucks driving away with their assets in tow.

Minister, I know that Ontario has been recognized as the third-largest producer of gem diamonds in the world. Could you please tell the House what benefits the diamond industry has provided to the province of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The diamond sector has provided many benefits to Ontario. We are now one of the few jurisdictions in the world that features all elements of the diamond industry, from taking them out of the ground to basically offering them for sale at the retail level.

The De Beers Victor mine was a \$1-billion project that has created over 400 well-paying jobs for the people of northern Ontario. Along with these jobs came training for the local residents of Attawapiskat in various trades, all funded by De Beers. More good news: 40% of the employees at the Victor mine are from the area's First Nation population. That's good news. Also, the factory that cuts and polishes the diamonds in Sudbury employs an additional 30 people, which is expected to grow to 50 once the company, Crossworks Manufacturing, has reached full production.

It's clear that the steps this government has taken to create value-added jobs in a home-grown diamond sector are showing real and very positive results, to the benefit of all the people of Ontario.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Acting Premier. In 66 days, Premier McGuinty will attack family budgets by making everyone pay 13% more for necessities like home heating, gas for their car and other things they use every day. More than a few of the Liberal caucus know that, just like with the sex ed curriculum, Dalton McGuinty rammed these changes through without consulting Ontario families or them. But the Premier's flip-flop on teaching sex education to six-year-olds sets a precedent for dealing with a bad policy dreamed up by elites and so-called experts.

Acting Premier, will you listen to Ontario families, who are already paying more for your health tax and energy tax and can't afford your greedy HST tax-grab too?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: First of all, we need to correct the record. I just heard the member, no matter how many times we've introduced this bill, saying that, somehow, there's going to be a 13% tax increase, which is patently untrue. As we all know—because we passed the bill, as has the federal government—for many things, more than four out of five things, there is absolutely no change in taxation.

1110

The member raises the question of energy, and he makes a point. Unfortunately, it's not a factual point. Here's the most important thing: We have worked with the federal government, whom you know so well, because we've decided that we need to reform our taxes and drag it out of the 20th century to get 21st-century jobs, some 591,000 more jobs as a result of \$47 billion

worth of more investment. On this side of the House, we are committed to more investment and more jobs, and we'd ask you to join the 21st century with the rest of us.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Dalton McGuinty's flip-flop on sex education came after he admitted he hadn't consulted parents. By the looks on the faces of the Liberal caucus over there, he probably didn't consult them either. He did the same thing with the HST, cutting families and caucus out of the process and ending up with bad policy.

In 66 days, you will know just how little Ontario families think of the McGuinty Liberals and their greedy tax grab. In the meantime, I'll let you in on a little secret that the Premier hasn't shared with his caucus: He can't name a single government that got re-elected after bringing in a harmonized sales tax.

Will the Premier prove he is really listening to parents—and even his own caucus—and scrap his greedy HST tax grab?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'd invite the member to talk to his federal colleague, Minister Tony Clement, who voted for the reforms that are coming into Ontario. If he's predicting that perhaps the Harper government is going to be defeated on that, I'll leave that up to him. He can have that chat with Tony.

Here's the most important thing. The most important thing is that on July 1 we are going to reform our taxes. What the good people of Ontario want to know is: If it's so bad, as the opposition has said, would they actually change it? Are they going to change it? No, I haven't heard that, because they know in their heart of hearts, as they used to say before we decided to bring it in, that it is the right thing to do.

The most important thing we tell people is that you need to file your taxes this year so that you get the benefits of all of the income tax cuts that are available for people. The fact that here in Ontario we have the lowest personal income tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income of any—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The minister's wrong-headed decision to delay Toronto's Transit City program will result in a short-term paper saving to the province of barely one one-thousandth of its budget, if that. And in the long run, delaying these transit lines will result in more costs to taxpayers because transit, like everything else, gets more expensive the longer you put it off. When will this government realize it has made a terrible mistake and restore funding for Toronto's desperately needed Transit City plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think I've answered this question a number of times, and the answer is that we are currently working right now with Metrolinx. Metrolinx is developing a plan to bring forward, to advise us on how

we might move forward. Our commitment is to move forward on all of the projects that have been outlined: the five projects.

In the meantime, it's important to note that projects like the Union-Pearson air-rail link are moving ahead. The money is being spent and the work is being done. The Sheppard project has begun. The Spadina subway extension is in the works. So there's money being spent, there's work being done, and Metrolinx is going to bring forward a plan on how we move forward on the other projects.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The city of Toronto would like to know when the \$4-billion cheque will be written. It's that simple.

Hundreds of Torontonians are writing to me to oppose the cuts you've made in the Transit City program. They say the minister's cuts will result in slow, overcrowded bus service and will only add to some of the world's worst commuter gridlock. They say the minister's cuts will mean more deaths due to smog, as Torontonians will continue to use polluting cars. They say the minister is harming Ontario's economy by eliminating thousands of high-wage Transit City-related jobs. When will this government admit that it made a serious mistake in delaying the lines and immediately restore the \$4 billion in transit funds it cut out of Transit City's budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The language that the member opposite uses is somewhat confusing, because she uses the language of "cuts" and then she acknowledges later in her question that we're really talking about a delay.

I know that there are people in the city, citizens who have spoken to me, who are disappointed that we had to make this decision, but the decision to slow down the cash flow and come up with a plan that would phase in these projects was made in the context of the reality that we are confronting a \$21-billion deficit. We're coming out of an economic downturn. We had to make responsible and prudent decisions on how to spend the tax dollars that are so hard-earned by the people in the province. So we made the decision.

The member opposite knows full well that there's a plan coming forward. She knows full well that we'll be presenting that when Metrolinx brings us that advice. She knows perfectly well—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, I've been out meeting with people in my constituency about our tax reforms. I have been explaining that even those who make little or no income or who haven't filed in recent years can qualify for a range of tax benefits if they do, including up to \$260 a year for each member of a family from the new Ontario sales tax credit; up to \$500 a year to help senior home-

owners pay their property taxes with the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant; and up to \$1,000 for families, including single parents, or up to \$300 for single people in the new Ontario sales tax transition benefit payments. Minister, can you inform the House about the importance of filing your taxes this year?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The member is absolutely correct that under our tax reforms there are a range of new credits, benefits and tax cuts that are now available to Ontarians. I've been attending tax clinics across the province and raising awareness about the special importance of filing your taxes this year, and I want to urge everyone, even those who may not have any income to report this year, to file their tax return.

Why is that important? The reason is simple: It's the only way you can get the money that is rightfully yours. If you're an individual making less than \$80,000 a year, you can receive up to \$300, tax-free, in the Ontario sales tax transition benefit payments. If you're a family with an annual income of \$160,000 or less, you can receive \$1,000 tax-free. And if you have low or modest income, the Ontario sales tax credit, the new one, offers up to \$260 a year—

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

Mr. Glen R. Murray: In a number of recent articles, the chartered accountants of Ontario have voiced their support for our tax changes, saying, "As a matter of principle, CAs are in favour of any change to tax policy that simplifies administration and compliance, while enhancing the competitiveness of business." Rod Barr, FCA, institute president and CEO, says, "The provincial government has taken a number of measures to help ease in the implementation of the HST for Ontarians and we think it's vitally important that people realize that taking advantage of transition payments and sales tax credits requires filing a tax return."

On top of introducing our tax credits, the tax rate on the first personal income tax bracket was reduced starting January 1, benefiting 93% of Ontario personal income tax payers. Minister, can you—

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the Ontario chartered accountants for their position. They agree with us that we should not have two governments tripping over themselves trying to tax the same transaction twice, when only once will do.

I think it's important as well to remind people why we are doing this. It's very simple: it's all about jobs—jobs in the 21st century for our good people, for our children and for our grandchildren. To have a compassionate, caring, just society, we need to have people back to work.

Because of this global recession, we are faced with a daunting challenge, but we're willing to make the difficult decisions required, working in partnership with the federal government, to ensure that we have a stronger Ontario and, therefore, a stronger Canada, an Ontario in Canada that has the ability to create jobs and wealth so

that we can have the schools and hospitals, the roads, the bridges, the environmental protections—all of the things that we all value and that we all believe we collectively need to cherish.

TAXATION

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, your government's HST will drastically affect the rental housing industry and the tenants who live in the 1.3 million units across this province. As you may know, about 60% of the rental housing costs currently not subject to PST will face your government's 13% HST. This means that the annual cost will go up by an average of \$400 per rental unit as a result of this HST and other inflationary costs. Your government's actions will prompt a deferral of repairs and maintenance for the rental units across this province. Did your government calculate the impact your HST will have on the repair budgets of rental stock in Ontario?

1120

Hon. James J. Bradley: In fact, the member would know, as the Minister of Revenue has told the House on many occasions, that that is precisely why we built into the tax package that is presented to the people of Ontario—strongly supported by the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, who suggested that we move in this direction—the tax credits that are provided to people. There was just a question in the House about filing income taxes for this year so that people are eligible for those particular tax credits—up to \$260 a year, for instance, in a tax credit for individuals. There are new property tax credits that are available to people to help them out.

We ensured that it could not be double-billed against taxpayers, tenants specifically—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: We are talking about the rental housing industry specifically, and a reduction of \$400 in repairs and maintenance represents a significant reduction in the average repair budget. Let me remind you that the capital needs of Ontario's rental stock are expected to accelerate in future years. Hundreds of thousands of units were built in the 1970s or earlier. You must agree that these old units require a lot of ongoing maintenance. Did you take into consideration that your HST will make it so difficult for rental housing providers to absorb these costs that they may walk away from renting units altogether?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I doubt that that is going to happen. I know that when you are in opposition you have the job of painting the worst-case scenario that you possibly can. I have to confess that when I sat on that side of the House, I always painted the worst-case scenario. That's a confession I make to you.

I don't think you'll see that happen. First of all, you'll find that those who own the buildings are required to meet the building code of the province of Ontario. The health units will come in to inspect if there are problems.

There are officials within the municipalities who can do inspections. They're going to be required to continue to maintain those buildings in an appropriate fashion. At the same time, they're going to see some decrease in their costs because of the HST. The input—

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

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last week I toured northern Ontario, including hard-hit forestry towns like Marathon. Northern Ontario has lost thousands of good-paying, value-added jobs. Five years ago the government promised to reverse that trend with a \$500-million forestry sector assistance program, but freedom-of-information requests show that about half of that money is still sitting unused. Why are hundreds of millions of dollars meant to create and protect jobs left sitting in a government bank account?

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It was good to see my colleague in Marathon last week at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association meeting. I was there as well with my colleagues the Minister of Transportation and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

There's a great deal of excitement and optimism, may I say, in northern Ontario, particularly in northwestern Ontario, about some of the economic development opportunities that are happening up there related to the Ring of Fire and the northern industrial energy rate that's being brought forward. And in terms of the forestry sector, again there is some real optimism because of the decisions that we'll soon be making about the forest tenure process and the wood supply competition.

Certainly, I look forward to my opportunity in the supplementary to give more details in terms of the forest sector issue that you've brought up, other than to say quickly, if I can, that there are 35 applications that are presently in that are still to be determined to go forward, and those, if they are successful, will bring forward over \$1 billion in investment. I think that's pretty good news for northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is a value-added jobs crisis in northern Ontario and has been for more than five years. Resources are being extracted, but the processing jobs are disappearing. From Xstrata in Timmins to the pulp and paper mills that dot northern Ontario, families are seeing less opportunity for high-paying jobs.

This government keeps making promises to protect jobs. When will they finally do so and provide northerners with the tools that they need to create and keep jobs in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The member and others will very soon be seeing some of the announcements we will be making related to decisions we're making regarding

the forest sector. We've got the wood supply competition that's completed. By March 31, all the applications came in, well over 100 applications for value-added opportunities in the forestry sector. We're excited about that. We're moving as quickly as we can to make decisions related to that, about the opportunities we have to put Ontario's wood back to work.

Indeed, there is optimism. There's no doubt—I'm the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North; I understand the challenges very, very well; I represent communities that have been very impacted by the forestry downturn—we have reason to be optimistic.

The actions taken by our government, including the extraordinary incentives that we put into that that no government has put in before, have made a real difference in terms of bringing the forestry sector back. We look forward to those announcements soon.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Aggressively reducing greenhouse gases to 6% below 1990 levels by 2014 and 15% below 1990 levels by 2020 is a government priority. Significant actions, of course, must be taken in order to achieve this at the provincial level, like closing down coal-burning plants and bringing more clean energy online, protecting green space and supporting the development of green technology.

In this regard, Minister, I was pleased to learn last week of a project in my community led by the Hamilton Conservation Authority that is doing just that by working with our local schools. Minister, can you inform this assembly how this government is supporting this particular project?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Let me, first of all, compliment this member, who has been here for many years, for his total interest in the environment and all issues related to the environment, particularly in the Hamilton area. Yes, he is correct that the Hamilton Conservation Authority is receiving almost \$29,000 for their classroom Grow Green project. This is a project that brings together high school students and elementary students and will increase their commitment to preserving natural areas and preventing climate change through low-carbon-emitting field trips to conservation areas. It's all part of Ontario's community go green fund to support projects that help Ontarians switch to a low-carbon lifestyle and reduce their climate change impacts. The students will gain knowledge of seed collection, tree identification and tree planting, allowing them to naturalize their community parks and schoolyards. This is a great project, and we'll talk more about it in our supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Minister, I'm proud of the work being done by the Hamilton Conservation Authority to teach our kids about the natural environment and what they can do to reduce greenhouse gases and help us grow greener communities. This is certainly deserving of sup-

port. There is a broad understanding, Minister, that we must take action to reduce our environmental footprint. Ontarians know that we only have one planet and that we have to change our habits and the way we live if it's to survive and thrive.

Minister, it's often local community groups that make a difference. How else is the community go green fund helping Ontarians to reduce their carbon footprint?

Hon. John Gerretsen: We all know that environmental action starts at home and in our community. As a matter of fact, this is the fourth round of funding from the community go green fund. It's in the final round, at this stage. A total of \$1.4 million is providing help to about 33 recipients across this province in a wide variety of projects. Let me just give you a few examples. We have the Clean Air Champions, which is receiving almost \$53,000, through which we're sending Ontario youth national Olympic and Paralympic athletes around the province into classrooms where they will be delivering inspirational presentations to each class on how to become a clean air achiever. We have the FoodShare Toronto program at \$65,000, which is looking at sustainable food choices at their institute. We have the Sault Ste. Marie North Waste Management Council's project, which is to reduce waste by—

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

1130

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Health. Registration for organ and tissue donation in some jurisdictions is as high as 80%. Ontario lags far behind at 17%. The problem, we believe, is our cumbersome registration system, which still requires that people mail in a registration or attend at a ServiceOntario health card office. Can the minister tell us if she supports the resolution that I tabled in the House last week that would require an online organ donor registration system using the OHIP number, which would allow people to get online, register as donors and significantly increase our donor registration in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for his continued commitment to increasing the number of organ transplantations in this province. We have made some great strides, but there is absolutely more to do. We've increased the number of organ transplants by 47% since 2003. Last year was a record year for transplants. Last year alone, in fact, over 700 lives were saved as a result of organ donations. We have moved to reimburse expenses for organ donors and, of course, increase awareness of the importance of registering as an organ donor.

There is more to do, and in the supplementary I'll speak specifically to the question the member has asked.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: What we know is that one person dies every three days in this country waiting for a trans-

plant. Some 1,615 people in Ontario alone are on a wait-list, waiting for that call to let them know that an organ is available.

What is being proposed by way of an online registration system is practical and it's doable. It will dramatically increase organ donor registration. I ask the minister again: Will she direct her ministry to work with the Trillium Gift of Life Network to implement an online donor registration system in the province of Ontario that will save lives? She said last week that she wants to do everything possible to increase registrations. Will she do this?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We want to do everything we can do to increase the number of transplants in this province. We have an expert panel report that we are currently reviewing. It is, I must say, a superb piece of work. One of their recommendations is an online registry. I can tell you that I am very interested in exploring how we could do that.

I cannot stand today and announce that we are going to have an online registry. What I can tell you is, we're taking the recommendations from the expert panel very seriously, and we know that one of those recommendations is in fact an online registry. But until we have that online registry, I would urge people to go to the ServiceOntario website, download the form and mail it in the old-fashioned way. That act may save a life.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Ontarians are facing rising hydro rates, in large part because the McGuinty government is not pursuing all possible cost-effective energy conservation measures. Instead, it's investing in expensive gas and nuclear power. Why is the McGuinty government unnecessarily increasing hydro rates for Ontario families?

Hon. Brad Duguid: No government has done more on the conservation side than this government. We are absolutely committed to building a conservation culture in this province. I just look at our home energy savings program, where we've been investing with consumers, with homeowners: 348,000 have done home audits; 160,000 have done retrofits. That's really helping us meet our greenhouse gas emission goals. It's really helping consumers save. In fact, on average, those families are saving about 23% off their bill.

I will say this to the member: I think we need to do more and I think we plan to do more. We're always looking for new and bright ideas that are in keeping with our opportunity to continue to drive home the need to conserve, because every opportunity we have to conserve is less energy that we have to build.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister, notwithstanding any number that you cite, the reality is, on the past Friday you announced energy conservation targets that were far below what even the Ontario Power Authority deems possible and achievable. The McGuinty government is

allowing the Ontario Power Authority to continue to under-invest in conservation by spending 60 times more on new electricity supply than it's spending on conservation. Let's be clear about where your priorities are: 60 times more on generation than conservation. Why are you continuing to put the interests of utilities and electricity suppliers ahead of Ontario families' needs for affordable hydro rates?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Just last week I had the opportunity to issue a directive to our local distributors. This is going to free those local distributors up to be even more creative, to reach out to their consumers, and to reach even more heights and more goals in terms of conservation programs. So we're going to have our energy distributors on-side, the Ontario Power Authority, our government.

This is something that requires more than just the efforts of government; this is something that needs to be built into the psyche of each and every Ontario resident and Ontario business. We're determined to build that culture of conservation in this province. We're not quite there yet, we've got more work to do, and we'll even take some of the ideas from the member opposite if he has some good ideas in this respect, but we're going to continue to make progress on conservation.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, your ministry has an on-the-ground presence throughout Ontario with many different mandates. Ontarians turn to your ministry for advice about managing nuisance animals, the protection of species at risk, licensing hunters and anglers, and accessing Ontario's vital aggregate resources. Minister, managing Ontario's natural resources in a sustainable manner is the responsibility of all Ontarians; however, your ministry is the lead on this important task.

Minister, 2010 marks a significant point in the organization of your ministry. It is my understanding that your ministry has recently completed a realignment. What effects, if any, will this reorganization have on the mandate of your ministry and how your ministry officials serve the public?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank the member for the question. The honourable member raises some very important concerns, and I want to reassure all members here that supporting hunting and angling in this province is a priority of this ministry as a part of sustainable management of Ontario's biodiversity. It's especially important to note because this is the first day of the spring turkey hunt.

I'm very pleased to respond to the question because I know some of our colleagues here do not have the full story. The internal reorganization of the Ministry of Natural Resources gives the ministry a stronger ability to develop, coordinate and modernize programs while ensuring the public is well-served. In fact, ministry officials, through the new, streamlined organization process, will

be delivering a higher level of integrated service than ever before, something I'm very proud of. Modernizing the operations of the Ministry of Natural Resources in the interest of all Ontarians is an initiative that has my full support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Johnson: Minister, despite your vocal assertions here today, many of the organizations that your ministry partners with have concerns about the realignment, and some of our colleagues here have demonstrated a lack of concrete understanding. Specifically, I know that many sector partners, especially those in the hunting and angling community, fear that the realignment has resulted in diminished prominence of fish and wildlife within the ministry. Have the priorities of your ministry changed and does your ministry no longer look to meet the needs of hunters and anglers, who through their recreational activities contribute hundreds of millions to the provincial economy annually?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Once again, thanks to the honourable member. Since becoming the Minister of Natural Resources, I've discussed the internal realignment with the leadership of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and with hunters and anglers I've met around the province. It's important for all members here to know that hunters and anglers will not see any service changes, and that fisheries and wildlife policy will now be handled in the policy division of the ministry.

I would also like to tell the members assembled here and those watching at home that the realignment has had no impact on the special-purpose accounts maintained at the ministry. Revenue generated by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses will continue to go towards projects which enhance Ontario's biodiversity, like the Lake Ontario Atlantic salmon restocking program.

