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of Ontario  
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**Official Report  
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**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 3 May 2010**

**Lundi 3 mai 2010**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 May 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 mai 2010

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Today is a special day. It marks the second annual Tourism Day at Queen's Park. Joining us in the members' gallery are Bill Allen, president of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario; Cheryl Sutton, Ontario Northland; Susan Cudahy, Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation; Heather Ford, Green Acres Inn; Don Obonsawin, Direction Ontario; Beth Potter, Camping In Ontario; Emily Harper-Hawkins, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario; John Winston, Tourism London; Tim West, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs; Tanya Southwick, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs; Terry Mundell, Greater Toronto Hotel Association; Troy Young, Attractions Ontario; Phil Casey, Attractions Ontario; and Gary Masters, Festivals and Events Ontario.

### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to wear a green ribbon in recognition of children's mental health awareness.

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

### MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate two members of this House who as of yesterday, May, 2, 1985, had been members of provincial Parliament for 25 years. Congratulations to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, David Ramsay, and to the member from York Centre, Monte Kwinter, on 25 years of service to this chamber.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us today, seated in the Speaker's gallery, a group of interns from the National Assembly of Quebec, who are visiting the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. They are: Laurie Comtois, Maxime Fortine, Laurence Fouquette-L'Ang-

lais, Pierre Lessard Blais and Martine Sirois. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a very special delegation from the Republic of Poland, led by his Excellency Bogdan Borusewicz, the Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The delegation is accompanied today by the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada, His Excellency Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz. Please join me in warmly welcoming all of our guests to Queen's Park today.

I just would point out to the members that this isn't the complete delegation. Many of the delegation were lost in the tragedy that took place in Poland. I would like to take this opportunity, if you're available today, to invite all members of the Legislature to join me in a memorial and a wreath-laying service that has been organized by the embassy of the Republic of Poland to honour those who tragically lost their lives on April 10 of this year. The ceremony will take place today at 2 p.m. at the Toronto Katyn Memorial. Please contact Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations for information.

Mr. Speaker, once again, on behalf of this assembly, our condolences to the people of Poland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Of course the government has adopted the protocol or maintained the protocol of advising us of ministers away. I see that some are merely going to be late. We've got almost 40% of the cabinet not here. Perhaps we could delay the commencement of question period until the ministers who are going to be late in fact do arrive so that we could have a complete and thorough interrogation of ministers, and hold the government accountable. A 40% absence is a pretty dramatic number. Perhaps it's only 37%—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** There we are. A brief adjournment might be helpful.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Are you seeking unanimous consent?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Of course, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I heard a no.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Last week the McGuinty Liberals had six or seven

or eight different positions on the new sex education curriculum that would start classes as early as with six-year-olds trying to tie their shoes. We would see the minister say one thing, and then the Premier saying something entirely different two hours later. Quite frankly, it looked more like a circus than a government.

That bungling continued this weekend when their HST tax grab hit consumers two months early. I ask you, was it incompetence, or were they desperately trying to sneak in a tax grab while Ontario families were unprepared?

1040

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that what this government is doing is creating an environment in Ontario where our economy can grow. That's what we are doing. The restructuring of the tax system is one part of that open Ontario.

We are focusing on bringing jobs to Ontario, whether you look at the Green Energy Act or the restructuring of the tax system that actually will support manufacturing, will bring jobs to Ontario and will help us to continue to grow out of this economic downturn.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, the only growth crop in the province of Ontario is more taxes, fees and hydro hikes on Ontario families.

Minister, this week alone, on May 1, you launched a sneak attack with your HST, so that some poor, unlucky Ontario family paid Dalton McGuinty's HST tax grab for the first time. At the same time, you increased hydro rates in our province. Combined with fees and their sneaky green tax, it will hit Ontario families by \$350 more per year. They've handed out sweetheart severance deals to HST tax collectors who won't lose a day on the job.