VISITOR

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

I would like to just take this opportunity to welcome Ron Rabbi from the Africans In Partnership Against AIDS and an advocate against hate laws in Uganda; he's in the east public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today. It's a pleasure to have you here.

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased this afternoon to welcome to the gallery Lynda Oliver, Judith Harper, Paul Donnelly and Linda Cowburn of the Northumberland health coalition. They're here today to protest government cuts to beds and services at the Northumberland Hills Hospital. Welcome.

M^{me} France G elinas: I, too, would like to welcome the people from Northumberland who worked so hard to collect many petitions, which I will present soon. They are Peggy Smith, Linda Cowburn, Paul Donnelly, Lynda Oliver and Janice Parker. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thanks for being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker's gallery—and more detailed comments will be made by members later—Senator Bob Runciman and his wife, Jeannette, to Queen's Park today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I would also like to recognize Senator Bob Runciman here today.

My statement is as follows: The citizens of Durham riding are increasingly alarmed over higher taxes and fees being imposed by this government. Under the HST, there's an 8% increase on many goods and services as of Canada Day 2010. Less visible taxes include the downloading of millions of dollars in costs onto drugstore operators and pharmacists and their patients. Fees associated with green energy, smart meters and the Samsung deal are being added to the price of electricity, contributing to an annual increase that is estimated at \$350 per family per year at least.

Is there a cure for a government with a tax-and-spend addiction? The cure is accountability. Our PC caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, has an accountability plan to improve transparency in all corners of the Ontario government. This needs to be done immediately. Our plan calls for freedom-of-information laws to apply to all provincial public bodies and for proactive posting of government expenses and contracts over \$10,000. This allows every citizen to be a watchdog of this government.

I would urge this government to stand up for the citizens of Ontario once and for all and to support our leader, Tim Hudak, and the accountability provisions he has suggested in the House.

SOUTH GLENGARRY COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr. Jim Brownell: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to recipients of the recent South Glengarry community and business awards.

I want to start by congratulating Les and Wendy Wert, who were named citizens of the year for their long-time advocacy in the South Glengarry tourism industry. The Werts run the Capricorn Capers bed and breakfast in Williamstown. In addition, the Werts take their guests on tours of the area, educate students on local history and work with a committee to attract more visitors to South Glengarry.

George and Beverley Runions, who run Glengarry Electric, were recognized for business of the year. They started the business in 1975, when George was on work stoppage at Domtar Fine Papers, only to have Glengarry Electric become a local favourite electrical business. George and Beverley volunteer countless hours of their time for the Williamstown Fair and St. Andrews United Church in Martintown.

The Lancaster Optimist Club was saluted for its dedication to helping youth in the area through public speaking contests and programs, essay writing contests, bike safety rodeos, donations to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and bursaries for graduating high school students.

The Eastern Ontario Training Board's Youth Merit Award went to Glengarry District High School student Devan Lancaster for her accomplishments as a horseback rider, which include winning the Bobby Greasley memorial scholarship and volunteering to teach others how to ride.

Lyall and Elizabeth MacLachlan of Lachlan Glen Farms took home the Excellence in Agriculture Award.

I want to extend congratulations to all the recipients of the South Glengarry community and business awards. These are the people who make our communities, and especially South Glengarry, great places to live, work and play.

TAXATION

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Earlier this month, the Premier announced that landlords in this province will not be able to pass the HST cost to tenants in the above-guideline rent increases, or AGIs, as they're known. The government's remarks were nothing more than the usual photo op and attempt to capture headlines.

The reality is that the AGIs are a rarely used tool anyway. On average, there are about 115 applications per year for AGIs, yet there are over 1.3 million rental households in this province.

This government should stop spending all its time on staged photo ops and actually put in place a plan that will help the rental housing industry transition to the HST with a view to protecting tenants. The industry has expressed that the HST will increase industry costs by almost 5% without even taking into consideration inflationary increases. The only discretionary expense that owners have is maintenance and capital repairs.

Tenants across this province are going to be negatively impacted as the HST eats into the maintenance budgets. The government must move quickly to ensure that the capital needs of Ontario's housing stock remain in a good state of repair so that these crucial units can continue to house tenants across our province.

LONDON CLEAN AND GREEN

Mr. Khalil Ramal: This past Saturday was the keep London Clean and Green community clean-up day in my

hometown. This event happens every year and encourages Londoners to pitch in to keep London a beautiful city.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all those members of London's communities who came out Saturday morning to spend a few hours picking up garbage, cleaning graffiti off walls and planting trees. These efforts not only contribute to making our city even more beautiful but also encourage sustainable environmental practices and maintain lasting friendships with people in the community. Without the time and effort put forward by our volunteers and organizing committee, the city of London would miss out on this wonderful opportunity to spend a lovely day outdoors for a worthy cause.

I hope to see this event continue in the future, and I hope that the numbers of volunteers will only increase with every passing year. I want to congratulate the city of London and all the volunteers who came out Saturday morning to plant trees and clean up our beautiful city.

PHARMACISTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a pleasure to be here today to speak on behalf of my constituents. I would first like to acknowledge the presence of Senator Runciman and his wife, Jeannette. They have been very good friends of mine for quite some time, and it's really nice to see them back in the chamber.

This past Friday, I had the opportunity to meet with Ishrat Rehmani, Sal Osman, Paul Pineo, Randy Little, Paul Brooks, Vijay Shukla, Tu Chu, Rob Cameron, Peter Barreiro, John Condron and Bassem Nashed. They are community pharmacists in Nepean–Carleton who took the time to share concerns with me over Dalton McGuinty's plan to cut front-line health care.

The message was unanimous: As pharmacists, they are neither business people nor political lobbyists. They instead are people who entered the health care field to help Ontario families, seniors and patients.

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As well, my constituency office in Nepean–Carleton has been flooded with hundreds of emails, postcards, petitions and phone calls from residents who are worried that Mr. McGuinty's plan to cut front-line health care will result in a reduction of services, closures of pharmacies and increased prices in our community pharmacies.

As the MPP for Nepean–Carleton, I share many of these concerns, particularly because Ontarians will no longer have access to some of our community's most trusted and highly accessible health care professionals, particularly in our rural areas.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm here to honour the members from Yad Vashem who are sitting in the gallery and who are here to commemorate the horror of the Holocaust and to celebrate the courage of the survivors.

I'm here, as I stand every year, to say the only three words that anybody with any ethical credibility can say

as a Christian, Gentile Canadian: I am sorry. I am sorry that out of 45 million Christians during Nazi Germany, only 150,000 became part of the Confessing Church, and of those 150,000, only 3,000 actually saw as part of their mandate the protection of their Jewish brothers and sisters. I think of my brother Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who lost his life; of Karl Barth, the great theologian of the 20th century, who stood as one with the Jewish people and paid dearly for it.

I also say "I'm sorry" as a Canadian—that rejected Jews at our borders, that brought in anti-Semitic laws, municipally, provincially and federally.

Finally, I am sorry that anti-Semitism is still in our midst. I think of the words of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, who said that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism.

My prayers are with you. My love is with you. The hope is with you that, as you come back year after year, we say this in a quieter and quieter voice because it's less of our reality.

NEWCOMER SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Recently, I attended an event at the Newcomer Services for Youth centre in Scarborough–Rouge River to recognize their volunteers. I was impressed to hear the impact this program has had on both newcomers and the volunteers.

Newcomer Services for Youth provides valuable services to youth between the ages of 13 to 24 who are convention refugees or newcomer permanent residents. The centre offers information on adapting to Canadian life, the education system, mentorship, volunteer and leadership opportunities, cultural events, computer skills, homework clubs, English conversation circles and all aspects of job searching.

I would like to share one positive story I heard at the event. A volunteer of Sri Lankan origin explained how he volunteered to become a mentor and was paired with a newcomer Chinese youth. Initially apprehensive about their ethnic backgrounds and cultural and language differences, he was extremely fulfilled by the positive experience. Their relationship grew into a friendship where they both attended cultural events in each other's communities. An interesting outcome resulted: appreciation and understanding of each other's differences, which benefits our diverse community in living and working in harmony with one another.

Many newcomers who benefited from these programs commented about their interest in returning later as mentors.

I would like to congratulate Newcomer Services for Youth in Scarborough–Rouge River for their work in building a better community.

RIDING OF OTTAWA CENTRE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: This past Saturday, I had the honour of hosting a sustainable community summit in my riding of Ottawa Centre, where many members of my

community joined in a discussion, which lasted a whole day, talking about how we can make our community sustainable. The discussion was around issues such as urban design, local food production and distribution in our community, and also related to the use of renewable energy and the ways communities can participate in the production of renewable energy. I was very honoured to have three very distinguished local speakers who are experts in those areas to talk about those issues and for them to come up with very thought-provoking ideas.

I want to especially thank Paul Kariouk, who spoke on urban design; Chantal Blouin, who spoke about local food production and distribution; and Graham Findlay, who brings a lot of expertise on the issues around renewable energy. We had a very healthy plenary after those speakers so that we could come up with ideas as to how we could make our community sustainable. I will be very shortly doing further consultation through my website—yasirnaqvimpp.ca—and Facebook to get more ideas from the community, and then compiling a report that will reflect some of the thoughts and ideas of my community and hopefully work with them in making sure that the community of Ottawa Centre is a sustainable one.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. Monte Kwinter: In a ceremony at Queen's Park earlier today, we recognized and honoured 18 Holocaust survivors whose stories of anguish, suffering and survival of both body and spirit are a testimony to the human will to live. These Holocaust survivors, who are in the House today, came to Ontario, rebuilt their lives and were honoured for their wonderful contribution as citizens of Ontario. Those honoured are Luba Drewnowski, Max T. Eisen, Syma Forberg, David Forberg, Gertie (Gitla) Gotleib, Alexander Levin, Ora Markstein, Leslie Meisels, Joseph Peretz, Herschel Perl, Itzhak Pilc, Rachel Piuti, David Rybowski, Zenia Rybowski, Maia Toivis, Manya Wise, Herschel Wise and Seymour Zweig.

Today we recognize Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah, Holocaust Memorial Day, a day designated for Holocaust remembrance in communities around the world. This is the 17th year the Ontario Legislature has observed Holocaust Memorial Day, and I'm proud to say that Ontario was the first jurisdiction in the world outside of the state of Israel to officially recognize it.

I have visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem, several times. The memorial is dedicated to preserving the memory and story of each of the six million people who died in the Holocaust, and, as a Jew, these memories strike the heart and soul, and every Jew is touched by the Holocaust. We lost loved ones, family members or friends. All members in the community lost someone. The Holocaust echoes through generations. The loss is extraordinary, and at Yad Vashem, that loss is made real. It is concrete. You can touch it.

In the Valley of the Communities, you can stand before wall after wall carved out of solid rock listing the

names of more than 5,000 communities that lived, breathed, had life and in which men and women loved, married, raised children, worked, laughed and worshipped. Today, in most cases, nothing remains of these Jewish communities except for their names forever frozen in the bedrock of Yad Vashem. It was there that I found the name of the city where my father was born, Czestochowa, and the city where my mother was born, Sosnowiec.

The Holocaust reaches out of the past and touches the shoulder of every Jew. The central theme of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day 2010 is the voice of the survivors, focusing on the many different ways survivors have contributed to Holocaust remembrance and commemoration over the years.

Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all those who died in the Holocaust, not just Jews. We also remember those whom the Nazis targeted for their race, their religion, their politics, their disabilities or their sexual orientation. It's important to set aside time to remember all these victims whose lives were taken by the Nazis. In remembering, we bear witness to what these men, women and children endured.

Tragically, other genocides have followed since World War II in Cambodia, Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia. It is evident that we must continue our struggle to keep alive the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations 62 years ago in the shadow of the Holocaust. The declaration recognized the inherent dignity and the quality of the inalienable rights of all members of the human family as a foundation of freedom, justice and peace throughout the world. It called on the world to protect human rights by the rule of law. We are indeed fortunate to live in Canada and in Ontario, but we must never take our good fortune for granted. We must guard our democratic institutions and democratic freedoms. We must appreciate, nurture and protect them and we must constantly remind ourselves how easy it is to lose them.

On Yom Hashoah, Jewish communities around the world recite a brief traditional mourners' prayer, the Kaddish. On the afternoon of April 11 this year, some of our members were at Earl Bales Park and there were hundreds of people who recited the Kaddish.

On behalf of the victims, the survivors and their families, I would like to recite that Hebrew prayer that is something for which all people may pray. I ask for unanimous consent to allow me to do this.

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

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Can I ask everyone to rise, please?

Prayer in Hebrew.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Thank you.

One line of this prayer translates as: "He who creates peace in the celestial heights, may he create peace for us." We must always remember so that the world will never forget.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR DÉPENSES DE TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN)

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

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts 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: I might explain at the outset that I would like to seek unanimous consent to remove my previous bill on the same topic, Bill 37, because it was slightly out of order. With that agreement of unanimous consent—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you.

This bill amends the Taxation Act to permit taxpayers to obtain a non-refundable income tax credit for expenses that they incur and pay for using public transit after December 31, 2009. The tax credit is a share of the tax credit offered by income tax Canada. If another person pays the expenses on behalf of the taxpayer, that other person is entitled to the tax credit, excepting if the person makes the payment as part of the taxpayer's remuneration.

I suspect that this is to harmonize the transit tax credit with the federal government and to encourage commuters and others to use public transit.

ROBERT W. RUNCIMAN

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak to Mr. Bob Runciman's retirement from the Legislature.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my privilege today to speak to the retirement of Mr. Bob Runciman, the member for Leeds–Grenville from 1981. To Bob and his lovely wife, Jeannette, I say hello and welcome. I'm glad to see you back here, although it was so much more fun when you were right there.

As I noted, Mr. Runciman was first elected to the Legislature in 1981, and as I would have reminded him in

a House leaders' meeting not too long ago, that was before I could even vote. It was certainly a good long stay here, and although he didn't make that three-decade mark, he certainly made his mark on this place during the almost 29 years he spent in the Legislature.

During that time, he served under three Premiers in a variety of capacities in various cabinets including as Minister of Public Safety and Security, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. I'm sure he will correct me if I've missed any, but I think I got them all. He also served twice as interim leader, which I think is a testament to him and to the respect his party showed him by electing him twice as their interim leader.

As he left his final round as interim leader, the Premier spoke to his role as interim leader. On June 4, 2009, we had an opportunity to pay tribute to his role as interim leader, and Premier McGuinty noted at that time: "A predecessor of mine, David Peterson, used to say that the toughest job in the world is to be the leader of an opposition party. I think he was wrong. I think the toughest job of them all has been interim leader of an opposition party—and to grapple with the fomenting changes inside your caucus as various personalities seek to assert themselves, and to garner support and to maintain some sense of order and to assume that high responsibility on behalf of Ontarians." During two separate terms, Mr. Runciman did that role with distinction.

Most recently, before his departure from this Legislature, he served as opposition House leader and tourism critic or, as we called it in my office, "all Bob, all the time." I had the privilege of serving as government House leader and as Minister of Tourism, so in all my capacities we had the pleasure of working with Mr. Runciman. Certainly it was challenging at times, but for the most part it was a pleasure.

As the member for Kitchener–Waterloo noted in her tribute to him on June 4, 2009—I'm taking the opportunity to quote you, Ms. Witmer, which I hope is okay: "Bob has twice had the opportunity to be unanimously elected as our leader since 2004, and although Mad Dog may not have been around from one of the earliest documented references to that nickname in the 16th century"—I note that she said "may not have been," which is a little unkind—"I can tell you that since his election in 1981, he has been madly steadfast and unswerving in his dedication, not only to the people in eastern Ontario, but to all the people in the province."

As I have noted, I had the wonderful privilege of serving as Minister of Tourism for a time. During that time, I had the honour of visiting the Thousand Islands, which Mr. Runciman will remember was celebrating its twinning with the 1,000-Island Lake of China at the time. Together, we hosted a contingent of Chinese representatives on what was a spectacular day in the Thousand Islands in the lovely riding of Leeds–Grenville. I had the opportunity of meeting his wife, Jeannette, that day and of being able to share a beautiful, proud Ontario day,

showing off what great treasures we have here in the province to our visitors from China. As always, Mr. Runciman was a gracious host and did a remarkable job of making our guests feel welcome.

As the child of a member, I want to say thank you to Jeannette, his lovely wife, who proudly served with him for 29 years. I know that you in fact do serve not only the people of Leeds–Grenville but also the people of the province.

I want to acknowledge their daughters, Sue and Robin, who shared their dad with us. I know he's a proud granddad of Iylish, Cassandra and Nick, so to them we say thank you for sharing your grandpa with us as well.

I want to end my tribute today on behalf of the McGuinty government with a quote from the leader during his tribute to Mr. Runciman on June 4, 2009. At that time, Mr. McGuinty said, and I kind of echo his comments here, Bob; I think you will enjoy this: "There will be no hugs from me; I want to make that clear at the outset. But I rise to give expression to the wonderful sentiments that I think we all sense today."

He went on to say, and I want to echo these heartfelt comments: "I want to thank Bob Runciman, MPP, minister, interim Leader of the Opposition, husband, proud father, for all that he has brought to his responsibilities over so many years. He has been dogged; he has been determined; he has been faithful to his principles at all times. I'm not sure there's anything more we might ask of anybody who is privileged to hold public office."

To you, Mr. Runciman, we bid a very happy time in the Senate and a wonderful retirement from this place.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I'm grateful to Andrea Horwath and my caucus mates for letting me perform this role on behalf of the NDP this afternoon.

I came here in 1988. It was a pretty good time to be a newly elected—and I was young then—young member, because a lot of the greats were here at that time. One of the personalities that was clearly a part of the front bench of the front benches was Bob Runciman.

It was in short order that the Premier of the day, Mr. Peterson, provoked the auto insurance debates. Bob Runciman became a close friend and, interestingly, we found common ground. We were allies in what was, again, a remarkable opportunity for a young, newly elected politician, and I'm grateful personally to the mentorship of Bob Runciman.

I'm also grateful for his friendship, because Lord knows I didn't have a whole lot from my own caucus. His friendship was very special to me. As a matter of fact, during the period of government of that last Liberal Premier from 1990 to 1995, there was a time when I had difficulty getting information from my House leader. The House leader at that time wasn't particularly interested in making sure I knew when certain debates were going to take place, especially when it came to debates on things

like changes to the rules in the standing orders. But Bob Runciman's House leader's office—I remember it well; I remember exactly where it was—always welcomed me. I could always count on them to give me the straight goods. They never steered me wrong. It was a different time—mind you, it was a very different time—but one never left the Conservative House leader's office hungry or thirsty.

We should note, Bob—you were important not just to this chamber and to this community of legislators, but you leaving Toronto has left its mark on the city. Bob Runciman moves to Ottawa and George Bigliardi's shuts down. It was a sad thing. And if I could have persuaded Bob, on that fateful day when he got the phone call, that his departure would have meant the loss of Bigliardi's to yet subsequent generations of Queen's Park-ers, I'd like to think I may have had some impact.

I look for things that we have in common. As I say, I regard him as a good friend. I enjoy his company. I certainly enjoyed working with him when he was House leader and leader, and when he was minister. I looked at the things we have in common. Bob was a trade unionist, and while I was a member of a union only during my student years when I was working out in BC, I was a trade unionist too, and I certainly find myself with many friends in the trade union movement. We have that in common.

I keep thinking about other things that we have in common. Ideologically, we're some distance apart. In terms of personality, I don't think we have much in common. Bob can be very emotional. He can become angry; he can become aggressive and assertive. I don't see myself in that way at all. But as I reflected more, I realized that, Bob, we have yet another thing in common: Mr. Rae didn't like me either.

Also, Mr. Runciman, I owe you a great debt. Some who are old enough will know that I was a minister in that government for a very short period of time—I think it was six months. Bob Runciman has saved me from the ignominy of being the shortest-serving minister of consumer relations, because he served in that ministry for but a month and five days before the fall of that government in 1985. So, to the producers of Trivial Pursuit, I am not the shortest-serving minister of consumer relations in Ontario; Bob Runciman is.

We miss you, Bob; I certainly miss you. You were a great member of this chamber; you were a great advocate—you were a courageous advocate. Runciman never backed down, and sometimes that courage is rarer than we wish. Runciman was fearless, and he was as straight as they come: no backstabbing, no beating around the bush. We need people like that here in this chamber. He was aggressive and fearless in the pursuit of the interests of not just his constituents but, I'm convinced, of his province and country. I'm proud to have been so fortunate to have been elected at the time I was so that I could have had the experience of working with you here.