I ask the Acting Premier: Why is it that Ontario families always pay the price for McGuinty government incompetence?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know my colleague in revenue will want to speak on the next supplementary on the HST, but I want to just frame this conversation. The frame is that we are operating in what we want to be as open an Ontario as possible—so, building a competitive tax system, building a clean energy industry, building a clean water industry; building a strong workforce. Our full-day learning program is a fundamental underpinning of that. If we don't make those changes, if we don't open Ontario and support our manufacturing, support our students and support our families, then we will fail. We are opening Ontario, and that's what these changes are about.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** This McGuinty government has been anything but open: a sneaky HST tax grab this weekend; sneaky hydro fee increases that, in total, will result in \$350 out of the pockets of average Ontario families in one year alone; and then buried on the Internet somewhere, these out-of-the-mainstream sex ed changes that would start sex ed classes with six-year-olds—government on the run, trying to bury these issues from Ontario families who they know will fully reject them.

So, a back-door energy tax going to general revenue, 350 bucks more a year from hydro rates, a health tax funding US health brokers to help you get into an American hospital, an HST that snuck in two months early—Minister, my goodness, what do you have planned next?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Every one of the initiatives the Leader of the Opposition has raised are initiatives that have been talked about. The Minister of Revenue has been going around this province talking about the HST for what seems like years now. There has been a robust discussion about the Green Energy Act and our incentives for green technology and the development of green energy in this province. Our changes to curriculum are open to the community. There has been consultation.

Every single one of those initiatives, whether it's a piece of legislation which has gone to public hearings or whether it's a policy change that has been talked about around the province, has been transparent to the public. That is the process of building an open Ontario. The policies of building an open Ontario are the stuff of that discussion.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier: I think the minister knows full well that parents knew nothing about your changes to the sex ed curriculum that would begin sex ed classes with six-year-olds, who are barely able to spell. And consumers knew nothing about your HST sneak attack this weekend, which forced some poor, unlucky Ontario family to pay your HST two months early. I think they're trying to address this bungled implementation of their HST tax grab. They sent out a senior revenue official to try to explain what they're doing.

So I ask the minister: Can you explain why loud laughter erupted when the tax man you sent to Brockville to speak to businesses said, in the last slide, "I'm going to tell you why the HST is such a good thing"?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Because it's a very good thing that we have 591,000 more jobs coming to the province of Ontario, because of \$47 billion more investment coming to the province of Ontario, because we have taken the bold step, the radical step, of working closely with the federal government to make the business climate in this province the most competitive in North America. That is our goal because we want to compete for and win those jobs.

There are parties that have voted against lowering personal income tax for people. There is a party over there that voted against lowering corporate taxes and small business taxes. They voted against eliminating the capital tax. They voted against eliminating the small business surtax. What they voted for was the status quo. On this side of the House, we know that we have to make a change so that there are more jobs here in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Revenue: Just like we saw a political circus across the floor when it came to your changes in the sex ed curriculum, similarly, across Ontario, we're seeing a circus erupt when it comes to your bungled HST tax grab. Let me give you another quote from your revenue official. We're calling him the most honest official in the McGuinty government. The revenue official you sent to Brockville is quoted as admitting the hush money you are sending out will "arrive magically in the mail" just before the next election.

I ask the minister, what makes you think you can use Ontario families' own money to try to bribe them in your HST implementation?

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I withdraw.

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I thank the people of the Ministry of Revenue for the great job that they're doing, collecting some \$100 million a day to pay for the hospitals and the schools and all of the things that we value as public servants and the public whose services we provide.

I say to the members opposite, history will record that when we entered into the largest tax reform in over 40 years in this province, you voted against it. You need to be very clear with people—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just ask the members to come to order, please.

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** On this side of the House, we are permanently cutting income taxes so we now have the lowest personal income tax rate of any province in Canada on the first \$37,000 worth of income. You voted against the fact that we're providing the HST rebate for those people in this province who have the least. People will remember that, but they'll particularly remember that there was one government that decided to take action to make sure that there are 600,000 more jobs in this province. People with good-paying jobs paying their taxes and contributing: That is the most important thing that we can do on this side of the House to make sure that, after the great recession, we have a great recovery.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Ontario families and the Ontario PC Party know where this is all coming from. Dalton McGuinty wanted to ram through his greedy HST tax grab to spend on his Liberal friends like the Courtyard Group, among others.

But don't take my word for it. McGuinty's most honest revenue official also admits that you rammed this HST legislation through. The revenue official says, "Generally, it takes us five years to decide which envelopes

we're going to buy, and they rushed this through in one year."

I can see the minister's face, and I ask him, please do not take any repercussions on this person at revenue because he's the most honest official that we have seen to date in the McGuinty government.

I ask the minister: Why should Ontario families have faith in this government when your—

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

*Interjections.*

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

1050

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I say to the members opposite that it's duly noted by the business community that on July 1 we'll be eliminating 7,000 pages of regulation in regard to the PST, and you voted to keep them. Your advice was, "Oh, my God, we'd better hang on to the status quo."

The good people of Ontario will one day have the opportunity to look about this—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** As we are cutting the burden on small business, there is a party that purported to represent them that said, "Whatever you do, don't change anything. God, don't make our business community more competitive." We listened to them, and that's exactly what we're doing.

It is important that this province recover from the recession that started south of here and that we compete for and win the jobs that our children and our grandchildren need. That's the most important thing we can do.

We will continue to focus, under our Open Ontario plan, on ensuring that there are jobs for people today, for tomorrow—

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

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Ontario needs to see increased accountability and transparency in our health care system. The McGuinty government had the opportunity to make that happen today.

My question is a simple one: Why isn't the government extending Ombudsman oversight to Ontario's hospitals?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am in complete agreement that accountability is a vitally important part of how we will strengthen our health care system as we go forward. Later today, I will be introducing legislation in this House that, I think, takes us an important step forward when it comes to improving accountability for quality in our health care system.

Our health care system is so very precious to us. We need to take steps today to ensure that our health care

system is going to be there for us and, more importantly, for our kids and our grandkids.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** If the government were truly interested in real oversight and transparency to protect patients, there are a number of steps that they could take. They could make hospitals accountable under the Freedom-of-Information act. They could set some real limits on sky-high executive compensation. They could grant the Ombudsman real oversight in our hospital system. Why have they rejected all of these options?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The health care system that we have today is—we're at a crossroads, I would say.

We have spent the last six and a half years of our time in government really strengthening the foundation of our health care system. We have enormously improved access to health care. Over 900,000 more patients have access to family health care than did when we were elected just six and a half years ago. We've been able to drive down wait times for important procedures like cataract surgery, hip replacement, cancer surgery and so on.

Because we have really focused on rebuilding access to our health care system, it is now time to turn our attention to enhancing quality and, yes, accountability for quality in our health care system.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The minister likes to talk about the crossroads that we're at, yet the government continues to take tiny little baby steps in terms of progress.

Patients want to see real protection of their health dollars. Today we watched a press conference hosted by a CEO who takes home more than \$800,000 a year while nurses across Ontario are losing their jobs.

The government could have announced a plan today for real accountability, real oversight and real transparency in Ontario's hospitals. Why did you not do it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Today is, I think, a pretty important day in our health care system in Ontario because we will be introducing legislation this afternoon that really strengthens accountability for quality.

At the announcement of that this morning, I was joined by members of the University Health Network quality improvement committee. It is an interdisciplinary group of people who drive the change in that hospital that is so essential to our health care system.

Today we will be broadening the requirements of hospital boards to be accountable for quality indicators and quality improvement. It's important to note that we have extended the powers of the Auditor General to look at hospitals, to oversee hospitals and ensure that we're getting the best possible value for money in our health care system.

#### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Again to the Acting Premier: While the government thinks of new ways to describe

health care cuts in this province, effective ways to control health care costs and protect patients are falling behind. Eleven nurse-practitioner-led clinics have been announced between February 2009 and today. Why have none of them opened?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk about a new innovation in Ontario: the nurse-practitioner-led clinic. As the member opposite would know, I'm sure, the member from Nickel Belt has talked about the NP-led clinic in Sudbury that really has led the way and has shown us how it can work. Nurse practitioners can offer excellent primary health care. All nurse-practitioner-led clinics are affiliated with a family doctor so that there is a continuity of care.

We are excited about the opportunity to have more nurse-practitioner-led clinics across the province. I know that the one in Belle River is up and running. This is a new innovation, and it does take time to get everything in place so they will be open and working to their maximum capacity.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm sure the minister knows that in Lively, just outside Sudbury, there's a clinic that is literally sitting empty. It's built, it's ready to go, but it is sitting empty because there's no money to operate it.

If the government is concerned about proper use of our health care dollars, does it make sense to build clinics and then leave them empty?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course, we are anxious to get the nurse-practitioner-led clinics operational as quickly as possible, but we think it's important that they do the foundational work that is important before they open their doors. So while I cannot speak directly to that one particular satellite, what I can tell you is that when I made the announcement several months ago of the next wave of nurse-practitioner-led clinics, it was a very exciting and happy day. We will be able to improve access to quality of care; we will be able to provide care that has a slightly different nuance to it. I truly believe in the value of nurse-practitioner-led clinics. It is an Ontario innovation, and I'm very excited about the future for them.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, this minister's announcements don't care for patients. Patients are waiting for innovative health solutions that ensure the front-line care is there when they need it. Instead, they see cuts to front-line services and new clinics sitting empty due to lack of funding. When will the government put the needs of patients first?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to say that I think the member opposite is not talking to patients in this province and is not talking to health care providers. Our health care system is significantly stronger than it was when we took office six and a half years ago. We have more services. We've got 900,000 more patients attached to primary health care. We've got 10,000 more nurses

working today than six and a half years ago. We're seeing better outcomes. We know there is more to do, and we are determined to do the very important work to strengthen our health care system.

Part of that work is getting our drug system reformed. I would welcome the support of the member of the third party as we proceed on strengthening our drug system—

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

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** As a member of Polish descent, I know this is a national holiday in Poland. It appears half of the Liberal cabinet is taking the day off as well.

My question is to the Minister of Energy. Will the McGuinty Liberals send Ontario families transitional funding to help them cope with the \$350 a year more you have added to their hydro bills in rate hikes, secret taxes and new fees?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. If he read our budget, he would know that there are provisions within that budget that indeed move forward with a tax credit in the amount of \$455 million that will flow this year at tax time: a property and energy tax credit that will, subsequent to the end of this year, flow three times a year to lower- and middle-income Ontarians to help offset what certainly are rising energy costs.

1100

Why are energy costs rising? They're rising because we've had to invest in infrastructure over the next six years because your government failed to make the necessary decisions to build an infrastructure energy system in this province. We've got a lot of catching up to do because of the failure of your government to make those tough decisions, but we are determined to ensure —

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The McGuinty Liberals have opened up multiple fronts in their attack on family budgets. They are attacking the energy budget with \$350 a year more in rate hikes and taxes on power. They've attacked Ontario families by making them pay more for car insurance, tuition fees, property taxes, plastic bags, tires, electronics, the health tax and, now, there's your greedy HST tax grab.

When you add up all of Dalton McGuinty's new taxes and fees, there's nothing left of the cheques you're sending out before the next election. In fact, families will be in the hole. What made you launch your attack on Ontario families?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member's all over the map with his questions today, but that's fine. When you were in power, you failed to recognize the importance of investing in a stable electricity system for this province. When you were in power, coal generation went up 127% during your years in power; we've brought it down by 70%.

We're investing, and energy costs are going up as a result. We've had to invest in our energy infrastructure. We've had to build up energy infrastructure in this province, and we're doing that in a way that's responsible, that's environmentally responsible and that takes into consideration the health of future generations.