I am going to have to temper some of my comments about the red chamber now that Bob Runciman is sitting

in it. But I couldn't think of a better choice than Bob Runciman. He will change the people in that chamber, just as he influenced and changed for the better the people in this chamber.

We don't say farewell, Bob. We're confident—I have no doubt whatsoever—that we'll be reading about you in the newspapers. There's surely more than one dipstick in the province that you can comment on. I wish you well.

Jeannette, you are just a wonderful, classy, delightful woman. Bob doesn't deserve you. But I tell you, you make a great complement to him, and I've enjoyed the opportunities we've had to share time and be together at the same places.

To the Runciman family, I share the government House leader's gratitude for sharing Bob with us.

We're better people for having had you here, Bob. This is a better chamber; it's a better province.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It is an honour to rise today on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to pay tribute to our good friend and colleague Bob Runciman.

Without a doubt, the Ontario Legislature has been a much quieter place without Bob Runciman in it. He was, no doubt, one of the most effective and tenacious MPPs in a generation.

Over three decades in the public service, Bob Runciman never lost that fire, that conviction to fight for the underdog and to make a real difference in the lives of ordinary, hard-working families who pay the bills but are often last on the list of the government's priorities—and of course, first and foremost, to his constituents in Leeds–Grenville.

I also want to pay tribute to his wife, Jeannette. As we know in this business, people often vote for not just the individual but the couple and the family. Jeannette, for your strength and leadership over these many years, we thank you very much as well.

There is no better testament to Bob Runciman's political acumen and hard work than the fact that he was re-elected seven different times. Even when the political tide ran against our party—some tough sweeps in contests against Peterson, Rae or McGuinty—in Leeds–Grenville, Bob Runciman held firm. All the members here today understand what an accomplishment it is to earn and to keep the confidence of your constituents for such an extended period of time.

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By the time I was elected in 1995, Bob Runciman already had the reputation as a senior leader in our party, a man who played on the first line and the man the Premier trusted to get the job done in his ministry and for his constituents. The confidence and integrity with which he carried himself inside and outside the Ontario Legislature was something to be admired and emulated as a young MPP. And from those days as a rookie to my current job as Leader of the Opposition, I continue to benefit from and welcome his advice and wise counsel. After all, Bob Runciman has done it all before, and done it well and with passion.

As Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, Bob Runciman stood proudly behind the police and emergency workers who put their lives on the line for us each and every day. As the consumer and commercial relations minister, he fought for greater business opportunities for Ontario, including something important to my riding: getting the European Union to drop its ban on Ontario icewine. That opened up whole new markets for Ontario's grape and wine industry. And as Minister of Economic Development and Trade, he helped preside over the biggest job boom in the province of Ontario, which led all of North America in job creation. Most importantly, on two separate occasions Bob Runciman stepped in as interim leader, provided that trusted and steady hand and clear, decisive direction to the Ontario PC caucus—twice—through tough times of transition. The fact that Bob was unanimously selected by caucus shows the respect and esteem he commanded throughout our party.

I know it's been a number of months, but the halls of Queen's Park just aren't the same without the "mad dog" on patrol. We miss your warm humour. We miss your deep compassion for the people you represent. But we are happy to see you continuing, as senator, to serve Canadians well with that same steadfast determination and drive.

Bob and Jeannette, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I thank you for all your years of dedicated service. I congratulate you again on your appointment to the Senate and say that, even for a day, it's great to have one of the most effective and tenacious MPPs here in the House with us. Bob and Jeannette, thank you very much.

Mr. Steve Clark: I more than anyone in this House know the big shoes that have to be filled with the appointment of Bob Runciman as a senator. You see, it is Bob Runciman to whom I attribute my interest in politics. Even though I was involved in politics at the high school level, it was an issue that then young Centre Ward Alderman Bob Runciman championed at Brockville city council that first got me interested in municipal politics. When I thought that my career was one in the newspaper business, it was again Bob Runciman who saw something in me and ultimately employed me in his constituency office in Brockville. I owe you a lot, Bob, and I owe you a lot, Jeannette. You're wonderful representatives, you've served Leeds–Grenville tremendously, and a day doesn't go by when I'm in the riding that I'm not asked, "How's Senator Mad Dog doing up in Ottawa?"

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Senator Runciman was unable to make comment in this Legislature because of his appointment, because the House wasn't sitting. So he's asked me to present some comments on the record on his behalf:

"Mr. Speaker, departing Queen's Park has left me with very mixed emotions—thrilled to have the opportunity to serve at the federal level, but also saddened to be departing the people and the place that have been such a big part of my life for almost three decades.

"I was blessed with great staff, both here and in my constituency, some with me for 13 or more years—Lynne Clark, Dianne Tominac, Pauline Connolly and Lynn Campbell—wonderful people and lifelong friends.

"And to the folks in this building, from the clerks' table to legislative research, cleaning staff, security, the press gallery and Ontario's best barber, Frank Filice, I say thank you for your friendship.

"I also want to say thank you for the support I received from my caucus mates and the help given to me over the many years by Barb Cowieson, Wilson Fabroa, Frank Iusi and Joe Garisto. And to the leader who gave me the greatest opportunities to contribute to our wonderful province, Mike Harris.

"Finally, I thank the people of Leeds–Grenville and my wonderful, very patient and generous wife, Jeannette, for always saying yes to my service in this great historic place. It's been an enormous honour and privilege. Thank you all."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you to all the members.

I want to take an opportunity to say thank you to Senator Bob Runciman. Bob, on behalf of myself, the table and all the staff here at the Legislative Assembly, we want to thank you for the contributions you have made over the years and that we know you're going to continue to make.

I want to personally thank you for the opportunity I had to work with you on a number of occasions on a number of issues. Your presence in this chamber is going to be missed. I will see that copies of Hansard and a video transcript of today's proceedings are sent to you as a permanent memento.

Thank you again for your service and all the best in your future endeavours, Senator Runciman.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to present a petition to save Northumberland Hills Hospital that was signed by 5,240 people. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network ... has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital ... that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services";

The undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and make sure that Khaleel has the muscles to bring it down to the table.

ROUTE 17/174

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J'ai une pétition provenant de citoyens concernés par la sécurité routière de la route régionale 17/174.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a besoin d'être élargie à quatre voies, du chemin Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8 afin d'améliorer la sécurité routière;

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a été reconnue par le passé pour sa condition dangereuse ainsi que le taux d'accidents annuel notable;

« Attendu que cette route représente la principale voie d'accès à la capitale nationale pour la population ouvrière de Clarence-Rockland, Alfred et Plantagenet et Hawkesbury;

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« Attendu que les comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell ont manifesté leur intérêt à effectuer une étude environnementale destinée à l'élargissement de la route 17/174 en passant une résolution au conseil;

« Attendu que la ville d'Ottawa a passé une résolution au conseil demandant soit à la province ou aux comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell de prendre l'initiative de l'étude environnementale pour la route 17/174;

« Attendu que le gouvernement fédéral et le gouvernement provincial se sont tous deux engagés à fournir 40 \$ millions » chacun « pour l'élargissement de la route 17/174;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons que les fonds nécessaires soient alloués aux comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell afin de réaliser l'évaluation environnementale obligatoire à l'élargissement de la route 17/174 de deux à quatre voies, du chemin Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8. »

C'est avec fierté que j'endosse cette pétition en y ajoutant mon nom.

SERVICE CENTRES

Mr. Steve Clark: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 401 service centres at Mallorytown, Ontario, were closed in September 2009 and 250 jobs were lost; and

“Whereas the community has identified the need for a staffed full-service tourist kiosk as part of the redevelopment of the Mallorytown service centres; and

“Whereas the completion date for reconstruction of these centres could be delayed past spring 2011; and

“Whereas the reeve and council of Front of Yonge township have passed a resolution giving the government approval of construction 24 hours a day, seven days a week to expedite the project;

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

“That the Ministry of Transportation accelerate reconstructions of the Mallorytown service centres based on the local council’s wishes and commit to enhanced tourist service improvements at these sites.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my name and give it to page Darcy.

JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS
ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai une pétition qui vient d’un peu partout en Ontario et qui demande :

« Attendu que le projet de loi 24, Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, qui, si adopté »—on en parle aujourd’hui—« rappellera aux Ontariens et aux Ontariennes de toute souche que la présence française en Ontario existe depuis 400 ans cette année et donnera la chance à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes de célébrer le 25 septembre de chaque année;

« Attendu que le 25 septembre est la date anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien;

« Attendu que si le gouvernement veut vraiment souligner l’apport des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, le projet de loi 24 doit être modifié afin d’en faire un jour férié;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que le projet de loi 24 soit modifié pour désigner le 25 septembre comme jour férié dans la province de l’Ontario. »

Il me fait plaisir de signer la pétition, et je l’enverrai à la table avec le page Khaleel.

TAXATION

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My petition is 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’ll give this to Ahsan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I’m also pleased to read a petition to save Northumberland Hills Hospital services.

“Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital ... that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

“Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

“Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

“Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

“Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients that need professional nursing and health care; and

“Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts.”

I am completely in agreement with this petition, pleased to sign it and send it up with page Sabina.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Espanola in the riding of Algoma–Manitoulin, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is making positron emission tomography, PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

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

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

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

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

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some pharmacies have withheld their services or made them less accessible for Ontarians in an unfair attempt to protest much-needed drug reforms; and

“Whereas Ontario opposition politicians are supporting these harmful tactics by refusing to support the reforms that will make prescription drugs more affordable for Ontarians;

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

“That all members of the Legislature withdraw their support for those engaged in protest tactics that are harmful and misleading to patients requiring prescription medications; and

“That all members of the Legislature support the drug reforms that will lower prescription drug costs for Ontarians and fairly compensate pharmacists for the services they provide.”

I agree with this petition, I will affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Marie.

TAXATION

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

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

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for

their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

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

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

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

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

I will send this with the greatest page in the Legislature, Kyle from Oxford.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

“Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

“Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

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

“That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government’s legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications.”

I agree with this, I will affix my signature and hand it to page Ara.

1400

CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

M. Phil McNeely: J’ai une pétition 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

« 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 6, la Loi visant à augmenter la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques ».

C'est signé par Nishaal Laperrière, Emily Monroe et Isabelle Tardif de l'école Gisèle-Lalonde à Orléans. J'envoie ça à la table avec Courtney.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

TRAVAUX DE LA CHAMBRE

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe that we have unanimous consent regarding An Act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day, 2010.

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

L'hon. Monique M. Smith: Je propose que l'ordre visant la deuxième lecture du projet de loi 24, la Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, soit pris en considération immédiatement et que jusqu'à 20 minutes soient allouées à chaque parti reconnu pour le débat suite à la deuxième lecture, suivant lequel le Président mettra aux voix la question de la deuxième lecture du projet de loi sans plus de débat ni d'amendements; et que suite à l'adoption du projet de loi en deuxième lecture, l'ordre visant la troisième lecture du projet de loi soit pris en considération immédiatement et que le Président mette la question aux voix sans plus de débat ni d'amendements; et que dans le cas de dissidence, on limite le délai avant la sonnerie d'appel à cinq minutes.

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

Motion agreed to.

FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY ACT, 2010

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

M^{me} Meilleur moved second reading of the following bill:

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

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

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je vais partager mon temps avec le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Le mois dernier, à l'occasion de la présentation du projet de loi pour la reconnaissance du 25 septembre comme le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, j'avais demandé l'appui de mes collègues de tous les partis politiques. Aujourd'hui, ensemble, nous complétons ce beau projet, et je suis très reconnaissante de la belle unanimité démontrée par l'Assemblée législative.

Au nom de tous les francophones de l'Ontario, je tiens à remercier chaleureusement le premier ministre McGuinty et tous mes collègues des trois partis politiques.

Ce projet de loi revêt, bien sûr, une signification symbolique profonde pour les Franco-Ontariennes et les Franco-Ontariens. Il affirme à nouveau l'apport extraordinaire de l'un des peuples fondateurs du Canada à l'édification de l'Ontario depuis la Confédération et bien avant.

Les célébrations du 400^e anniversaire de la présence française au Haut-Canada et en Ontario vont nous amener à accentuer notre sentiment d'appartenance tout au long des prochaines années. La communauté franco-ontarienne célèbre aussi cette année le 100^e anniversaire de son organisme porte-parole, l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, ainsi que le 35^e anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien. Je veux d'ailleurs saluer bien chaleureusement la présidente de l'Assemblée, madame Mariette Carrier-Fraser, qui est présente ici aujourd'hui.

Je veux aussi souligner la présence de plusieurs représentants de nos institutions franco-ontariennes. Je vois ici des conseils scolaires qui sont représentés, les collèges, nos universités bilingues, des gens du domaine économique, nos syndicats, l'AFMO. Tous ceux qui se sont déplacés aujourd'hui vous démontrent très bien l'importance de ce projet de loi.

Je veux aussi remercier cette Assemblée d'avoir proposé la date du 25 septembre comme Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. Cette date coïncide avec la célébration annuelle du drapeau franco-ontarien, un étendard de fierté qui a 35 ans cette année.

J'aimerais également remercier et saluer les nombreuses personnes qui se sont déplacées de partout pour être ici aujourd'hui et qui représentent plusieurs organisations francophones en Ontario. Comme vous le voyez, il y a beaucoup de gens qui voulaient être ici avec nous pour assister à ce moment historique.

Comme vous le savez, il y a tellement de gens qui ont contribué à l'avancement de la communauté francophone au cours des derniers siècles. J'aimerais pouvoir les nommer afin de leur rendre honneur.

Je pense, bien entendu, à Samuel de Champlain et à Étienne Brûlé.

Je pense, bien entendu, aux pionniers du secteur de l'éducation des dernières décennies, dont, par exemple, le

premier président de l'ACFÉO, le Sénateur Napoléon Belcourt.

Je pense également à Almanda Walker-Marchand, fondatrice et présidente générale de la Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises de 1914 à 1946.

Je suis fière que l'arrière-petit-fils de Samuel Genest soit aujourd'hui le sous-ministre délégué aux affaires francophones. M. Genest, l'arrière-grand-père de Paul Genest, a joué un rôle majeur dans la contestation du règlement 17, qui est la fondation de notre système d'éducation en français.

La présente Loi sur les services en français est le fruit du travail acharné d'un amoureux de la langue française : M. Bernard Grandmaître. En tant que député et ministre dans le gouvernement de David Peterson, il a apporté une contribution significative à l'épanouissement de notre communauté au cours des 20 dernières années.

Finalement, je ne peux passer sous silence la contribution de ma bonne amie Gisèle Lalonde. Elle a contribué d'une manière significative à la lutte pour les services de santé en français en tant que présidente de SOS Montfort.

Il ne s'agit que d'une infime partie des gens exceptionnels qui ont démontré beaucoup de courage et de conviction.

Je tenais aujourd'hui à saluer le cheminement extraordinaire de la communauté francophone depuis 1867, un cheminement qui explique toute la fierté qui l'anime et l'optimisme qui lui permet d'envisager un avenir encore meilleur en Ontario.

Vous me permettez maintenant de vous parler du présent et de l'avenir des francophones et des francophiles de l'Ontario.

Au cours des dernières années, le gouvernement a appuyé sans relâche l'avancement des conseils scolaires francophones au même titre que les conseils scolaires anglophones de la province. Cet appui a produit des résultats de taille, et j'en suis très fière. Grâce aux nombreuses initiatives touchant à la qualité de l'éducation, à l'accès, à la petite enfance, à la formation des enseignantes et des enseignants et à l'appui aux parents francophones, les élèves francophones et francophiles de l'Ontario se placent, année après année, au sommet de la réussite scolaire. Quand les élèves de l'Ontario connaissent du succès, toute la société ontarienne s'érige en une société plus prospère. C'est ce succès que l'on reconnaît aujourd'hui dans la nouvelle loi.

1410

Les soins de santé en Ontario sont maintenant parmi les meilleurs soins de santé offerts au Canada et même dans le monde entier. Depuis plusieurs années, le gouvernement s'est attaqué aux défis de santé propres aux francophones de l'Ontario, surtout dans les régions plus rurales ou moins peuplées où l'on retrouvait des problématiques plus sérieuses qu'ailleurs. On peut maintenant croire que les francophones, à l'instar de leurs concitoyens anglophones, sont progressivement en meilleure santé grâce aux services de santé améliorés.

C'est ça qu'on souligne aujourd'hui en adoptant une loi célébrant les Franco-Ontariens.

Chers collègues, l'égalité entre citoyens se manifeste de multiples façons. Le système de la justice et les services sociaux jouent un rôle particulièrement important dans l'application du traitement équitable de chaque citoyen. Je tiens donc à signaler le travail exemplaire que l'Ontario accomplit dans les services de justice et les services sociaux en français. En Ontario, un citoyen francophone a maintenant les mêmes droits et les mêmes privilèges que tous les citoyens. La loi que l'on adopte aujourd'hui rappellera annuellement cette égalité de fait entre citoyens, et j'en suis très heureuse.

Il y a bien d'autres raisons de jeter un regard optimiste vers l'avenir francophone en Ontario. Mais permettez-moi de signaler qu'il y a aussi quelques inquiétudes au sein de la communauté francophone lorsqu'elle réfléchit collectivement sur ce qui pourrait menacer son avenir. Parmi celles-ci, il faut mentionner l'assimilation potentielle chez les jeunes, surtout dans un contexte où la télécommunication et l'Internet sont plus souvent qu'autrement en anglais. Je pense aussi à l'arrivée de nombreux immigrants francophones et francophiles en Ontario et à leur pleine intégration dans les réseaux francophones. Je me réfère à une population vieillissante.

Si le passé est garant de l'avenir, nous allons ensemble surmonter ces défis et réussir là aussi.

En terminant, j'exprime donc le souhait que la tenue annuelle du Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes permettra une sensibilisation continue sur ces enjeux. J'ai confiance que la nouvelle loi va aider à atténuer ces inquiétudes bien fondées au sein de la plus grande communauté francophone du Canada et à l'extérieur du Québec.

Chers collègues, je ne saurais mieux dire que la présidente de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. Selon elle, « Il souffle sur l'Ontario un nouveau vent identitaire fort. » L'appui unanime de tous les députés aujourd'hui en faveur de l'adoption de la nouvelle loi proclamant le 25 septembre « Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes » contribue encore une fois à cette énergie vive qui nourrit ce vent identitaire qui servira si bien les aspirations futures de la communauté francophone.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

M. Peter Shurman: Je vais partager les 20 minutes avec mes collègues de Wellington-Halton Hills, Simcoe North et Nepean-Carleton.

À titre de porte-parole de l'opposition pour les affaires francophones, je suis heureux de parler du projet de loi 24, une loi pour déclarer le 25 septembre le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. D'abord, permettez-moi de souhaiter la bienvenue à nos invités qui sont ici aujourd'hui pour les débats.

Nous, les membres du caucus du Parti conservateur, appuyons sans doute ce projet de loi. Les invités présents aujourd'hui ne sont peut-être pas conscients du fait que notre parti appuie tellement ce projet de loi, au point que

j'ai proposé son adoption le jour où il a été introduit. Toutefois, ceci allait à l'encontre de l'horaire du gouvernement, et ma proposition pour un consentement unanime pour l'adoption de cette loi fut refusée par les libéraux.

We in the PC caucus, of course, support this bill. The guests who are here today may not be aware that our party was so supportive of this bill that I proposed passing it on the day it was introduced, but clearly that ran contrary to the government's agenda, and my request for unanimous consent for immediate passage was denied by the Liberals. I'm pleased that it's being passed today.

Alors, nous voici. Le projet de loi, quoique symbolique, reconnaît officiellement une journée qui a toujours été significative pour la communauté francophone au cours des derniers 35 ans. Le 25 septembre 1975, le drapeau francophone vert et blanc a été levé pour la première fois à l'Université de Sudbury. Créé par Gaétan Gervais, un professeur d'histoire, et Michel Dupuis, un étudiant en sciences politiques, le drapeau fut adopté par l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario en 1977. Depuis, le drapeau fait partie de plusieurs événements et célébrations de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Ce projet de loi nous donne l'occasion de reconnaître le rôle spécial qu'occupe la communauté francophone dans l'histoire de notre province. La présence francophone en Ontario remonte à 400 ans. En 1610, Étienne Brûlé était l'un des premiers à explorer la province. La première mission jésuite a été établie à Ste-Marie Among the Hurons. Cette mission était un des premiers peuples fondateurs de notre merveilleuse nation.