There is a cost to doing that. But the cost of not doing that is an unstable energy system that is polluting our air and impacting the health of our kids. That's what you stand for. That's what they stand for; that's not what we stand for.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today's report by the Ontario Environmental Commissioner indicates that transportation is the largest and fastest-growing source of energy use in Ontario. More and more gasoline and diesel are being used for personal and freight transport. This is polluting our air, hastening climate change and making people sick. Does the McGuinty government have a plan and targets for reducing gasoline and diesel use in Ontario?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, I would like to thank the Environmental Commissioner for coming up with an excellent report. We work very closely within our ministry with the Environmental Commissioner, and we look forward to doing that in the next six months while he's still on the job, since he has been extended for at least six months. Of course, he's going through the process together with everybody else who has applied for that position as well.

We have done an awful lot over the last six years with respect to our whole climate change agenda, not only with respect to transit in which we've invested some \$9 billion. We're in the process of implementing a cap-and-trade system. We are looking at fuel efficiency standards in this province as well. We've done a lot of work. A lot of work needs to be done, but we are absolutely determined to meet our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 6% by—

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** That certainly is an answer that confirms what the Environmental Commissioner said in his report: "Ontario does not have energy reduction targets for the conservation of transportation fuels." If we had them, this minister would have been reciting them ad infinitum.

Vehicle use is increasing faster than population growth. In his report, the Environmental Commissioner urges the government to "expand ... [the] modal shift to public transit." Why is the government going flat out against the recommendations of its own Environmental Commissioner by cutting Transit City funding and reducing access to affordable transit?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, we did not cut transit. It was the previous government that invested absolutely nothing in transit. Secondly, let me just quote

to you what the Environmental Commissioner had to say in a question that he was asked this morning. He said, "Generally we're pretty good. We're one of the better provinces in that regard ... on conservation there are other programs in other provinces but I still say that Ontario's still at the front." That's what he said today.

We all recognize on this side of the House that a lot of work has been done over the last six years. A lot more work needs to be done, but we're on the right track. We want to meet those targets and, with everyone's help in this House, we will be able to do so.

### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. As you know, this week is Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario. One in five children between the ages of 13 and 17 faces mental health challenges, which can have devastating effects on children and their families. I know from my work on safe schools that left untreated, mental health issues can become very serious and can lead to bullying, dropping out of school, and tragically, even to suicide.

I know that the government is committed to connecting Ontarians of all ages with needed mental health programs. It's a difficult task that this government has been working to achieve since our election in 2003. But I still hear from families about their ongoing challenges in accessing services. So as we begin Children's Mental Health Week, can the minister tell the House about the government's efforts to support—

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

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for her advocacy on this issue and her commitment to her community on this issue in particular.

She's quite right that a number of steps have been taken since we came to office in 2003, and that is because, under two previous governments, there were no increases to children's mental health from 1992 until 2003. That's why since 2004, we've invested an additional \$64 million to support and expand children's mental health services. We've created the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health to promote research and to improve quality. We've expanded and funded the Ontario child and youth telepsychiatry program. Very recently, we've started our work with parents for children's mental health: to develop better ways for parents to navigate the system and help their children and to support parents in the journey that they follow along with their children.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** These investments and improvements to service are very important; Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services in Guelph was thrilled to get access to telepsychiatry for children and youth. But what matters most to families is that these programs are working and helping their children. We've heard frequently at

the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions that there is a stigma that keeps people from talking about mental health in the way that they speak about other health issues. Part of that stigma comes from the fear that mental health cannot be properly treated.

Can the minister tell the House about some of the successful programs that we do have for children and youth with mental health issues?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I do want to thank the select committee for the important work that they're doing on behalf of the entire Legislature and the province of Ontario.

We do know that this week in particular, raising awareness with respect to children's mental health is critically important, and that is because there are many programs that can help kids turn their lives around. I have seen those programs firsthand. I was at the York Centre, where children and youth who could not function in a mainstream classroom were learning. I saw those kids stand up and give speeches and talk about how important and impactful the service and the help that they were getting was to build confidence and turn their lives around.

At Niagara Child and Youth Services, children are getting the services that they need to have the best practices for new service delivery models and ensuring that they're getting the help that they need.

Simon Davidson at the centre for excellence is driving innovation and more, in fact, of—

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

### TAXATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Acting Premier. In 59 days, Dalton McGuinty will broaden his attack on family budgets by making us pay 8% more for hydro, heat for our homes next winter, gas for our cars and a whole range of things. The constituents of the member for Nipissing get it. One of them writes, "With people having even less cash to spend, they will buy less and the economy will tank even further."

The cheques you're sending out will be long gone by the time Ontario families have to pay for energy, car insurance, tuition, tires, electronics and property and health taxes. My question is, what made you stop caring about family budgets?

1110

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm delighted to talk about the permanent tax credits and the permanent nature of our tax reform. Yes, indeed, courtesy of the federal government, there will be transitional money that will be coming to Ontario families and businesses starting in June of this year, as long as they file their income taxes, but there are so many permanent tax cuts that are coming.

First of all, we lowered personal income tax for 93% of people on January 1. Second, we're bringing in the new HST rebate, which will be paid on top of the GST

rebate for families with low incomes. We are doubling the property tax credit for seniors by an additional \$250. More property owners, people who own a home or are also renters, will receive the enhanced property tax credit as well. All of those measures, I say to the member, supported by Tony Clement, are permanent.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** What the minister forgets to say is that the first thing this government did upon being elected was raise corporate taxes, raise small business taxes and bring in the health tax.

John Bell of Hamilton township in Northumberland is looking at what the Liberals' greedy taxes mean for him today, and worries about the 8% more that Dalton McGuinty will collect on hydro on top of hiking hydro rates by 10%. He says:

"Still not upset about this pending fleecing of our electrical pockets? Then you must either be extremely young, extremely well off financially, or you just don't care."

The member for Northumberland won't ask John Bell's question, so I will: Are you attacking family budgets because you are out of touch or because you just don't care?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Both the member for Nipissing and the member for Northumberland—Quinte West have been doing a wonderful job making sure that their constituents understand the facts.

I say to the good people in those ridings and all ridings, particularly the ridings that are covered by the members opposite, that there is a resource at [ontario.ca/taxchange](http://ontario.ca/taxchange) where there is a comprehensive list of those things that will be changing and the vast majority of things that will not be changing.

I am particularly proud of my colleagues because they understand that what their constituents have said clearly is, "We need more people working in this province." That's not going to happen unless our private sector is even more competitive in an increasingly competitive global economy. So we have taken action to ensure that in this province we will lead North America in being the most competitive when it comes to taxes. It's that job creation—

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

#### POLICE

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mark Bonokoski's Sunday Sun column concludes that police concerns about—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Who are you talking to?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This is, of course, to the Acting Premier. This column concludes that police concerns about post-traumatic stress disorder are being swept under the rug. Why won't this government—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'll wait, Speaker.

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

I remind the members again about technological devices in this chamber. Perhaps they should all be best banned.

Member?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The Speaker's wisdom about cell-phones and BlackBerrys is unassailable.

Again—it's a serious matter; this is to the Acting Premier. Bonokoski's Sunday column compels the conclusion that police concerns about post-traumatic stress disorder are being swept under the rug. Why won't the government respond to the needs of police officers suffering from PTSD?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think we can absolutely agree that police officers have very difficult jobs, with high levels of stress, working under hazardous conditions. That's why, in fact, WSIB has provided support to police officers suffering from PTSD. I think the other reality is that we know a lot more about what PTSD is today than we did years ago.

It's an ongoing improvement of services: case managers trained in police officer post-traumatic stress disorder claims; a new fast-track appeals process; and appeals resolutions officers to deal with any police sector appeals. We are working with police services. We know this is a very serious issue and we know there's more that needs to be done.