Nous avons vu des vagues d'immigration francophone dans la région Détroit/Windsor au 18^e siècle ainsi que dans les régions est et nord-est de l'Ontario au 19^e siècle et au début du 20^e siècle.

Le Droit, le journal quotidien francophone de l'Ontario, dessert la communauté francophone depuis 1913. Par surcroît, 17 autres communautés sont desservies par des journaux hebdomadaires francophones.

En tant que parti gouvernant en Ontario par la majorité du 20^e siècle, le Parti conservateur a contribué non seulement à reconnaître l'importance de la communauté francophone en Ontario mais aussi à promouvoir et à conserver l'aspect unique que tient cette communauté en Ontario.

As the governing party in Ontario for the majority of the 20th century, the PC Party has been instrumental in not only acknowledging the importance of the Franco-Ontarian community but promoting and preserving the unique place it holds in Ontario.

La clé de la préservation de toute culture est la préservation et la promotion de la langue. Ainsi, en 1969, des écoles de langue française ont été établies aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire en Ontario.

L'année suivante, le Bureau du coordonnateur provincial des services en français a été chargé de l'administration des services gouvernementaux de langue française. En 1985, le bureau est devenu l'Office des affaires francophones.

En 1984, le français a reçu le même statut de langue officielle que l'anglais dans le système judiciaire de l'Ontario.

En 1997, il y a eu la création de 12 conseils scolaires de langue française avec un financement équitable à celui des conseils scolaires de langue anglaise.

Cette même année, l'Office des affaires francophones, en collaboration avec le ministère du Solliciteur général, a développé un plan stratégique pour augmenter les services afin d'aider les femmes francophones victimes de violence.

Dans le but de poursuivre son engagement envers l'éducation en langue française, en 2000, le gouvernement PC a alloué quatre millions de dollars pour former des spécialistes afin d'identifier les jeunes francophones ayant besoin de services éducatifs spéciaux.

Cette même année, une stratégie de « marketing » touristique a été conçue pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

En 2001, lorsque le gouvernement PC a créé le Fonds d'aide au développement de la petite enfance, 5 % des fonds ont été alloués pour des projets à l'intérieur de communautés francophones. Deux ans plus tard, mon collègue, en tant que ministre des Transports et député de Newmarket–Aurora, a introduit la plaque d'immatriculation franco-ontarienne.

De crainte d'être accusé de pencher uniquement sur les accomplissements des gouvernements PC successifs, je désire reconnaître les mesures prises par le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Son projet de loi d'initiative parlementaire pour reconnaître le drapeau franco-ontarien en tant qu'emblème officiel de la province a été adopté par tous les partis en 2001. Il est juste de dire que le projet de loi présenté aujourd'hui vient compléter l'histoire du drapeau franco-ontarien, qui a débuté il y a 35 ans.

1420

Lest I be accused of concentrating solely on achievements of successive PC governments, I want to recognize the actions of the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. His private member's bill to recognize the Franco-Ontarian flag as an official emblem of the province was passed with all-party support in 2001. It's accurate to say that the bill before us today completes the story which began 35 years ago of the Franco-Ontarian flag, which I proudly wear on my lapel today.

It is not only through these governmental initiatives but also through the tenacity and spirit of the Franco-Ontarian community that the French language and culture remain a vital and integral part of the fabric of Ontario society.

La langue et la culture françaises demeurent des parties intégrantes et fondamentales de la société ontarienne et ce non seulement par l'entremise des initiatives gouvernementales, mais aussi par la ténacité et le courage de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Merci.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Stop the clock for a minute. I would ask our guests not to applaud.

It is the tradition of this House that they witness the debate but not take part in the debate. Kindly curb your enthusiasm. Thank you.

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait plaisir aujourd'hui d'ajouter ma voix à celles de mes collègues qui ont parlé avant moi en appui du projet de loi 24.

J'aimerais commencer par parler un peu au sujet des contributions de la communauté francophone de ma région, moi qui représente le comté de Nickel Belt dans le nord-est de l'Ontario.

Dans le Nord-Est, dans Nickel Belt, nous avons le plaisir d'avoir une communauté francophone forte et vibrante, tant dans sa langue que dans sa culture. Je suis fière d'être du nord de l'Ontario et je suis encore plus fière d'être franco-ontarienne. Plusieurs communautés dans ma circonscription ont une forte représentation francophone, que l'on parle des communautés comme Azilda, Chelmsford, Hanmer, Val Caron, Val Therese, Gogama et Foleyet—si on regarde plus au sud de mon comté, il y a Alban dans la Rivière des Français. En fait, on a récemment attribué à une résidente de Nickel Belt l'Ordre de la Pléiade. C'était pour reconnaître les efforts de M^{me} Gisèle Chrétien, une résidente de Hanmer, qui a été la présidente du Collège Boréal. On en a profité également pour reconnaître M. Denis Hubert-Dutrisac, qui est présentement le président du Collège Boréal. Ces deux personnes sont des promoteurs de la culture francophone. Leurs travaux et leurs efforts, ainsi que les travaux et les efforts de plusieurs membres de leur équipe, sont évidents dans tous les coins de Nickel Belt.

Le Collège Boréal est important pour le Nord-Est, et vraiment, pour toute la francophonie. Je suis fière que j'ai à côté de moi M. Marchese et un autre de mes collègues, M. Bisson, qui étaient ici dans la Chambre en 1994-1995 lorsque le gouvernement néo-démocrate a créé le Collège Boréal. C'était un investissement de taille et un investissement controversé à un temps où notre province faisait face—à ce temps-là, c'était la plus grosse récession économique que l'Ontario n'avait jamais vécue. Il y avait beaucoup d'opposition à financer un collège francophone, mais le gouvernement néo-démocrate était fier d'appuyer, non seulement par ses paroles mais également par son investissement, un collège francophone qui est devenu le Collège Boréal.

Vendredi, j'étais au Collège Boréal et j'étais très fière de voir le président et le président du conseil nous annoncer le projet de société qui est en train de prendre vie au Collège Boréal. Mais ça m'a fait penser : si cela n'avait pas été un gouvernement néo-démocrate qui a fait ces investissements-là pendant un temps de récession économique contre une volonté politique qui n'était pas vraiment souriante aux francophones—cela a été suivi par huit ans du gouvernement conservateur au niveau provincial, et je pense qu'eux, ils n'auraient jamais financé Boréal. Ça m'a fait penser : wow. On a fait tout ce chemin-là avec notre collège francophone. On en est rendu à un projet de communauté qui voit le jour; ça, vraiment, est grâce à un gouvernement néo-démocratique

qui rajoute l'acte à la parole. Ça fait partie des accomplissements des gens francophones du Nord, dont je suis très fière.

Si on continue à voyager dans le nord-est de l'Ontario, on peut voir les contributions de différentes communautés ainsi que leur impact sur la francophonie de la province. Quand tu suis la 11 dans le nord de l'Ontario—on pense à Chapleau, à Timmins, à Kapuskasing, à Hearst, à Dubreuilville, Smooth Rock, Cochrane, Elliot Lake, et la liste continue, tout plein de petits villages, de petites villes dans le nord-est de l'Ontario—le français n'est pas toujours minoritaire. En fait, le français est souvent la langue utilisée dans les magasins, dans les restaurants, dans la rue. Le français est vivant et vibrant dans certains coins de la province, et ça, c'est quelque chose qui vaut la peine d'être souligné et quelque chose qui vaut la peine d'être célébré. Les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes sont extrêmement fiers de leur héritage et de leur contribution à une communauté forte.

À Sudbury, nous célébrons déjà le 25 septembre car, comme vous le savez tous, il y a 35 ans, M. Gaétan Gervais, professeur d'histoire à l'Université Laurentienne, et M. Michel Dupuis, étudiant à l'université, ont créé le drapeau franco-ontarien que nous utilisons partout dans la province comme symbole.

J'aimerais remercier mon collègue de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, qui était le chef de file pour apporter cette reconnaissance du drapeau franco-ontarien à la grandeur de la province.

J'aimerais revenir un petit instant et vous parler un peu de M. Gaétan Gervais. M. Gervais est le créateur du drapeau, et bien, il a encore son drapeau original. C'est un drapeau de grandeur normale qui a été fait à la main. Donc, quand tu regardes le drapeau—vous le connaissez tous : un côté blanc, un côté vert, le lis et tout ça—tu peux voir que cela a été découpé à la main et que cela a été cousu à la main. C'était le premier drapeau. Il l'a gardé dans son bureau longtemps. Maintenant, il le garde bien précieusement chez lui, mais le sort une fois par année, le 25 septembre, pour que toute la communauté puisse le voir, et il le partage avec nous.

M. Gaétan Gervais est professeur d'histoire à l'Université Laurentienne et il s'intéresse surtout à l'histoire de l'Ontario français. Il est codirecteur du Dictionnaire des écrits de l'Ontario français. M. Gervais est également auteur de plusieurs livres importants pour la francophonie ontarienne, qu'on parle de L'Ontario français : Des Pays-d'en-Haut à nos jours, qui a été publié par le Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques en 2004; ou Des gens de résolution. Du « Canada français » à l' « Ontario français », qui a été publié à Sudbury par Prise de parole; ou encore Les Jumelles Dionne et l'Ontario français, encore publié par les éditeurs Prise de parole à Sudbury. M. Gervais est instrumental dans le développement de la francophonie—un Sudburien, en fait, un résident de Nickel Belt, dont nous sommes tous très fiers.

Donc, les créateurs avaient pensé—M. Gervais et M. Dupuis—à un drapeau vert et blanc. Le vert représente la

verdure de nos printemps ici en Ontario. Je sais que dans Nickel Belt, le printemps est arrivé, mais on ne voit pas beaucoup de vert. Il y a du petit vert—tant, tant, tant—qui commence. Mais dans le sud de l'Ontario—nous sommes à Toronto à ce moment—le printemps est là. Les couleurs vertes, tendres de toutes les saveurs, sont là. C'est de toute beauté. Il sort notre drapeau; il le montre fièrement. Le blanc, également, est de nos longs hivers et de la neige. Il ne reste plus de la neige à ce moment, même pas dans le nord de l'Ontario, mais on sait tous que la neige fait partie de l'Ontario et de qui on est. Notre drapeau représente ça aussi. La fleur de lis témoigne de notre appartenance à la francophonie internationale, et la fleur de trille représente l'enracinement des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes dans la terre de cette province.

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Sa création était un moment très spécial, non seulement pour Sudbury, mais pour toute la province. Ce drapeau représente notre héritage, notre culture et notre langue. Je suis très fière de pouvoir dire qu'il a été créé à Sudbury et que l'on a choisi la journée du 25 septembre comme la journée des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. Pour moi, c'est quelque chose qui va être précieux pour toutes les générations à venir.

Je suis également très fière qu'il a été créé à l'Université Laurentienne. L'Université Laurentienne est au cœur de notre communauté dans le Nord-Est, une université qui est devenue partie intégrante par l'implication de ses professeurs et de ses étudiants, etc. On peut voir également le développement de l'éducation en langue française à l'Université Laurentienne, et on peut être fier de ça aussi.

Le mouvement d'avoir un jour franco-ontarien désigné est, bien sûr, à la base surtout un geste symbolique. On désigne la journée du 25 septembre. C'est un geste certainement agréable et amical de la part du gouvernement, mais on se demande souvent, comment significatif est-ce que la désignation va être? Je dois dire qu'ici à Queen's Park, nous avons créé beaucoup de journées de ce genre, mais si je demandais à mes collègues, ou même à ceux dans les gradins, s'ils pouvaient les nommer, je dirais qu'il y en aurait beaucoup moins. En Ontario, si vous regardez le calendrier officiel, on reconnaît environ une douzaine de ces journées à toutes les semaines. Il y en a beaucoup. Je dirais même qu'il y en a beaucoup, beaucoup. La grande majorité passent plus ou moins inaperçues, sauf pour le public cible, bien entendu : les gens qui sont directement impliqués dans cette journée et les gens qui veulent la souligner.

Il est sûr que je suis contente qu'on déclare une journée pour les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes. C'est un geste symbolique important—c'est vraiment au côté de la signification qu'il va falloir s'assurer que ça demeure important.

Il y avait un groupe de personnes, de Franco-Ontariens et de Franco-Ontariennes en Ontario, qui auraient aimé que le gouvernement aille un pas plus loin, qui auraient aimé profiter de l'élan de la lancée de la reconnaissance

du 25 septembre pour en faire un jour férié. Je comprends très bien le désir de différentes associations que les étudiants et les étudiantes soient en classe ce jour-là pour qu'ils puissent participer aux célébrations.

Comme je vous dis, à Sudbury, ça fait 35 ans qu'on souligne l'anniversaire du drapeau le 25 septembre. C'est quelque chose d'important. J'y participe à chaque année. À Chelmsford, ils organisent un gros tintamarre dans les différentes écoles. Ils font de différentes activités qui sont très importantes. Mais quand on compare ça à l'impact qu'une journée fériée reconnaissante l'apport des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes pourrait avoir, il y a quand même une discussion qui aurait dû avoir lieu mais qui n'aura jamais lieu.

Je veux faire quelques commentaires. Je suis quand même représentante dans l'opposition. J'ai aimé le discours que la ministre a fait, ainsi que celui de mon collègue de Thornhill, mais il y a quelques points que la ministre a soulevés qui sont des petits irritants et que j'ai de la difficulté, même dans une journée de fête, à laisser passer.

Quand on parle de meilleur accès et de meilleurs soins en santé pour les francophones, ou même de l'amélioration—si on ne parle pas de la qualité des soins en français, qu'on parle tout simplement de la santé des francophones, je dirais qu'on a encore du chemin à faire. Si on regarde les dernières statistiques, les Franco-Ontariens, on est loin derrière—notre niveau de santé—quand on se compare à la population ontarienne en générale. Je ne suis pas sûre que c'était un choix judicieux de mettre de l'avant.

C'est la même chose lorsque la ministre parle de l'égalité dans le système de la justice comme un travail exemplaire que son gouvernement a fait pour que les systèmes judiciaires soient égaux. Je vous encouragerais de lire certains écrits des Franco-Ontariennes et des Franco-Ontariens qui essaient d'utiliser les tribunaux des droits de la famille et qui ne sont pas capables d'avoir des services en français parce que plusieurs des ces tribunaux-là ne sont pas dans des régions désignées, ce qui veut dire que si tu n'as pas le consentement des deux parties, tu n'auras pas droit au système judiciaire en français. Je ne connais pas grand monde qui ont besoin de se rendre en cour pour un divorce qui sont capables de s'entendre sur quoi que ce soit. Sinon, ils ne seraient pas en cour; ils auraient réglé ça à l'extérieur de la cour. Donc, si tu es rendu là, puis tu dois avoir les deux parties s'entendre sur le français avant d'avoir droit à des services en français, mais, je n'appelle pas ça un travail exemplaire. J'appelle ça qu'il nous reste encore bien du travail à faire face à l'égalité des droits.

Même chose quand on commence à blâmer l'Internet qui est en anglais seulement. La semaine dernière, je parlais au ministre responsable de la taxe de vente harmonisée pour lui dire que ses petits clips sont en anglais seulement. Même chose : la ministre de la Santé vient de sortir des clips sur YouTube qui sont en anglais seulement. On parle ici d'un gouvernement qui a les ressources, le mandat et le devoir de faire les choses de

façon bilingue et qui ne le fait pas. Moi, je dirais que c'est une chance de briller par ton exemple qui vient d'être complètement bafouée.

Les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, nous sommes la plus grande communauté francophone hors Québec. Nous aurons très bientôt notre Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, reconnu le 25 septembre. Je peux vous assurer que je vais être là, que je vais participer à ces célébrations et que je vais encourager tous les Ontariens, peu importe la langue, à se joindre aux festivités, à reconnaître cette journée et à aider à faire vivre et vibrer la communauté franco-ontarienne aujourd'hui et pour les générations qui s'en viennent.

C'est une belle initiative, un beau geste symbolique, et j'espère que, tout le monde, vous serez présent le 25 septembre de cette année pour le 35^e anniversaire de notre drapeau. J'espère que tout le monde en Ontario va participer aux célébrations du 100^e de notre association francophone de l'Ontario. On célèbre 100 ans cette année de l'ACFO, l'AFO, etc. Elle a changé de nom au cours du dernier siècle.

Donc, je vous encourage, tout le monde. C'est une opportunité de célébration. Il faut prendre le temps de célébrer dans la vie. C'est souvent ce qui est le plus important, et c'est souvent les souvenirs qu'on va chérir le plus dans nos vieux jours.

Il me fait plaisir, au nom du parti néo-démocrate, d'appuyer ce projet de loi.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Tout d'abord, c'est avec honneur et fierté que je viens participer à ce projet de loi, qui est de très grande importance pour nous, Ontariens et Ontariennes. Lorsque je dis « très grande importance », je dois tout d'abord remercier et féliciter madame la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones d'avoir eu l'initiative de présenter ce projet de loi.

Nous savons que sur la planète, nous comptons plus de 200 millions de francophones. Je dis bien que sur la planète, il y a plus de 200 millions de francophones. Au niveau de l'APF, 77 parlements et organisations interparlementaires font partie de l'Assemblée des parlementaires de la Francophonie.

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Je proviens d'une région qui a beaucoup de francophones. Je dois dire même que dans la région du comté de Prescott, au-delà de 20 % de mes citoyens et citoyennes ne parlent que le français.

Aujourd'hui, nous avons avec nous dans les galeries le concepteur du drapeau franco-ontarien, Gaétan Gervais. On lui souhaite la bienvenue. Merci d'être présent. Je dois dire aussi que j'ai remarqué que dans la galerie, nous avons Denis Hubert-Dutrisac, qui a été honoré mercredi dernier en recevant l'Ordre de la Pléiade de la province de l'Ontario pour son application au niveau de la francophonie ontarienne.

Moi-même, je suis président de la section ontarienne de la francophonie. Je suis aussi chargé de mission des

Amériques. Tout récemment, j'étais en Louisiane pour discuter des sujets de la francophonie.

Aujourd'hui, le fait que nous venons avec un projet de loi pour faire reconnaître vraiment la journée des Franco-Ontariens ici même le 25 septembre—cette année, nous allons célébrer le 35^e anniversaire. Laissez-moi vous dire que lorsque nous avons présenté le projet de loi pour l'emblème de la communauté francophone—le drapeau de la communauté francophone, justement—c'est devenu un outil de marketing. Lorsque je dis un outil de marketing, c'est que beaucoup de gens de l'extérieur de l'Ontario ne savent pas que nous parlons français. J'étais en Louisiane et puis à Montréal tout récemment, il y a une semaine hier justement—dimanche dernier. J'ai rencontré des gens de Paris qui étaient là pour parler de l'avenir d'Haïti. Puis, la première chose qu'ils m'ont dit : « De quel secteur du Québec proviens-tu? » Le fait que je parlais français—très peu de gens à l'extérieur de l'Ontario savent que nous parlons français.

Je dois dire à ce point-ci que je dois remercier les deux partis de l'opposition. En 2001, lorsque nous avons accepté le drapeau franco-ontarien—le 21 juin 2001—la leader parlementaire du temps, Janet Ecker, qui était ici à ce côté du Parti conservateur, qui était en pouvoir, a demandé cette journée-là d'avoir un drapeau franco-ontarien un peu plus gros que les autres que nous avons dans la Chambre. C'est le ministre aujourd'hui des services publics qui a demandé l'appui unanime afin que tous les membres puissent avoir sur leur bureau le drapeau franco-ontarien.

Tout ça pour vous dire—c'est comme le député de Thornhill vient de le mentionner : nous voyons de plus en plus que nous reconnaissons que les francophones sont une des trois communautés qui ont fondé notre beau pays et aussi fondé notre province. Donc, aujourd'hui on voit qu'on est sensibilisé, qu'il est très important de connaître les francophones et le travail qu'ils ont fait.

Lorsque nous regardons tous le travail qui est fait par les communautés francophones dans ma région—je dirais à Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, incluant Cumberland; je compte au-delà de 80 000 francophones. En suite de ça, en Ontario, nous comptons plus de 600 000 francophones—donc, maintenant, au-delà de 1,2 millions de citoyens et citoyennes de l'Ontario qu'on pourrait considérer francophiles.