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The five-part series by the Sun told story after story after story by a police officer in this province who is being failed, who continues to suffer from PTSD. The Bonokoski column reports that retired Detective Inspector Bruce Kruger has referred the matter to the Ombudsman.

This government has taken great pride in its compliance with Mr. Marin's recommendations in the past. Will the government join in encouraging Mr. Marin to launch a full-scale investigation into this serious matter so that there can be standards and guidelines that can be complied with?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I'm not going to comment on a specific case, obviously, and I'm not going to instruct any officials on how they should behave. What you need to know is that we take this very seriously. The WSIB, the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and police services boards are looking at what more can be done, how we can prevent post-traumatic stress disorder from happening in the first place.

The WSIB provides benefits to more than 500 workplace victims of PTSD each year. In fact, since 1998, the WSIB has reduced the decision time on PTSD claims from 192 days to 41 days. So there is progress.

We know more about what needs to be done. The relevant groups are working to prevent—

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

## TAXATION

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. The Jeff Allan radio talk show is a talk show in Kitchener, Ontario. Last week, the member for Cambridge was on the show. A call came in from a questioner asking the member for Cambridge a question. He refused to answer the question. Here is the question from the caller:

“I have a small business, a coffee business, here in Cambridge. And I have a concern related to the opposition to the HST.

“My accountants and the rest are pointing out very clearly that I’m far better off with the HST. I will get all of my inputs back, my bookkeeping is a lot easier, it’s one set of books. I’m going to be able to, it looks like, hire probably two or more part-time employees”—

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I was delighted to be on Jeff Allan’s show just this morning, because there seemed to be an issue. I appreciate the fact that the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that the smartest thing we can do to get our economy growing, particularly in the KW-Cambridge area, is to reform our tax system. It’s something that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has been calling for for some five years.

I say to my friend opposite, it is important to understand that this is something that the business community, which I remember you used to try to represent, has said is the best thing that we can do to create jobs. It’s the private sector that we need to be going back and creating jobs, and the single most important thing we can do is to make sure that we are not just competitive in Ontario, not just in North America, but around the world; that our products, our goods and services are—

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

1120

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Tim Hudak, the leader of the Conservative Party, has said this about HST: “Now, I know that some business leaders support the harmonized sales tax, and to be clear, I believe that there’s little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply”—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Please continue.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** —“two sets of taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales tax.”

What did Mike Harris say about the HST? “We always said there should be one sales tax ... we would like to work with the federal government to make that happen.”

What did John Tory say? “I think it’s something that many people in business and elsewhere say is going to enhance the competitiveness of Ontario and create jobs” in Ontario.

Minister, can you help explain to the Tories—

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** They used to be in this House talking about lower taxes, and when we lowered taxes they voted against it. They used to talk about small business being the number one generator of new jobs in Ontario, and when we moved to improve their business climate, when we moved to eliminate the small business surtax, they voted against it.

There was a time when that party stood for the private sector but they’ve walked away from that, and they’re very proud about the fact that they do not believe that we should improve the competitive position of the business community in this province.

We know that that is the source of the new jobs that our children and our grandchildren need in the 21st century.

PEDIATRIC FORENSIC  
PATHOLOGY INQUIRY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Attorney General. Last week, I asked about the status of the legal review and compensation committee you formed after the release of Justice Goudge’s report. I was told that you’re acting “expeditiously,” but it has been a year and a half of silence. I wasn’t told when victims will have answers.

Brenda Waudby was convicted of killing her daughter based on false evidence provided by Dr. Charles Smith. It took over two years for her child’s babysitter to confess.

Minister, 12 wrongful convictions were identified as a result of Dr. Charles Smith’s reports. Again, when will you have answers for Ms. Waudby and victims like her?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Very, very important questions. There are two tracks that I want to speak to. First of all, with respect to those criminal cases—potential wrongful convictions—the crown has been moving very fast, very quickly, to expedite these to get into the court system. In fact, the crown has done everything possible to get these heard by the court as quickly as possible to make sure that any wrongful convictions are righted. That’s one track.