Ici même à Toronto, nous voyons qu'ils reconnaissent l'importance de faire connaître notre belle province. Lorsqu'on voit dans nos écoles les cours d'immersion, on manque même de professeurs pour répondre à la demande. Dans notre région, nous avons beaucoup d'écoles francophones et aussi d'écoles anglophones travaillant sur le même niveau. Maintenant, nous partageons ensemble. Nous respectons davantage, aussi, le fait que les francophones étaient des bâtisseurs dans notre belle province.

Oui, en Ontario, nous comptons plus de 600 000 francophones. Je dis bien 600 000 francophones. À Toronto même, plus de 110 000 francophones y sont présents. Puis, nous savons que lorsque vient le temps de

regarder sur le développement économique, que ce soit le développement économique industriel ou le développement économique touristique, il est très important de faire connaître à nos visiteurs ou à nos investisseurs : « Oui, vous pouvez venir vous installer en Ontario. Nous allons nous assurer que vous pouvez continuer à faire affaire dans la langue française. »

Je me rappelle le 1^{er} juillet 2008 lorsque la ministre du Développement économique, Sandra Pupatello, s'est rendue—je m'y suis rendu avec elle—en France afin d'ouvrir un bureau de l'Ontario. Pourquoi sommes-nous allés à Paris pour ouvrir un bureau de l'Ontario? C'est que de plus en plus, nous voyons l'importance de faire affaire avec les pays dont la langue de travail est le français. Puis même, si je regarde—il y a un bureau de la France du développement économique qui est installé à Montréal. Il y a deux semaines, j'étais à une réception ici même à Toronto; ils ont déménagé à Toronto maintenant. Ils sont partis de Montréal et ils ont été amenés à Toronto parce qu'ils reconnaissent maintenant qu'on peut travailler en français ici même à Toronto. Nous avons les écoles en place. Les cours postsecondaires sont en place. Si vous voulez vous rendre au Collège Glendon, vous allez vous apercevoir que même si les personnes ne peuvent pas s'exprimer en français au début, lorsqu'ils vont graduer de ce collège, ils pourront s'exprimer dans les deux langues officielles canadiennes.

Donc, tout ça pour vous dire que ce projet de loi 24 est très important afin de faire connaître à travers le monde entier qu'ici même en Ontario nous sommes ouverts pour les affaires. Nous sommes ouverts—comme on dit en anglais, nous sommes « open for business ». Venez vous installer et vous allez vous apercevoir que vous allez pouvoir travailler dans les deux langues et puis, de plus en plus, travailler, faire l'exportation ou attirer des investisseurs des pays francophones. Donc, c'est un outil de marketing qu'on a sorti auparavant, avec le beau drapeau que le concepteur, Gaétan Gervais, a mis à notre disposition.

On a accepté à l'unanimité dans cette Chambre que le drapeau franco-ontarien soit reconnu comme un emblème officiel de la province aujourd'hui grâce à madame la ministre qui, vraiment, avec son initiative d'arriver et de nous présenter un projet de loi qui va rendre tous les Ontariens et les Ontariennes très fiers de cette position—qu'on soit unilingue anglophone ou unilingue francophone, on reconnaît maintenant l'importance de pouvoir faire affaire dans les deux langues. Quand je dis les deux langues : les deux langues officielles. On sait que de plus en plus, il y a l'espagnol qu'on essaie de développer davantage. Mais, encore une fois, le français est une langue qui devient de plus en plus importante pour les gens d'affaires.

J'étais aux Nations Unies le 22 janvier dernier. À ma grande surprise, la langue numéro un aux Nations Unies aux bureaux de New York est le français, qui prime sur les autres langues. Donc, c'est pour vous démontrer l'importance. Ensuite, nous avons une réception. À la grande surprise encore, on nous a annoncé que 1 800

personnes dans la ville de New York suivent des cours en français maintenant, parce qu'on regarde la langue à la grandeur mondiale lorsque vient le temps de faire affaire avec les entreprises des industries. Donc, la langue française est très importante.

Je dois le dire encore : merci à notre ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, afin de pouvoir aller de l'avant avec un projet de loi. Vous vous êtes certainement aperçus qu'on n'a pas été obligé de faire du « lobbying » pour le faire passer. C'est que l'opposition, que ce soit—

Interjections.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: —M^{me} Gélinas; excusez-moi. C'est parce que je commence à manquer ma voix avec ma grippe.

Donc, c'est pour vous montrer l'importance que vous jouez au niveau gouvernemental à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario afin de faire connaître davantage notre belle langue, le français.

Donc, à vous tous, chers amis de l'opposition, merci. Rarement nous avons vu—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Further debate?

M. Garfield Dunlop: J'ai l'honneur d'être parmi vous cet après-midi pour vous parler de la loi 24, la Loi sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. Je voudrais premièrement remercier ma collègue l'honorable M^{me} Meilleur pour l'introduction de cette loi. J'aimerais également remercier tous les membres de la Chambre pour avoir appuyé la Loi 24, et j'espère qu'elle sera adoptée pour la 25 septembre, qui sera proclamé le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

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En dernier lieu, j'aimerais remercier M^{me} Deborah Ann Glavic, qui m'a aidé à préparer ce discours.

Je voulais vous parler principalement de cette loi aujourd'hui car il y a de fortes racines francophones dans ma région du nord de Simcoe. Nous sommes privilégiés dans la région du Simcoe-Nord. Nous avons des communautés comme Penetanguishene et Lafontaine qui ont maintenu une forte présence francophone jusqu'à ce jour.

Tout récemment, le 16 avril de cette année, j'ai participé à l'annonce de financement Trillium pour la mise en oeuvre d'un jardin communautaire chez Le Villageois de Lafontaine. Ceci est un nouvel établissement pour les personnes âgées qui sont, en majorité, francophones.

Nous dédions également une fin de semaine entière au mois de juillet pour célébrer le Festival du Loup. Ce festival célèbre la culture et l'héritage de cette communauté francophone, mettant en valeur la musique, l'art et l'histoire. Ce festival est fréquenté par des personnes de diverses origines.

Je veux prendre quelques moments pour souligner deux personnages historiques importants. Le personnage francophone le plus reconnu est le célèbre explorateur Samuel de Champlain. Nous avons un monument et une école élémentaire française, à Orillia, qui portent son nom en mémoire de lui. Il est arrivé en 1615 dans la

région que nous appelons aujourd'hui Huronie. Ce qui nous n'est pas tous familier est le fait que cinq ans auparavant, soit en 1610, il avait envoyé M. Étienne Brûlé pour vivre parmi les Huron afin de mieux se familiariser et de découvrir davantage leur milieu. Alors, il est important de noter que la proclamation du Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes coïncide aussi avec le 400^e anniversaire de l'arrivée d'Étienne Brûlé en Ontario.

Je veux aussi vous mentionner que la première messe catholique a été célébrée dans la colonie de Carhagouha, qui, de nos jours, est située à l'ouest de la ville de Québec. Cette messe a été célébrée par le père Le Caron. Samuel de Champlain et Étienne Brûlé ont été présents lors de cette messe. Dans la ville de Penetanguishene, nous avons une école secondaire française nommée en l'honneur du père Le Caron.

Comme nous approchons l'année 2015, ce sera le 400^e anniversaire de l'arrivée de Samuel de Champlain en Ontario. Dans la région du Simcoe-Nord, nous nous sommes déterminés à souligner cette occasion spéciale. Nous nous attendons à ce que les gouvernements provincial et fédéral accordent une attention spéciale envers ce personnage francophone si extraordinaire.

En conclusion, je suis très heureux de voir que cette législature reconnaît l'importance de nos francophones en Ontario, leur histoire et héritage si enrichissants, ainsi que les opportunités qu'ils représenteront à l'avenir. De la part des résidents de la région de Simcoe-Nord, j'applaudis la proclamation de la Loi 24, loi de 2010 votée par le parlement sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariens.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

M. Ted Arnott: Je tiens à l'honneur de parler en faveur du projet de loi 24, Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté par l'Assemblée législative, le 25 septembre de chaque année, nous reconnaissons l'importance de la présence francophone en Ontario et nous rendrons hommage aux accomplissements et aux contributions de nos résidents et résidentes francophones.

Quoique aujourd'hui j'offre mes commentaires en français, j'aimerais bien avoir cette aisance dans les deux langues. J'ai écrit ces commentaires en anglais sur mon BlackBerry, une autre merveilleuse tradition canadienne, mais j'avais besoin d'aide pour les traduire en français.

Améliorer ma fluidité en français a toujours été l'un de mes objectifs, mais trouver le temps pour réaliser cet objectif est un gros défi depuis mon élection à l'Assemblée législative en 1990.

Je suis tout de même fier de dire que j'ai étudié le français à l'école secondaire et à l'université. J'ai également participé au programme de cours immersif en français à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières en 1987.

Par surcroît, mon épouse est une professeure de français et nos fils font partie du programme de cours

immersif en français offert par notre système d'écoles publiques à Fergus.

Notre famille croit en la valeur du bilinguisme. Nous adoptons cette valeur parce que nous sommes des Canadiens.

Le Canada que nous connaissons, aimons et tenons à cœur ne serait pas ce qu'il est aujourd'hui si ce n'était pas de la communauté francophone qui forme le centre de notre histoire partagée. Le Canada ne serait pas le Canada sans la culture et la langue françaises.

Cette année marque le 400^e anniversaire de l'arrivée des pionniers francophones, lorsque Étienne Brûlé est arrivé d'une mission de reconnaissance pour Samuel de Champlain.

Aujourd'hui, il y a près de 600 000 francophones en Ontario, la plus importante communauté francophone hors Québec.

Aujourd'hui nous leur rendons hommage, nous les remercions pour leurs contributions variées à l'Ontario, et nous célébrons ce qui fait de nous, les Canadiens et les Canadiennes, une communauté spéciale.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

M^{me} Lisa MacLeod: Mes collègues, il me fait plaisir de parler du projet de loi 24, une loi pour déclarer le 25 septembre le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

Il est vrai de dire que ce projet de loi aujourd'hui sert à raconter l'histoire du drapeau franco-ontarien, qui a débuté pendant le mandat progressiste-conservateur il y a 35 ans. C'était le 25 septembre 1975 quand le drapeau francophone vert et blanc a été levé pour la première fois. Je veux prendre l'occasion pour souligner plusieurs de mes collègues qui ont aidé à nous livrer à ce moment. Je me souviens d'une gamme de députés qui ont assisté à ce côté de la Chambre. Je parle ici de Gilles Morin, Leo Bernier, René Brunelle, et surtout Albert Bélanger et Brian Coburn de ma communauté, celle d'Ottawa.

I am thinking on this occasion to underscore numerous PC colleagues who have throughout the years contributed to where we are today. I'm thinking here of Leo Bernier, René Brunelle; of course, from Ottawa, Albert Bélanger, Brian Coburn; and from the minister of francophone affairs' own riding, Gilles Morin of Ottawa-Vanier.

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I'm fortunate to call Ottawa my home, a city where many cultures and both official languages thrive in my riding of Nepean-Carleton. We are fortunate to have many French-language schools. I will name them: École élémentaire publique Michaëlle-Jean, École élémentaire Bernard-Grandmaître, École élémentaire catholique Jean-Robert Gauthier, École élémentaire catholique Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau, École secondaire catholique de Barrhaven, and Collège catholique Franco-Ouest. These schools enrich our community and help build Canadian culture.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gerald R. Savoie from Manotick, who was awarded the ordre de la Pléiade for his contributions to

the Franco-Ontarian community. I want to congratulate Gerald for his exceptional merits in receiving this distinguished honour. He has made Nepean–Carleton and the entire city of Ottawa very proud.

I'd like to congratulate all of my colleagues in the chamber today, regardless of political affiliation. I think taking a stand today with my colleagues from Thornhill, Simcoe North and Wellington–Halton Hills, as well as members across the chamber, is a strong stand for diversity in this chamber and for Ontario.

I'd also like to commend my colleague from the city of Ottawa, Jean-Marc Lalonde from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who has been quite an advocate on all matters of culture. Whether it is Franco-Ontarian Day, the Franco-Ontarian flag or even recently when we celebrated the Olympics in this nation in Vancouver, he has tremendous spirit. I would like to congratulate him.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

There being no further debate, Madame Meilleur has moved second reading of Bill 24. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY ACT, 2010

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

M^{me} Meilleur moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'APPRENTISSAGE DES JEUNES ENFANTS À TEMPS PLEIN

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 21, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters /
Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin

d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to continue with the debate I left off with, I think, last Thursday. I believe I still have approximately 20 minutes or so, as the clock shows.

Last Thursday, I was talking about an individual whom I thought encapsulated Bill 242 very well. His name was Petr Varmuza, a former city employee who worked in the field of child care for a long, long time. I thought he brought a great deal of wisdom to the deputations on Bill 242. He talked about the three Rs: Is it the right thing to do? Are we doing it right? Are we providing the right resources to it to make sure this bill is done well?

I talked about "Is it the right thing to do?" last week, so I'd rather not re-engage viewers with the first R. I talked as well about "Are we doing it right?" I raised many questions to which I spoke, and I will continue with that, and the third, and parts of "Are we committing the right resources?"—those two I combined in my remarks, and I will end my remarks by reviewing many of the amendments I made that the government rejected.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: For the record, the member from Oakville wasn't there; you're quite right. But the government rejected all of my amendments, and I want to review them one by one toward the latter part of my discussion.

I began to say last week that consideration must be given to the potential loss of revenue for daycares, which may put them at risk or drive up costs for parents whose children remain in daycares. I thought I talked about it last week; I'm not quite sure. But it doesn't matter. If I did so, I'll repeat it; that is, many of the child care centres that provide preschool and after-school activities rely on those dollars.

Those daycare centres that provide child care for four- and five-year-olds rely on a steady flow of dollars to be able to stay open. Once you remove those students from those child care centres, it's going to cost them a great deal by way of financial support, which they were desperately looking for. We believe that unless we support them in this transition as we obligate the boards of education to provide preschool and after-school care with full-time JK and SK in a seamless day, we need to provide the support to those daycare centres, for the most part non-profits and others, that are currently providing that support.

I have to admit that there wasn't a great deal of clarity in committee. As we were speaking on this matter, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga gave answers that I thought left me more befuddled at the end than indeed in between and before we even spoke on this matter. I was saying, "Will you be providing transitional dollars for those child care centres—stabilization funds or indeed even base funding?" The parliamentary assistant from

Kitchener–Conestoga said that the minister announced \$63 million already, and that was supposed to be used for transitional funding.

I pressed the member and said, “That money, as far as I know, is supposed to be a continuation of federal dollars that have been dispersed over the last four years”—\$63 million for the last four years. What the government has done is finally put in some of their own money by committing \$63 million for the following year. God knows whether that money will continue to flow year after year; we don’t know. We have been pressing Liberals to talk about the \$300 million they wanted to spend since 2003, and as far as I know, they’ve only been spending approximately \$25 million to \$30 million of the money they promised—their own provincial dollars—as opposed to what the federal government has done, which they took and distributed over a four-year period.

So I said to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, “I’m sorry, but as far as I know, that \$63 million has nothing to do with Bill 242.” A couple of minutes later, she received a note, from what I could gather, and then she said there’s going to be some extra money. I tried to clarify that, but by the end of the answer I was more confused than before I asked the question. So it wasn’t entirely clear.

I made some inquiries with child care folks outside Queen’s Park. They said, “We don’t get any help from the government in this regard.” I suppose if I talked to the minister, she might reveal some of those things; I don’t know. But I was told through some outside person that the government is indeed announcing privately some additional money other than the \$63 million for stabilization funds. We heard a figure of \$50 million, which would go a long way to help those non-profit sectors that will be seriously affected by it.

But if indeed they’re providing that kind of money, say it out loud. Tell opposition member Marchese that there’s \$50 million coming. Why hide it? Why not tell me publicly that you’re doing that? Then I can call the folks who are calling me and say, “Don’t worry, the minister and others have told me privately and publicly that there is money coming. Not to worry.” But they don’t say.

What the outside folks also say—we hear that the \$50-million figure they told them may be a diminishing number; that is, they said \$50 million, but clearly that number fluctuates, which suggests to me the government is not entirely committed and/or clear about how much money they’re going to give to this sector that is going to be profoundly affected by Bill 242. And because the minister and others haven’t told me whether they’re going to give it any money, my feeling is that I don’t know whether there’s any money that is going to come from the government.

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We’re not going to know until September, and even then it will be vague, it will be hit-and-miss. Some communities may get some support, others may not. We don’t have a clue. I say to the minister, who is present in

this Legislature, “If you know, tell us,” so that we can have clarity—not to talk about accountability, but at least clarity—so that those who are worried can be relieved of the financial stress they know they’re going to experience come September. I put that on the record as well, because I am concerned.

How will this affect the boards that already have full-day kindergarten, like most of the French boards in the province? I asked that question today in the Legislature, along with my colleague France Gélinas, because—and I’ll get to the amendment later, because we have time—we were very concerned.

We stated French-language boards play a unique role in this province and we, as New Democrats, support the uniqueness of French-language boards, French language, French-language culture in Ontario, and we need to do whatever we need to do, constitutionally and by law, to make sure that they are getting the support they need, to make sure that they have been adequately and fully consulted so that they, together with the government, are able to answer many of the questions that they have, that they submitted to us both in writing and orally; their worries about how Bill 242 is going to affect them in particular, their culture, their language, their students, their programs.

When I raised this in committee there was not but a word. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga, the parliamentary assistant, said not but a word, which leads me to believe that those who came to depute have legitimate worries.

Now I know the government is going to hide under subsection 260.8(1) which reads, “The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting transitional matters related to the implementation of this part.” and (2), “In the event of a conflict, a regulation made under subsection (1) prevails over provisions of an act or regulation that are administered by the minister.”

What this section did for the government is to avoid answering any questions in committee, to avoid accepting any of the amendments that I proposed, and simply to say “Don’t worry, Marchese. Don’t worry, French language boards, you’re going to be taken care of in regulation.” It all seems nice, even cute, to suggest that we got it covered; that Marchese has proposed an amendment to deal with that and the government says, “We’ve got another amendment to deal with this. We’re not going to talk about it. We’re just going to present a motion in the bill that says a regulation will be passed and that will override anything contained in the bill or anything else for that matter.”

Understand the vagueness of that section. Understand that, through regulation, where we have absolutely no control, the government can quietly, secretly do whatever it wants with the French boards or with any other non-profit child care centre here, in Ottawa, in the north, in the east, whatever, where there will be no uniform application of the law, but rather hit-and-miss on the basis of whatever regulation is passed by the government

to deal with whatever problem they're facing anywhere in Ontario.

This regulation means there will be no uniformity of application. They can do what they want. I suppose it is a response. It wasn't the response I was looking for, but I know that French-language boards have submitted to us and to the government their serious concern by way of a six- or seven-page letter that has been sent to them saying, "We've got concerns; you've got to deal with them." My hope is that they will. My hope is that they will consult after the fact and resolve as many problems as have been raised.

We argue that there must be subsidies for before- and after-school care to ensure accessibility. If we do not offer subsidies for the preschool and after-school, it means a lot of those young children are not going to be able to go to that full-day JK and SK. If indeed the cost of that preschool and after-school—\$30 a day can be very expensive for a whole lot of people. So we are worried about that. We do not have any information as to how the government proposes to deal with that, but if the price is too high we're going to be shutting out a whole lot of parents. We assume there is going to be a subsidy program, and we hope the details of that subsidy will soon be revealed so that many can be relieved of this problem before the start of the next year in early September.

Without guaranteed before- and after-school care, this is not really full-day anything. Parents who cannot find or afford before-9 and after-3 care may not be able to access the extra half-day of kindergarten for their child. For learning to be full-day, it must include guaranteed full wraparound service at one location. There is nothing in this legislation to provide full-year care for the summer, Christmas or March break periods.

We worry that in the summer, when school is over, children are going to be on their own, parents will be on their own, desperately looking for care. So while you have a seamless day for 10 months of the year, for the next two months parents are on their own having to struggle to find child care—including March break, Christmas break and other days.

By the way, in my amendment to say there should be full, year-round schooling for these children—and by "schooling," I mean those preschool and after-school child care programs. We believe these programs are desperately needed by working men and women. While it is true that the government provides for boards that are willing to provide such a program in the summer, there is actually nothing in law that says they must. It is voluntary, and because it is voluntary, no board without adequate support and no board that's facing ongoing deficits is ever going to provide a program for the summer for those kids. You're never going to have a year-round program, as we propose. Unless you obligate boards to do so, they will not do it. Because it's voluntary, and because most boards are broke and have been so for a long time and have been experiencing deficits for a long time—and by the way, they are able to deal with their

deficits by cutting programs. I suggest to you that it means they have no money to provide those programs.

Boards like the Toronto District School Board have already expressed concern about whether or not the funding being provided by the government is adequate. And it's not just the Toronto board. Most boards across Ontario are profoundly worried that they're going to have to take money from the current budgets to provide for this program. I guarantee that the extra administrative costs and the extra time the teachers, vice-principals and principals are going to have to put into this program mean that much of what they do now will have to simply be deferred, will have to wait. There is an incredible cost, both financial and in time, to teachers, vice-principals, principals, superintendents and everybody else to make sure this program works and works well. It suggests to me that they're going to be very busy trying to make this work, and it says to me that much of what they've been doing will simply not be done.

I want to get to my amendments because people need to know the amendments that I have moved. I want to remind people that the government did not accept any one of my amendments or any of the amendments that were introduced by Ms. Witmer, the member of the Conservative Party, with respect to this particular issue, and I want to read them for the record.

1520

Amendment 1: The government must develop a five-year plan to implement the entire Pascal report by 2015.

We reminded the member from Kitchener–Conestoga that Charles Pascal—and I'm looking for the page that tells us what Pascal had recommended. And I said "five years" and I remember the member from Kitchener–Conestoga saying, "Here's the report. He didn't say five years. He said up until 2020, so it's another 20 years"—no. Much of what Pascal had recommended would be done in five. And in the first three years, as I indicated to her in committee, they should have done the following:

- provide the full-day early learning program for all of Ontario's four- and five-year-olds, including extended day/year options for parents;

- vest accountability for system change in an early years division in the Ministry of Education;

- create an early years policy framework for a coherent, comprehensive and accountable child and family service system;

- improve parent engagement;

- mandate municipal authorities to consolidate and re-engineer child/family programs and child care for children up to age four into the Best Start child and family centres; and

- allocate sufficient funding to support the strategy.

Understand: In three years, they requested the Minister of Education to do all the things that I read in that report. The bulk of it was supposed to be done in three years. Then there's more in the next two years.

But if you were there—some of you were there—she dangled this paper before us, saying, "No, the report said 2020." It's not true. Whatever was to be done by 2020

included the following in years 5 to 10: expand parental leave, and make available a new early childhood specialty degree That's what we were supposed to do in five years, which she dangled in front of my eyes.

We hope that the government is committed to the Pascal report and we hope they will do this in five years. They rejected that.

I put it forth because I truly believe in it; I think Pascal strongly believed in it; teachers believed in it; and everybody who was consulted believed in it.

Amendment 2—folks, you guys are—it's a bit annoying, because I'm trying to read and there's chatter here. If you don't mind, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We were complimenting you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know, but it's just the chatter that hurts.

Amendment 2: In order to deliver a planned and effective curriculum and support the principle of seamless early childhood education throughout the complete full and extended day period, each class will be staffed by two designated early childhood educator positions and one teacher position.

The early childhood education positions must be full-time and based on a seven-hour day.

The two ECE positions must overlap to enable the provision of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. coverage, including the availability of both ECEs to cover the lunch-hour period.

This is not going to work very well. We're proposing two early childhood educators, because you can't do this with one teacher and one early childhood educator. The minister knows this, and they're going to have to scramble to find parents, grandparents, anybody who's going to come in and try to fill in the preschool and after-school, including lunch hour. It's not going to work, and it's not going to work well. And they rejected my amendment.

Third one: A board will be allowed to employ workers on a letter of permission where no ECE is available. If a worker on a letter of permission applies for a second letter, a training program must be provided to facilitate qualifying as an ECE.

Many deputations came forward saying, "Look, a letter of permission is okay but it should be limited, and maximum two years." Some of the people who apply simply are not qualified, so to extend it indefinitely is wrong. The government rejected this amendment.

Amendment 4: The government must set up a process to compensate child care centres for financial losses due to the impact of the shift of four- and five-year-olds to the public school system over the next five years. They rejected that, as I indicated in my remarks.

Amendment 5: Class sizes in the kindergarten early learning program must be capped at 26 students. They rejected that. It means that class size is likely to go up to 30. We believe having four- and five-year-olds in a classroom that's not adequate—up to 30 students is going to be tough on the teacher and tough on the early childhood educator.

Amendment 6: School boards must be mandated and funded to provide a nutritious lunch and snacks to all children in the full-day learning program. They rejected that as well.

Amendment 7: School boards must be mandated and funded to provide full-day and full-year care for every child registered in the full-day learning program. They rejected that.

Amendment 8: In order to protect the space in our schools currently occupied by child care programs, the government must provide capital funding to provide space for the early learning program that will not result in the loss of viable child care spaces.

Amendment 9: This would provide an exemption for French-language district school boards until a date set out in a plan developed under this legislation. The minister would develop a transitional plan for the implementation of this legislation that recognizes the unique nature of French language schools and respects the long-standing kindergarten programs that are already in place.

These are all my amendments, all rejected by the government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to follow the member from Trinity–Spadina. As usual, he brings a lot to the debate. I know that in the opportunities that I've had to work with him at the committee level, some of his input has been quite valuable, and we've tried to work together. Where the member for Trinity–Spadina, Mr. Marchese, brings forward an idea that falls in line with the direction of the government, we've tried to give credit where credit is due. In a number of cases, we've been successful in that.

This is a program that is very, very popular with parents. It's obviously a change in our school system and it's a major change in our school system. It's something that's being introduced, I think, in a transitional way to allow the school boards to learn, as they're doing, to bring into a number of schools about 35,000 four- and five-year-olds. Fourteen hundred classes in about 600 schools around the province are going to benefit from what we're calling the first phase of full-day learning, and that's starting this September. After that, stages will follow; stages will be phased in. The intent is to have it fully phased in by 2015-16.

I think the approach that is being taken—and some of the ideas, to be frank, that were put forward by the member from Trinity–Spadina have a lot of merit. It's a matter of the process you use to deal with them, then. What we're saying is that the concerns that were raised by some of the stakeholders—very valid concerns, very valuable input—can be dealt with through the introduction of regulations to deal with this as we move forward.

This obviously will be a process that changes along the way. As we learn more, as we get more input from groups, as the experience makes itself known, we're going to get better and better at this.

I thank the member for his remarks. I understand his sentiments—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you.

The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Trinity–Spadina's final lead on Bill 242. I think he was kind when he said that there wasn't a great deal of clarity while we were working on clause-by-clause in committee. The words "Trust us; it will be in regulation" came up almost without exception every time a question was raised of the parliamentary assistant, and quite frankly, it got a little disconcerting. We were looking for very specific responses, and instead, the answer was always, "It will be in regulation. It will be okay. Trust us." I think, quite frankly, the people who presented over the three days of hearings deserved a more concrete response. I also believe the opposition members deserved a little more than, "Trust us; it will be in regulation."

I've spoken previously in this House about my concern with how much detail is left to regulation, how easily regulations can be changed with the stroke of a pen, without consultation, so I do have concerns that there are many unintended consequences that are going to happen with the implementation of Bill 242. The member from Trinity–Spadina raised a number of them in his amendments and in his questions to the parliamentary assistant. I think it's very unfortunate that we were essentially brushed aside and told, "No, no, don't worry. It will all be in regulation. It will all be good." I think it's a terrible way to deal with legislation that, as the previous speaker said, is quite a dramatic change in how education is going to be dealt with in Ontario.

1530

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's always a pleasure to make comments following the member from Trinity–Spadina. He brought a lot of factual information to this debate. One can't help but think: How can something good—the implementation of full-day kindergarten and junior kindergarten—go so wrong? Well, it goes so wrong when there is no transparency, when there is no opportunity for people to be heard.

Do we want full-day kindergarten? Absolutely. Do we support full-day learning? Absolutely. Do we have questions? The member from Trinity–Spadina certainly spelled out some questions that the people in the field, the people who are tasked with implementing this in very short order—we're talking how, in a number of weeks from now, those little four-year-olds are going to be participating in full-day learning in Ontario. The people who are going to be delivering those services have legitimate questions, and we all get brushed aside.

To say that it will be handled in regulation is, in my point of view, disrespectful—disrespectful of what we're trying to achieve and disrespectful of the goodwill of the people who want to make this a success on the ground

but who need answers from this government in order for this to happen. We get told it is going to be handled in regulation. Regulation is not a transparent process. It's not a process that gets debated in a public place. It's certainly not a process that we in opposition have any way, shape or form of influencing. With such an important issue, it is hard to comprehend why good people are being brushed aside.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes this afternoon to speak on Bill 242, full-day learning, and to say, as a retired educator—I spent almost 33 years in an elementary school classroom—that I certainly have the knowledge and understanding of what it means, the importance of having four- and five-year-olds in the classroom, in kindergarten, in full-day learning. We've taken the bull by the horns with this and have decided on a program that will see up to 35,000 four- and five-year-olds in 1,400 classes in 600 schools in Ontario in September of this year.

This will be expanded. This will happen in stages across Ontario. We will certainly learn from this process as we go. I'm sure, long after we're gone from the Legislature, there will be other ideas that will be taken into consideration as we receive more knowledge about this.

Certainly we've learned a lot from Dr. Pascal and the understanding that he has of the importance of early learning and the way it's to be implemented. We would like to do everything in every program across Ontario, but we just can't do that. I can say that this is giving the youngsters that opportunity to move between programs and locations without having to move from one school to another, or from one learning experience to another. That's what I like about it: It's giving the young people that opportunity to have that full experience of learning when they are so vibrant in doing so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to say to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry that we do not question whether it's the right thing to do. We went beyond that debate. So to repeat that fact that this is a nice program, this is a good program, is irrelevant in the scheme of this debate, at least with us. The question is, are we doing it right? That is the question that I have been debating Thursday and today. It is my view that we're not doing it well. The reason why we're not doing this well is because we have not accepted to do all of what Pascal told the Liberal government to do. Had they done what Pascal told them to do, we wouldn't have all of these questions. We wouldn't be in a situation where everyone is worried about what is going to happen come September or the next September or beyond. Because they cherry-picked two of the elements of that full Pascal report, we are left with profound questions and worries.

When the government attempts to deal with this—and with all due respect to my friend from Oakville, we have worked together on a number of other bills and he himself has made an effort to make amendments, and he has worked on amendments on this bill—there was no effort whatsoever. On this bill, the government passed a motion that said, “The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting transitional matters....” These transitional matters are presumably going to be five or six years, so we’re not going to have any clarity for five or six years over any transitional matter that may pertain to this bill. So anything goes, nothing goes; there will be no uniformity, or maybe there will be. We might deal with the French-language school boards; we may not—adequately or not. Other matters—we don’t have a clue. So to deal with this process question this way is not right. That’s my point.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I’m pleased to rise and talk about third reading of Bill 242. I had the pleasure of sitting in on clause-by-clause debate and listening to the deputations over three days of hearings. There were a number of issues that were raised. Quite frankly, I don’t think they were dealt with when we got to the amendments and the clause-by-clause, so I’d like to focus my debate on that.

The first one, which is right up at the top in terms of what we’ll call unintended consequences of implementing full-day learning, is the concern that the bill will not allow school boards to partner with local, private and not-for-profit providers to offer the before- and after-care program for either before-and-after care, for summer, and for non-school days. Those would be the PD days, March break, the Christmas break. The YMCA had concerns that the current model that they have operated with for the last 50-odd years will in fact be eliminated if they are not allowed to continue those partnerships within existing school boards. As I said, this was also a concern of the Ontario school boards’ association, Dufferin-Peel PLASP and the YMCAs.

I’m going to give you a bit of an overview from an excerpt that was given by the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association. An example of this partnership “can be seen with Peel District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Both have a working relationship with several organizations including PLASP—formerly known as the Peel lunch and after-school program—Family Day and the YMCA. PLASP Child Care Services is a not-for-profit organization with fairly sophisticated financial and fee collection systems, including a call centre. It has been involved with both school boards for over 20 years”—in Peel—“and provides programs for children up to 12 years of age that include before-school, lunch-hour and after-school care as well as PA/PD days, Christmas and March break holidays. These relationships have developed into school-based partnerships that provide seamless transitions and services for children and their families. These child care

providers are part of the collaborative fabric that make up the Peel region’s Success by 6 and Peel child and youth initiatives.”

What I see happening with Bill 242 is in fact going to eliminate that partnership. I think it’s a terrible shame that partnerships that have been built up over years and years and are, quite frankly, a community responding to the needs within their community—that this bill will eliminate those partnerships and availability to allow before- and after-day programs.

The YMCA wanted a clear role for not-for-profit community providers delivering after-school programs for the six- to 12-year-olds. To some degree, I think they were successful in getting that clarification of the six-to-12-year-olds.

1540

My concern is what is happening with the younger children. Full-day learning, of course, will allow children as young as three years and eight months old to be in a full-day program. Where is there availability for before-and-after programs for PD days, March break and Christmas break? I’m a mother of two young children, and I know the challenge of finding care for those one-off days. Quite frankly, it’s a lot simpler when you’re looking for full-day care than if you’re trying to fill in the spots here and there throughout the year.

I do have concerns about the viability of non-school-based child care providers as well—operators who say that the four- and five-year-olds have actually helped subsidize the cost of the younger children. We have a model in place in Ontario that I would argue has been working, where a set number of children have to have an ECE provider with them. That number of children changes as the children age, and when you eliminate the four- and five-year-olds in that business model, it makes the business case for operating a child care program that effectively ends at three- and four-year-olds very challenging from a business standpoint.

Almost every child care organization that presented before the committee shared the same concerns, and I think that’s very unusual. I’ve sat on a number of different committees now, and it’s sort of sending a message when deputation after deputation is raising the same concerns, raising the same issues. We saw that very clearly with Bill 242. There were a lot of presentations that began: “We support the option of allowing children to participate in full-day learning, but we have concerns with how it is going to be implemented under this bill.” Then, to give them credit, many of the presenters gave specific examples of how Bill 242 could have been improved and could have actually worked within the current system.

The YMCA fears that parents will be forced to use unlicensed, unregulated, informal child care arrangements. That comes back to: If I’m only looking for care for PD days, March break and Christmas, it’s not a sound business model for a provider—a business person—to set up a model where they’re not going to get the children full-time. There is no business in Ontario that will say,

"If I can only have clients for two and a half weeks in any given school year, I can make a sound business case for that." We heard a number of providers referencing that.

Despite the fact that we had three days of hearings, there were no substantive amendments made to reflect the input that was received from so many of the presenters. It sends a message to the presenters as well that we're going through the process but we've really already made up our minds, and even though you're in the system and working within the school boards and within the schools, we're really not interested in hearing from you how to improve our model under 242.

We don't know how quickly different boards and schools are going to be able to offer the program. A lot of parents are going to be deprived of the opportunity, depending on how Bill 242 is spun out, of whether they can make plans and how to make those plans. We now know in our own community which schools will be providing full-day learning, many without, and many will not be able to provide that care. Many schools are not being given that option. So again, there's that unknown: Depending on where you live, depending on which neighbourhood you're in, you will have full-day learning, and for many, of course, you will not.

The sheer cost of implementing this program: I think we've had the government back down a little, quite frankly, and slow down on implementation, because they're starting to look at the bottom line in terms much how much this one program is going to cost the provincial coffers. It would not surprise me in the least to find that even the implementation of five years will be slowed down more as we look at just how challenging wrestling this deficit is going to be.

As the community and social services critic, it's frustrating to me that we have so many programs existing in Ontario now that previous governments and this government have held up as something that they really want to offer to the people of Ontario, and yet they won't fund them effectively. I'm thinking, of course, of the children's aid societies currently, or community development. We have hundreds of families who are looking for services for their children who have aged out of the school system, and they are not getting access to services at home, to Passport programs. I see a brand new program being started, and I just have to question, if you can't sufficiently fund the programs that we have now, then why are you starting to begin some new programs? You have to have your fiscal house in order before you're going to get to new programs like full-day learning.

Back to special needs children: Are there going to be services in place for those kids? The Early Years program that was put in place has done a very effective job of capturing children who need that early speech and language assistance. I'm worried that by starting a new program, by getting a new one up and running, we're going to lose some of those kids in terms of getting the assessment that they need.

As I raised in my comments in response to the member from Trinity-Spadina, much of this legislation is being left to regulation—too much, in my opinion. I think that the providers and the school boards deserve clear, concise instructions as to what they can expect, and I want to give you one example that highlights the need for that clarity.

There was a memo that was sent out to directors of education across the province on January 13 of this year. It was sent by Jim Grieve, who is the assistant deputy minister in the early learning division; a very talented staff member, formerly with the Peel board of education. He has been charged with implementing the Early Years program, so he sent out a memo to all the directors of education, and he was trying to clarify some of the proposals that were in Bill 242. I'll highlight only one section that obviously raised a number of phone calls and a number of questions to me. It's talking about governing legislation and program documents.

It says, "The ministry is also developing a program guide outlining how the extended day program would complement the core day program." So of course, the extended day program would be any child who taps into the before- and after-school program: the 6:30 or 7 a.m. until 9 a.m., and then 3 p.m. onwards after the formal school day ends.

It says, "Additional material will be developed for parents to use at home, should they choose not to enrol their children in the extended day." So we're talking about homework programs that are going to be provided by the Ministry of Education for children who are not tapped into the before-school and after-school programs. I'm looking at that, thinking, "Okay, I have a child in grade 2. I have a child in grade 5. I remember shaking my head when they were bringing homework home in kindergarten, and now we're talking about JK?" And again, this quote comes from a January 13 memo from the ADM for the Early Years division of the Ministry of Education.

As an additional point, I raised this with the minister's parliamentary assistant in committee because I felt I had an obligation, because it had been raised with me as a point of concern, that perhaps I could get clarification at that time. And in fact, the parliamentary assistant first shook her head and said, no, no, I must be misquoting. Then, of course, when I provided the memo, there was an, "I'll get back to you." I'm still waiting for that answer. I would like clarification on that, and I understand the minister is here, and perhaps we could get that clarification, because I think it's important for the clarity of this debate to know what exactly is meant by, "If you do not participate or sign your child up for the before-and after-day program, in fact, you will be sent home with homework for them."

1550

The Ontario Principals' Council also appeared at committee. As has been raised by a number of people, they are concerned about the September rollout. There still are many unknowns. We have almost no information as to

how this full-day learning program is going to be implemented in schools throughout Ontario, but parents have to enrol their children now in order to sign up for the September date.

I think that's a really unfortunate way to deal with parents who need that clarity. We often talk about the need to simplify the lives of working parents in Ontario. Having those unknowns with this full-day learning program is not helpful to parents.

The early childhood educators and the current providers are also raising some issues. They're concerned that because there will be no availability of partnerships between schools, school boards and the actual providers of the child care, there are going to be some bidding wars and some staffing challenges. Are we looking at shutting down a system that's already in place with the YMCAs and the providers as the ECEs move into the school system? Because that's what I'm seeing. I don't think it was the government's intention to close a business sector that has been operating and servicing the child care field for so many years across Ontario. If anything, when we talk about child care providers, we always talk about the lack of availability: "We need to have more child care spaces." I think one of the unintended consequences of Bill 242 will be that providers will shut down.

There was one provider, a private operator. Her entire business model, every single location that she has operating currently, is in schools. She will not have that option available to her. She's going to have to change her entire model in order to still be in business come September 2010. I have to believe that that was not the intention of the Ministry of Education when they introduced Bill 242.

The bottom line: This bill is going to be hitting the not-for-profit sector of child care providers the hardest. Bill 242 is going to mean a complete reworking of how child care is provided in Ontario. I truly believe that the ministry has not given sufficient time and sufficient information to the providers, the parents and, ultimately, the schools to implement this without a lot of concerns and causes.

We are coming up to a traditional time of year when the school boards shut down. There is not a lot of activity that occurs at the local schools in July and August, when children are out of school. So even when we talk about the timeline from third reading debate of Bill 242 and September 2010, you need to truncate that by two months because you cannot wait until July and August of this year to be implementing, to be solving some of these details.

For parental choice, Bill 242 is not going to provide it. If you are able to tap into the full-day learning model, you will still have a challenge, and, I would argue, more of a challenge finding care for those PA days, for March break, for Christmas and, of course, over the summer holidays. You in fact have made it more challenging for parents to find care who want it and who need it for their children.

I'm going to leave the debate at that point, but I guess I would like an answer on why the assistant deputy minister is talking about homework for children not tapping into the before- and after-day program. I think that would be very helpful for today's debate, and I'm happy to take any questions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I listened to the speech attentively. The member brings some good points, points that we have heard many times before in this debate and points that deserve an answer.

There's one particular one that I wanted to talk about, and those are the human resources challenges. For years, early childhood educators have been in the \$12-, \$13- to \$14-an-hour range. Are you surprised that people decide not to take three years of a college degree that is demanding and that costs a lot of money, effort and energy so that you can have a college degree in early childhood education and be paid \$12 to \$14 an hour?

As a parent of teenagers looking at what their career path should be—you may be very good at working with children, and it could be that your heart is all into working with early years, but when the job market is at the \$12-to-\$14-an-hour mark, no wonder we have a shortage of early childhood educators. The educators who are there are there because they have passion. Their hearts are in the right place. But when you can't pay your bills at the end of the day, it makes for a tough decision.

Yes, there will be a shortage of early childhood educators until they get the respect they deserve, with the pay and the benefits that they deserve, for the hard work that they do. The member brought that forward during her allocution, and I certainly support this.

We will need more early childhood educators. They have to be integrated with respect into a salary grid that respects the knowledge they have.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Burlington for her comments. I'm pleased to offer a couple from our side of the House as well.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Dufferin-Caledon.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm sorry?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Dufferin-Caledon.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Dufferin-Caledon. I apologize; I got the riding name wrong.

I can tell you that, like most of us are completely aware, our constituency offices tend to be very much a sounding board, a litmus test, I guess you might say, for government legislation and policies that are brought forward from time to time. I can tell you that in my going-on-seven years here now, there have not been many pieces of legislation proposed in this assembly that have received as little negative feedback, at least in my constituency office, as this particular piece of legislation, Bill 242. If passed, I would suspect that it will be well favoured by most of the stakeholder groups that are involved in this issue.

I had two wonderful events in my riding when we first brought this forward, one at St. Vincent School in Thunder Bay and one at St. Patrick's School in Atikokan. All of the stakeholder groups involved—the teachers, the principals, the trustees, the administrators and the community at large—were very excited and very much favoured the introduction of this legislation. I think we're very excited to see it move forward.

As most people will know, it is a completely voluntary program. I think it's very important to remind people of that, especially parents. They are not required to do this. This is indeed voluntary, and it's a choice that's left up to parents to make on their own. I'm assuming that people will do that on a go-forward basis.

On the child care component as well, there have been some comments made in reference to the effect that this will have on child care. I think it's important to remind people that in our budget that was just introduced a very few short weeks ago, we invested \$63.5 million into child care, the money the feds did not come across with, that protected 8,000 child care spaces in the province and saved 1,000 jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm really pleased to make a few comments with respect to the very thoughtful presentation that was made by my colleague the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

I'd just like to comment on four points related to what she said, but note at the outset that nowhere has anyone said that we disagree with the idea of early childhood education and all-day learning; it's the way it's being implemented.

1600

The member raised some very important concerns with respect to the impact on not-for-profit child care providers as a result of this bill and how it skews the business model with a number of older children going into full-day learning with the ratios that are required for the younger children who are left. So it does put into some jeopardy whether or not some of these child care providers are going to be able to remain in service as a result of the changes being brought forward with this bill.

The second issue that she spoke to was the issue of the failure of the government members in committee to actually listen to some of the thoughtful presentations that were being made by some of the early childhood educators who came before the committee. Once again, this government is approaching this matter as a fait accompli. It doesn't really matter what you say in committee; their minds are made up and they're not amenable to any kind of change. We've seen that in other areas recently, most notably with the pharmacists, who had some excellent presentations that would have saved money and reduced some professional allowances, but once again, a fait accompli: They don't want to hear it.

The third point she made was, how we are going to pay for this in the context of the \$23-billion deficit this year? What happens to all of the other children who need

our help who are currently in the system? I'm thinking primarily of children with special needs, many of whom have issues that aren't being addressed by this government.

Then finally, there's the whole issue of the lack of clarity about how this is actually going to work in practical terms, on the ground and in the schools. It's the end of April now; September is coming. I hope we're not going to be left with a disastrous situation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's always one's good fortune to be able to hear the participation by the member for Dufferin–Caledon on an issue like this. This is third reading. I suspect it's going to go to a vote relatively soon. That's regrettable.

Look, if the government were to seek unanimous consent to put this bill into committee of the whole House, we could still make those amendments, couldn't we? All it would take would be unanimous consent and we'd have this bill in committee of the whole and we could make those amendments and do the fine-tuning that people are calling for. But Ms. Jones isn't speaking on behalf of herself; she's the voice of a whole pile of constituents in her riding and, quite frankly, people beyond. If those people's voices aren't important, then what indeed is going on here? That means that the committee process, frustrating at best, so oftentimes, and the second and third reading process are really just a sham. That's not healthy. It certainly doesn't contribute to the democratic process.

I feel compelled during the course of this debate to reflect on the imminent demise of Crowland Central school down where I come from, down by Cooks Mills, Lyons Creek—a historic, rural school, a small school. Oh my goodness, the audacity of those families who want to maintain a small school of—oh, what?—150 students. That school is at risk of being shut down because you've got folks down there just like the folks up here who, because of the funding restrictions, are being forced to consolidate schools, so these same kids who are going to be spending all day learning are going to be spending an hour and a half on a bus before they begin their all-day learning, and then another hour and a half on a bus before they get home in the evening. I don't want to be the parent who has to deal with that kid or those kids dropped off at the doorstep.

France Gélinas is next. She's our member from Nickel Belt. I'm looking forward to listening to what she has to say about this matter as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Dufferin–Caledon has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased that the members from Nickel Belt, Sault Ste. Marie, Whitby–Oshawa and Welland commented on my 20 minutes. I must say, I am disappointed that we didn't get any further explanation as to why a January 13 memo makes reference to "Additional material will be developed for parents to use

at home, should they choose not to enrol their children in the” before- and after-day in the “extended day.” This to me is a non-starter. You have to be able to justify what possible reason there would be for providing homework for parents who choose not to enrol their children in the before- and after-day program when this program starts for kids as young as three years and eight months old. I did not get the explanation that I wanted in committee when I asked the parliamentary assistant. The Minister of Education was in the House during debate and I did not get a response at that point. I think it’s indicative of a government that is choosing not to listen and not to respond. If you’re proud of this program, then justify it and explain what is meant when the assistant deputy minister is talking about extended material developed for parents to use at home—sounds like homework, talks like homework, reads like homework, so explain it. If that’s not what it is, then tell me what it is, because I think parents have a right to know and, quite frankly, so do school boards and teachers.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in third reading debate and, while I don’t look forward to the vote, I’m sure that it will come imminently.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It’s my pleasure to participate in the third reading of Bill 242, full-day early learning in Ontario. Basically, the government has announced funding for full-day kindergarten. The goal is to provide programs for 35,000 students in 2010, 50,000 students in 2011, and full implementation by 2015-16. The cost will be about \$200 million in the first year and \$300 million in the second year, rising to about \$1.5 billion by the time it reaches 2015-16. About 25% of schools already have class space, we were told, for full-day kindergarten, and we were told that there would be one certified teacher and one early child care worker in each class and that the class size will go to about an average of 26 students. Before- and after-school care will be provided on a needs basis for a fee, depending on available space. This is about all we know about the bill. Although lots of people have come with lots of questions, most of the questions remain.

I will be talking this afternoon about a letter that has been written by, I would say, the heavyweights of French-language education in Ontario. They have banded together and penned a letter that all four heavyweights in the Franco-Ontarian education system ask the government to respond to. Given that they are Franco-Ontarian, the letter is in French. I will quote from the letter.

So who are those four heavyweights? Well, the first one is l’Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, the French Catholic school board. What’s the second one? L’Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes, the principals’ and vice-principals’ association. The third heavyweight is l’Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, the French teachers. The fourth one is l’Association des conseils scolaires des

écoles publiques de l’Ontario, the French public school board.

On April 21, they wrote to les membres du comité législatif permanent de la politique sociale, the members of the social policy committee of this Legislative Assembly, about Bill 242, and they made specific recommendations regarding French-language schools. Allow me to quote the opening paragraph:

« Mesdames, Messieurs,

« Les organismes œuvrant en éducation de langue française »—ce sont les quatre organismes que je viens de vous lire—« ont pris connaissance des amendements proposés au projet de loi 242 par les différents partis et vous font part de leur intérêt en la matière. Nous intervenons dans le seul but »—les quatre organismes ont un seul but—« de nous assurer que le développement de l’éducation de langue française en Ontario ne soit pas mis en péril par la mise en œuvre du programme d’apprentissage des jeunes enfants. »

Le message est clair; le paragraphe d’ouverture en dit long : « Le programme d’apprentissage des jeunes enfants, le projet de loi 242, risque de mettre en péril le développement de l’éducation de langue française en Ontario. »

1610

C’est assez bizarre qu’aujourd’hui, la journée où on vient d’adopter dans la Chambre le projet de loi déclarant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, comme Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, les organismes doivent se mettre ensemble pour venir à bout d’être entendus, parce qu’un projet de loi est en train de mettre en péril le développement de l’éducation en langue française en Ontario. Depuis le règlement 17, et je dirais même avant ça, tous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes le savent : la survie de la francophonie en Ontario passe par l’éducation. Quand on a un projet de loi d’un gouvernement qui risque de mettre en péril le développement de l’éducation en langue française en Ontario, c’est sérieux. C’est très sérieux.

Ils disent : « Vous savez tous que l’offre de services à la petite enfance nous tient à cœur, car c’est un des moyens utilisés par notre communauté pour réduire les écarts et améliorer le rendement des élèves de langue française. »

Le paragraphe d’ouverture met la table pour ce qui s’en vient. On est en train de parler d’un projet de loi qui risque d’avoir des ramifications sérieuses et de longue durée sur le développement de l’éducation en langue française.

Ils disent : « Nous voulons que les élèves ayants droit réussissent. » Les ayants droit, ce sont les enfants qui ne parlent peut-être pas bien le français, mais qui ont droit à une éducation en français en Ontario. Souvent, ces enfants-là vont apprendre à parler français dans nos écoles francophones. On veut que ces élèves-là réussissent.

« On veut que la viabilité de nos communautés ne soit pas menacée par le modèle provincial de la majorité linguistique de l’Ontario. » Ce sont des mots qui pèsent

lourd pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. On parle d'une menace à la viabilité de nos communautés. On parle de choses sérieuses qui ont été écrites par quatre organismes champions de l'éducation francophone en Ontario. Ces gens-là parlent de menace à la viabilité de nos communautés; ils parlent de la mise en péril du développement de l'éducation de langue française en Ontario. Ils doivent être pris au sérieux, et on se doit de leur donner des réponses.

La lettre continue en disant : « Nous vous demandons par la présente de poser les questions difficiles et de faire les interventions suivantes dans le cadre des débats de l'Assemblée législative qui se passent à ce moment.

« Les partenaires en éducation de langue française soussignés »—les quatre que je vous ai nommées : l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, l'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes, l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens et l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario. Ils demandent la flexibilité nécessaire pour leur permettre de maintenir les services de maternelle et de jardin d'enfants qu'ils offrent déjà depuis une dizaine d'années. Ça fait une décennie que ces organismes-là offrent le jardin à temps plein, la maternelle à temps plein.

Quand on entend le gouvernement parler d'un concept révolutionnaire, ce n'est certainement pas en s'inspirant du modèle des écoles francophones qu'on parle de ça. Ce modèle-là n'a pas été créé pour les francophones et n'a pas été créé par les francophones; il est là, vraiment, pour la majorité linguistique anglophone. Puis, c'est correct, mais ça ne peut pas se faire en mettant en péril le développement de l'éducation en langue française; ça ne peut pas se faire comme une menace à la viabilité de nos communautés francophones.

Donc, que ce soit au plan du financement, de l'embauche du personnel ou encore au plan des partenariats communautaires établis pour assurer les services avant et après les heures de classe, ainsi que des programmes complémentaires importants à la minorité linguistique, ils demandent une flexibilité. Ils ne demandent pas d'enlever le projet de loi. Ils ne demandent rien d'extraordinaire. Ils demandent une flexibilité pour reconnaître le modèle qui a été développé pour et par les francophones et le droit de s'ajuster et de continuer à exister pendant qu'on s'ajuste à une nouvelle loi. Ce n'est pas beaucoup. On demande une flexibilité, mais à date, le gouvernement a refusé cette flexibilité.

Mon collègue de Trinity-Spadina a parlé des amendements que le parti néo-démocrate avait mis de l'avant qui auraient permis la flexibilité demandée dans cette lettre, et à date, le gouvernement dit non. J'espère qu'ils vont changer d'idée.

Je commence avec les questions à poser qui sont difficiles et les interventions qu'elles demandent.

La première est la reconnaissance des particularités des conseils de langue française en situation minoritaire. Ce qu'ils recommandent est que la mise en œuvre du

programme d'apprentissage pour les jeunes enfants soit faite avec une plus grande considération pour les particularités des conseils scolaires de langue française. Ils en font trois points.

Le premier est que les conseils scolaires de langue française gèrent la prestation de la maternelle et du jardin depuis 10 ans grâce à un modèle de financement différent de celui proposé, et ils ont besoin de savoir si les fonds générés par ce nouveau programme pourront leur servir à mettre sur pied des programmes pour les enfants de trois ans. C'est une question légitime qui leur permettrait de planifier en conséquence et qui demande une réponse.

Deuxième point, encore sur la reconnaissance des particularités : les conseils scolaires de langue française ont besoin de savoir s'ils pourront continuer à recevoir le financement adapté au bassin plus limité de leur clientèle scolaire en réduisant le seuil-repère du nombre d'enfants par salle de classe de 26 à 20 enfants. Encore là, mon collègue en a parlé beaucoup. Quand on parle d'une moyenne de 26, ça pourrait facilement dire qu'on aura 30 bouts de chou dans ces classes-là. Pour le modèle francophone, ils demandent une moyenne de 20 enfants comme seuil-repère.

Les conseils scolaires de langue française ont besoin de plus de flexibilité au niveau du modèle de dotation proposé pour la mise en œuvre du modèle, étant donné le nombre limité d'éducatrices et d'éducateurs de la petite enfance de langue française en Ontario.

Les efforts de recrutement ont déjà été faits. On sait déjà qu'il n'y aura pas suffisamment d'éducateurs et d'éducatrices de la petite enfance pour rencontrer les besoins des écoles francophones. Le gouvernement se doit d'adresser ça; il se doit au moins de leur donner la flexibilité qu'ils demandent pour être en ligne avec la réalité. On ne peut pas les inventer, ces travailleurs et travailleuses; ils doivent avoir un diplôme, mais on sait qu'on n'en a pas beaucoup qui pourront offrir un service en français de qualité.

« Donc, nous recommandons l'ajout d'un paragraphe distinct qui autorisera le conseil scolaire de langue française à modifier le programme d'apprentissage des jeunes enfants à temps plein et les programmes prolongés payants avant et après les heures pour mieux répondre aux particularités des communautés de langue française vivant en milieu minoritaire. » Ils demandent une flexibilité. Ce n'est pas beaucoup à demander.

En deuxième temps : une entente avec les fournisseurs. « Nous recommandons que les conseils scolaires de langue française aient la possibilité de maintenir, de renouveler et de conclure des ententes avec les fournisseurs de services de garde pour offrir le programme de jour prolongé à partir de 2010-2011 et pour les années subséquentes. » C'est une demande qui doit, au minimum, recevoir une réponse.

Recrutement et rétention du personnel—c'est le point numéro 3. Il y en a sept. « Nous recommandons que le projet de loi 242 prévoit des mesures visant à pallier aux difficultés de recrutement des ressources humaines » et pour assurer la mise en œuvre du programme PAGE.

« Il faut prévoir des mesures d'équité salariale et des dispositions pour les avantages sociaux afin que les salaires soient comparables partout dans la province afin d'éviter la perte de nos ressources aux grands conseils anglophones. Déjà, nos conseils ont signalé une pénurie d'éducatrices et d'éducateurs certifiés. »

1620

Si le programme, le projet de loi, mène aux programmes à temps plein pour les bouts de chou, et un conseil est capable d'attirer des travailleurs d'un conseil à l'autre parce qu'un a plus de ressources que l'autre, le gouvernement, par ses actions, crée des inégalités. Les conseils scolaires de langue française craint ces inégalités et les quatre ont demandé que ce soit discuté.

Numéro 4 : « Programmation d'apprentissage: nous recommandons que la programmation soit bien adaptée, par opposition à une simple traduction que l'on voit souvent, aux besoins particuliers des élèves qui fréquentent les écoles de langue française, et qu'elle tienne compte des stratégies de littératie particulières aux francophones. La programmation qui va être offerte pendant la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein ne doit pas être une traduction de ce qu'on a offert aux conseils anglophones. Ça doit être un programme d'apprentissage qui reflète les besoins des enfants francophones, ce qui veut dire souvent une approche différente face à la littératie.

« Des services en français dans les écoles de langue anglaise : nous recommandons que l'article 25.1, qui permet aux écoles de langue anglaise d'offrir des services en français, soit retiré. Ne vous méprenez pas : nous voulons que le plus grand nombre d'élèves parlent français, mais nous craignons que cette offre n'ait pour résultat d'inciter les parents dont les enfants ont le droit de fréquenter une école de langue française à les inscrire dans une école de langue anglaise plus proche au domicile. Cette migration augmentera le taux d'assimilation des francophones. »

C'est un point important. C'est sûr qu'on veut que tous les enfants aient accès à une éducation en français. On veut également que les écoles anglophones offrent une bonne éducation en français, offrent de bons cours de français. Ce n'est pas là la question. La question est plutôt que les écoles francophones sont dispersées et couvrent de grandes régions géographiques. Les écoles anglophones sont beaucoup plus nombreuses. Donc, ils devient facile pour un parent de choisir l'éducation anglophone de ses enfants. C'est souvent une décision plus difficile de choisir une école francophone qui, comme je vous le dis, couvre de grands districts, couvre de grands territoires.

Des coûts supplémentaires de l'éducation en langue française : « Nous recommandons que le financement pour les groupes francophones reconnaisse le coût supplémentaire de livrer les services en éducation auprès d'une communauté en situation minoritaire. Il est recommandé que le financement soit intégré aux subventions axées sur les élèves, sur les besoins des élèves, et que les facteurs pour calculer les fonds

octroyés aux conseils de langue française reconnaissent leur situation particulière : la distance des écoles de langue française aux domiciles familiaux; manque d'accès à l'école de langue française; transport et durée du trajet en autobus; coût de la promotion auprès des parents; traduction des documents en français afin de pouvoir transiger avec les municipalités; pénurie de personnel francophone, etc. » Et la liste s'allonge rapidement.

Au point 7, le dernier, disposition transitoire et protection des droits constitutionnels : « Nous recommandons que la formulation du paragraphe 260.8(1) du projet de loi soit révisée. À titre de responsables des écoles de langue française, nous devons nous assurer que toutes les dispositions du projet loi 242 soit assujetties aux protections des sous-sections 4 et 4.1 de la section 1 de la Loi sur l'éducation. Ces sous-sections reconnaissent les garanties de la section 93 de l'Acte constitutionnel de 1868 qui porte sur nos droits confessionnels, et la section 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, qui porte sur nos droits linguistiques à titre de conseils scolaires de langue française. » Ils vont en détail sur les différents articles de la loi.

Je me rends compte que le temps manque. Je veux remercier M^{me} Dorothee Petit-Pas de l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, M. Normand Delparte, qui est le président de l'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes, M. Benoit Mercier, qui est ici avec nous aujourd'hui, en fait, qui est le président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, et M. Roland Marion, qui est le président de l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario.

The French schools support full-day learning; they have been doing it for over a decade. The way this bill is brought forward basically has the potential to be very detrimental to the development of French-language education in Ontario as well as have a severe negative effect on the viability of francophone communities throughout Ontario. Those are serious threats. Those are serious issues. They were brought together in a letter signed by the two boards, the Catholic and the French, and the public French board, as well as the principals' association and the teachers' association from the francophone side. They're asking for changes. They're asking for flexibility. They're not asking for much, but they need it. I hope the government will listen.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. David Oraziotti: It's a pleasure to participate in today's discussion, third reading debate of Bill 242, full-day learning.

I have to say that my community is receiving very well the exciting news of this bill and the opportunities that the young people in our community will have for full-day learning. This is another positive initiative in the education sector that our government has delivered on over the last seven years. You can add this to capping the primary classes of the early years, K to 3, and also the

Good Places to Learn initiative that has seen over \$4.8 billion in new infrastructure go towards schools and improving the learning environments for young people in the province of Ontario. I know that in my community of Sault Ste. Marie, per pupil funding has increased by over 55% in just seven years. That has meant more teachers, more librarians, more support staff, more educational assistants and great environments for our young people. The full-day learning program this fall will see 35,000 young people have the opportunity to learn in over 1,400 classes in about 600 different schools around the province. As you know, Speaker, we're going to be phasing this in. This is a fairly significant financial endeavour as well, but it's one that we're committed to and one that's important. By 2015, all the schools in the province of Ontario will have the opportunity to participate in the full-day learning programs.

I know that in Sault Ste. Marie eight schools are now involved in full-day learning. I want to congratulate Mario Turco, the director of the Algoma District School Board, and John Stadnyk, the director of the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board, for their leadership and support of this initiative. They are embracing it, and the parents and community members that I speak to about this initiative are very, very positive in their comments around this. We know what the research says, and it's —

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a real pleasure to be able to engage in this debate, and I look forward to having a 20-minute rotation to discuss this bill in more detail and how it impacts my community and certainly my demographic, in fact. It's an opportunity, I think, for us to put forward ideas in this chamber. Certainly we're very concerned on this side of the Legislature that, given the time frame this government, this Liberal government, is trying to implement full-day learning in, a very short time frame, perhaps they ought to slow down, particularly given the price tag. I'm looking forward to speaking in more depth on some of the challenges that are facing parents of four- and five-year-olds.

Last week I had a great opportunity to be back in my community, as most of us were, starting on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, out communicating with people now that the weather is warmer, whether it was in an Earth Day celebration or whether it was pancake breakfasts in our rural communities. There was a lot of confusion about what this program is going to mean for everyday families, and I think that confusion warrants further discussion. It means, I think, that parents at home ought to be looking at what the fine print is with this piece of legislation, what this bill will mean to families.

I look forward to expanding on that over the course of the next, I guess, 30 minutes.

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But I want to congratulate my colleague from Nickel Belt, who always, I must say, ensures that we in this chamber are fully apprised of what is going on in her

community. I thank her for bringing forward her views on this contentious piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to respond to the conversation around Bill 242. I think it's important that we go back and look at the actual model that's going to be put in place, because it's quite different than the model where you have a teacher in a full-day classroom. It's quite different than the model of parents who choose to keep their children in full-day child care—which, incidentally, they can continue to do, if that's the model they wish. We're using a model that is much more akin to what Dr. Pascal recommended, which is that we need to take the best of what the certified academic teacher can bring to the kindergarten and junior kindergarten classroom, but also the best of what the early childhood educator can bring. So we've got a model where, during the actual formal full-day school day, there will be both a kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator with the group of four- and five-year-olds.

Before the school day begins and after the school day ends, we will also make child care available to parents at a fee. But that will be offered in a lot of cases by the same early childhood educator who's present with the classroom teacher in the morning or possibly a different early childhood educator who's present with the kindergarten teacher in the afternoon.

This model is, in fact, quite unlike any of the models that are out there now, and that's why that model is being protected in the legislation. There will be some flexibility—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

The member from Nickel Belt has up to two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a little bit disconcerting to hear the member from Sault Ste. Marie and the member from Guelph go on and explain what Bill 242 is about, when I had just finished stating for 20 minutes that there were issues that needed to be addressed. I would have liked, at a minimum, that they would have said, "We hear what the member has to say. We will try to fill in the blanks." But, no, they both pretended that the serious issues that I have brought forward, which have been brought forward by four of the heavyweights in French education in Ontario—it's as if none of this matters.

Neither one of them even acknowledged that I had brought forward a serious issue from the francophone community. They talked about what full-day learning is about. I think we all know. The Franco-Ontarian people who want a change to the bill know exactly what the bill is about. We don't need to be told. What we need right now is a government that acknowledges that the issues that have been brought forward are serious, and they deserve, at a minimum, that they listen to them and give them an answer. But I didn't hear any of that.

They went on and explained what the full-day learning was going to be. I am not too sure who they're talking to; I have a fairly good idea what the all-day learning is about. We have been talking about this for the last two months. How about talking to me? I've just explained to you that there's a serious issue brewing with the francophone community. We are talking about making sure that francophone communities continue to exist, and they ignored it all.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm pleased to be able to participate in today's debate on the impacts of full-day kindergarten on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and, most of all, other moms and dads across the province.

At the outset, let me say that this bill is deeply personal to me, since I am one of the very few legislators in this place who will be impacted by this bill. So I'll take the opportunity not just to speak to the theoretical model of this bill, but to the personal impacts—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order. Order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —that this will have on my family. That's why I'll begin my remarks on Bill 242, the kindergarten bill, with a personal story.

Amid the laughter by the Liberals who do not have children right now in the system, you may know that my daughter, Victoria, just turned five and is currently attending half-day junior kindergarten in one of Ontario's finest public schools. After speaking with my husband and our caregiver and taking other matters into consideration, our family felt it was best for our daughter to continue in half-day learning when she reaches senior kindergarten next year. That was our choice. We had expected the government of Ontario to respect that. And although the Pascal report called for parental choice—and I quote, “parental choice”—of either half- or full-day learning, I quickly found out the hard way, as the Ottawa Citizen so aptly pointed out today, that the Liberal plan will actually force parents like my husband, Joe, and I to take it, to leave it or to transfer their child out of their neighbourhood school if full-day learning is not the option.

In fact, I was told by my daughter's school to transfer out of our neighbourhood, and then I was told by the Minister of Education that if I didn't like that, I could keep my daughter at home until she was six, when, presumably, the Premier and the education minister would get their way and start teaching her sexual education. I asked, “What type of choice is that? Where in the formula are parents and families being factored in?” There really is no choice, and I know I speak for parents in saying that neither of those options are viable.

I can hardly imagine removing a child from a learning environment that they are comfortable in, one in which they have made new friends, in a neighbourhood that is familiar, in a daycare that is comfortable and safe. Nor

can I imagine removing a child from a school altogether for the first grade. Why in the name of God would the education minister suggest to a parent who has had their child in school already for a year to remove them until they are six years old? That is a shame.

The Ottawa Citizen got it right today when it described the Liberals' identity crisis on full-day learning. They said:

“The province has suggested all along that parents will continue to have the choice to keep their children in half-day kindergarten if they wish. Being told to find another school is likely not what any parent had in mind.

“It gets more confusing. Ministry of Education officials are now saying that a third option is for parents to enrol their children in full-day kindergarten but pick them up halfway through the day. This, too, could be problematic. If the program is designed from the get-go to be full-day, will teachers be able properly to assess students who are in class only half as much as their peers? What will be the effect on students?”

This is probably the best line from that editorial in today's Ottawa Citizen, and I encourage the government members to look at it: “The option has the worrisome sound of an ad-hoc plan.”

So despite Pascal's reference to choice on page 14 of his own report, the report that the Liberal government is touting, parents like me and my husband, Joe, are advised to read the fine print on early full-day learning. When Dr. Charles Pascal released his early learning report to the Premier in June 2009, the report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*, stated on page 14, “Children's participation would be by parental choice, with parents having the option of half, full (school hours), or fee-based extended day of programming.” So I ask, what has changed, and what is next?

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Indeed, it's increasingly clear that the Liberals have adopted an all-or-nothing approach to full-day kindergarten. It will be a real shock to parents right across the province, come September, particularly those parents who believed there would be choice: those parents who will find out there will be fees attached to before- and after-care programming; and those parents who will find themselves in a real spot on a PD day, a snow day, a March break day and during summer and Christmas vacations. They will have one choice in the matter: They will either have to pay for two child care spots—one at the school with the fee-based programming and another for these other days—or they're going to be stuck every single time there is no school. When school is closed, these parents are not going to be able to have an easy and available option.

Again, parents are going to need to read the fine print. And since the Liberals are forcing this through in such a short period of time and without a lengthy implementation process, I only hope, through me and through my caucus colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party, that by speaking out, parents will check the fine print sooner rather than later. As Andrea Mrozek wrote

of my predicament in last week's Citizen, "Province-wide, taxpayer-funded early learning programs spell the end of choice in child care."

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member for Toronto Centre: In your chair.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This presents another very serious concern with this bill: It will put daycare providers out of business. There will be absolutely no consideration given to the consequences of eliminating the not-for-profit sector from providing before- and after-school programming for four- and five-year-old children.

There was also no consideration given to the small independent daycare providers who offer care, subsidized or otherwise, in their homes. Without access to four- and five-year-old students, home daycares and not-for-profits will suffer, and that's just not fair.

As Mrozek said in her Citizen op-ed on Friday last week, "By introducing a monolithic taxpayer-funded plan, legitimate and regulated child care providers can't compete." I repeat: They cannot compete. "When ... government subsidizes" a business, "it means others are put out of business."

She's right, and in this chamber, I'm going to defend people like Sue Ayyad, the YMCAs and the Karen Fromms of this world, because if I don't and the PC caucus doesn't, who will? The big-box government across the way, where one size fits all? I don't think so. Hardly.

First they remove parental choice. Secondly, they're putting regulated, licensed and essential community organizations and small businesses out of business.

Equally as concerning, however, is the third flaw in this plan; that is, the Liberals are mortgaging the very futures of those they are forcing into full-day, every-day school.

Let me explain. To implement this program, it will cost \$1.5 billion in operational costs next year alone, and likely another \$300 million in capital renovation costs to retrofit rooms, add space and bring in equipment. This is a very real concern I heard from my own school board, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, concerned about space. If you can just imagine my own little daughter's school, where right now there is a half-day junior kindergarten and a half-day senior kindergarten class. They are going to four kindergarten classes next year. That's going to create a significant burden on the budget of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to retrofit those rooms. That brings you up to \$1.8 billion in new—I repeat, new—spending at a time when our province has a \$21-billion deficit.

Even then, with an estimated \$1.8 billion in new spending, it's likely not enough. As trustee Michael Barrett of the Durham District School Board said, "The funding is not adequate to roll out the program as prescribed by the province." This is troubling, given that the Premier told the CBC in June that he didn't know the cost of the program. Can you imagine? He still doesn't

know what the cost of this program is going to be, and we have a \$21-billion deficit.

That is where we, in the official opposition, are concerned by the lack of planning by this Premier—and just last week we saw where that gets him. But it's of deep concern to us.

So that begs the question: How much more are we expected to shell out for a program that is not tested? As the National Post wrote on October 29, 2009, in their editorial, "Given Ontario's massive deficit, why is Premier Dalton McGuinty focused on imposing an expensive, full-day kindergarten program on the province?" And as parent Tanya Allen of Parental Choice says, "I don't want to be forced into using all-day kindergarten.... This program is not only a waste of money, but it also obliterates parents' choice in child care."

This type of spending right now, at this moment in our province's history, is unsustainable. The PC party believes that the government simply cannot afford this potentially multi-billion-dollar program right now.

With the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada estimating that it will cost close to \$9,000 per year, it's no wonder parents like Kate Tennier of kindergartencredit.ca offer an alternative for the spend-happy Liberals to consider: ensure that early education funds follow the child by giving the funding to moms and dads instead. That's what she suggests.

Above all, the fundamental flaw in this legislation is that it is, as Irene Atkinson of the Toronto District School Board says, "one of the most ill-conceived and badly thought-through programs that the province has ever announced."

It is very clear that this government lacks preparedness, given the issues my own family has confronted due to the uncertainties. The Ottawa Citizen acknowledged this in citing that the province has created unrealistic expectations about its ability to accommodate.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's clear that I've excited the Liberals today. I'm not quite sure how they can be so excited by actually explaining in this chamber my own personal experience with this system. I guess this is where the disconnect comes in: when you're actually confronted with an issue as a parent. I feel fortunate that I'm able to raise in this chamber the issues that we face, to a number of people in this chamber who will probably not ever have to experience this issue.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Toronto Centre will have a chance to respond, as will others from the government side.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Madam Speaker. Again, I think it just speaks to the hostility in this debate: If you do not agree with them, that's too bad. Well, I don't agree with them on this and I should have a choice. Dr. Pascal told me I should. So when it was our opportunity to find out our own way for our own child in my family, to decide what was best for her, and we were told we

didn't really have that option—that's where we are placed in a real conundrum in this chamber.

Again, it's a great idea to try and put this forward. In fact, there are many models that have been expressed or explored throughout the province. I've heard of several. For example, there could be alternating full days. But again, it should be the parents' choice at that age.

I'm fortunate that my daughter is in a great school. I'm fortunate that she has a great caregiver. And I'm fortunate that, as parents, we are able to take her to school and know her teacher, know the students in her classroom and participate in our community. But taking our choice away until my daughter is six years old is really not an option. I really resent the fact that the minister told me that I should remove my child from school, after she was there for a year. She said, "You don't have to have your child in school until the age of six." Well, my daughter is already there, and there are several other parents in my own predicament.

In any event, I'm not going to go on much longer, because I am really interested to hear what the member from Toronto Centre has to say to me, given the hostilities that I experienced while I was speaking—because actually some of the hostilities didn't have anything to do with my remarks. So I am looking forward to hearing from them and to concluding this debate at said time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'm pleased to comment on some of the comments made by the member from Nepean-Carleton.

You know what? I'm jealous. I'm jealous of you because your child is fortunate to be going to school in this time, when we have these programs available—optional programs for parents who can attend. They can use these programs if they want. Having half-day programs—what a great luxury.

1650

When my daughter started kindergarten in the 1990s, the school board had already switched to full-day programs every other day. They couldn't afford to run the buses because of the massive cuts that were inflicted by Harris and the government. Through cuts and downsizes, boards were given the option: They could run JK if they wanted to. If they wanted to run JK, they could do that, but the funding disappeared for running smaller class sizes in primary grades. Our board made a decision when I was on that board to re-introduce junior kindergarten and keep smaller class sizes, but the result was that we had to bump the class sizes in the larger grades. What happened? Strikes. How many days did my children miss because of strikes?

They got to high school, and didn't miss a day. Funny—the government changed, and everything worked out.

As for materials for home help: Earlier today there was mention made about the fact that boards will provide materials to take home. We all know that when parents

contribute to their children's education and help out with it, their children do great. The fact that boards are going to provide materials to go home to help out parents with their children's reading and getting a good start at a younger age is wonderful. Whether it's a mom and dad, or a mom and a mom, or a dad and a dad, or grandparents, or single parents—all those don't seem to be in your orbit right now—I think it's extremely important that everybody has an option to get into a system that is going to be open.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm pleased to comment on Bill 242 and the address of my colleague, the member for Nepean-Carleton.

I think that this bill is just an indication of the lack of planning by this particular government. We've got the most massive deficit ever seen in this province, and unfortunately it's as a direct result not of a recession—it's easy to blame the recession—but of the malfeasance of this government, the corruption of this government—

Mr. Glen R. Murray: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't think you can accuse the government of corruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member to withdraw that word.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I certainly will withdraw that I said that this government is corrupt. But malfeasance of this government—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member from Cambridge to withdraw the comment and not use it again.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I withdraw the word—do you want me to say the word?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): No.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: No? Okay. I just want to make sure of that.

In any event, we have this massive deficit that this government has no intention of paying off. Their plan is that if you put it off far enough, we're all going to be dead in the long run and we'll still have a deficit. As a matter of fact, they're going to double this deficit, but that's just the start.

There's no doubt they're going to attempt to raise taxes. You are going to see the new HST radically increased right after an election if this government wins. You can bet on it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: The reason I was upset before is because I think on two levels. One, day-long learning for low-income people and families that are struggling creates not just the possibility for children—who in many homes that I represent don't have access to magazines and there's limited access to the English language, which is important for their ability to transition into full productive citizens. But there were also some comments made that some people live in a world—and the member

for Ottawa West—not Ottawa West, Nepean–Carleton. I apologize. I want to make sure I get that right. I put a child through school. I'm a grandparent—high-needs kids with disabilities who came home to a single dad.

There were references made to the curriculum, and part of the reason for this early childhood education and this curriculum, which I'm still a great believer in, is so it takes the onus off six- and eight-year-olds—if anyone has actually read the curriculum and read the day-long learning act—to not have to explain to their peers why they come from a different family than just a mum-and-dad family. If you have ever seen how heartbreaking it is for a child with a disability—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Speaker: I ask the Minister of Education to withdraw what she just said.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I didn't hear what she said. I'll have to pass on that. Thank you.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: What it has unfortunately done is enabled some of the people who are advocates of hate—the McVetys and others out there who are too quick to drive the differences. At one point, obviously if it's not this year, it is our responsibility as adults to make sure that children don't have to explain the differences, that every child should be free of bullying. Some members in that member's party talked about ending bullying. Well, getting facts about kids' body parts in grade 1 and getting facts about the diversity of families in grade 3—and that's all the curriculum said. It's a good curriculum, getting kids educated at four and five.

Kids have rights beyond their parents. I worked with a lot of children who died at 18 and 19 because they didn't get information about gay sexuality—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I think it really is important to just clarify what the member from Nepean–Carleton actually said. I think we're getting off on a tangent with respect to another matter, and certain thoughts and motives are being impugned here. I think it's really important that we focus on what we're talking about, which is Bill 242, and the very important points that the member from Nepean–Carleton was making with respect to young children, their ability to function in full-day class and the choices that parents are being asked to make when they're considering placing a very young child in an all-day learning environment.

It is important to note that parents should have the choice, whether they choose to put their child in full-day learning or half-day learning. The member was simply raising some of the concerns that she has for those parents, perhaps including herself, who don't choose to put their child in full-day learning, and what's going to happen then. Where else will they go? It's fine for the government to say, "Well, don't bother. Just keep them out of school until they're six." The practical matter is that she has a child who wants to go to school, may not be ready for full-day learning, as many children in the

province of Ontario are not. But then what happens? The government simply has not provided us with the answers. Do they go to another school in another area? Are you going to provide busing? What's going to happen with their classmates—a lot of practical considerations that the government is all too anxious to say, "Oh, don't worry about that," but parents are worried about them.

Here we are at the end of April, we've got another month or so to work out these very important, practical considerations that have to be dealt with, and there are no answers. The answer we get is, "Don't worry about it. We'll deal with it." September is coming, and I think parents have a right to know these things. I commend the member for Nepean–Carleton for raising these issues. They're practical considerations, they need to be dealt with, and this government is certainly not very forthcoming with any kind of answer.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Nepean–Carleton has up to two minutes to respond.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I just want to say thank you to my colleagues from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Toronto Centre. It's clear we don't agree on the practical approach here. However, we should be engaged in a respectful debate on this matter. This actually does impact me. In a way, I didn't think so, because I thought there would be choice. But I appreciated you bringing your own personal experiences to the chamber, so I thank you for that.

I'd like to thank both my colleagues in the Conservative caucus: from Cambridge, who talked about the financial implications of this bill, as well as my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa, who I think expressed some of the practical concerns we have with this legislation.

I'd been very clear at the outset that I had concerns, and I still do, with the financial implications of this bill. Only when I became a parent did I understand the practicality issues with respect to this. Unfortunately, this place has become so polarized that no resolutions or amendments put forward by the opposition almost any time ever pass. Very infrequently do we see stakeholders come to debate or give deputations and any of their ideas ever accepted.

This is, I guess, a problem with a government that has been in office for a long time. It happens in every political party. But unfortunately, with this piece of legislation, if they cannot admit that it's not all going to be an unbumpy ride, then we're going to have a real problem come September. I can just tell you from my own experience that it has not been easy. All weekend, I spoke about this issue to parents who have the same concerns. I encourage the government to heed those warnings when they're implementing this. It's going to be an awfully expensive price tag, so we have to get it right.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

There being no further debate, on April 20, Mrs. Dombrowsky moved third reading of Bill 242. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

There will be a 30-minute bell. Call in the members.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I've just received a deferral slip. It reads as follows:

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, dated April 26, 2010:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended

day programs and certain other matters, be deferred until Tuesday, April 27, 2010, after question period."

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

It is my opinion that the ayes have it.

I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1702.

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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**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
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
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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