Secondly, Justice Goudge recognized in the report that there were a lot of individuals who might have potential claims but they were all maybe at different stages, maybe different facts. So what he asked us to do was to see if we could come up with a compensation approach, which I will speak to in a few moments in the supplementary question, and we’ve been working to do that.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** A year and a half isn’t very fast, Minister. Brenda Waudby’s child was murdered, and for many years she was falsely accused of being responsible. Her nightmare continued for nine whole years. Recently, Ontario’s Criminal Injuries Compensation Board denied her compensation, so she turned to you. You should have had an answer.

Mrs. Waudby’s lawyer wrote that it seems “absolutely nothing has changed for those most directly affected by the significant systemic failures” that Goudge identified.

Minister, I can think of nothing worse than losing a child and then being falsely accused of her murder. Why is Ms. Waudby still waiting?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Nor can I, nor can any of us. We cannot do anything to change those horrible circumstances, so we do whatever we can to try to get as close as possible.

The criminal system, as I said, is moving very quickly to right the wrongs. Just remember that there are different parties representing different ones of the accused. On the compensation side, Justice Goudge asked us to see if we could come up with a standardized approach so that those individuals wouldn't have to go into the traditional, often lengthy civil court process. I've been getting that legal advice. It is ongoing. I should be in a position to speak to that very soon. We have been working very hard on this to make sure that individuals who have been wronged—

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

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. For people in northern Ontario, the HST on home utilities, including heat and hydro, and gasoline for the cars is going to make life a heck of a lot less affordable. After all, winters are colder there, prices are higher, and people can't just jump on a subway to get to work.

The finance minister will be in Thunder Bay later today to sell his northern energy credit. Before the finance minister does his dog-and-pony show up north, will the Acting Premier tell the Thunder Bay families exactly how much the McGuinty government's HST will cost them on utilities and gasoline alone?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I thank the member for the question. It is important that we recognize that Minister Duncan is in Thunder Bay today to share with people the latest initiative coming out of the 2010 budget.

In 2009, we were able to pass in this House a piece of legislation that will ensure that there are going to be more jobs. I can't think of anything more important in northern Ontario today than opportunities for more jobs in the north.

In his recent budget, he also talked about a new revised energy and property tax credit, particularly about the new parts of the credit that have to do with families in northern Ontario.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for understanding the tremendous advocacy of the northern caucus mates that we have here on the government side who went to him and explained how important it was that we're able to—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Last summer, I was in Thunder Bay, where I met with Milton and Anne Marion. The Marions are seniors who pay as much as \$600 a

month for furnace oil. They'll be paying an extra \$50 a month when the McGuinty government's HST kicks in.

Will the Acting Premier tell the Thunder Bay families how much the HST is going to cost them, and admit that the energy credit won't even come close to covering the costs on home heating alone?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** It's important that we look at all of the benefits that will accrue to the couple that you talk about.

First of all, we cut their income taxes on January 1. Second, we've improved the property tax credit for seniors. Third, we've enhanced the property tax credit for more Ontarians, and in our latest budget we've improved that even more, as well as provided a new credit in regard to energy for those who are up north.

We've also made sure that the people who are the most vulnerable, who today receive the GST rebate from the federal government, will continue to receive that as well as the new HST rebate.

Finally, we secured a historic agreement with the federal government that sees some \$4.3 billion transferred. We're taking that money and we are putting it right in the wallets of consumers.

We know that this is not easy, but 591,000 more people working in the province of Ontario is worth it.

#### TOURISM

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Minister, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario is at Queen's Park today. TIAO, as it's known, is the voice and advocate of Ontario's tourism industry. Today they are here to discuss the future of their industry and to see how the industry can work with government to ensure that it remains competitive and sustainable.

However, a strong industry is also one that can efficiently promote Ontario, one that can create excitement and interest in Ontario.

Minister, what is the government doing to support the tourism industry to generate interest in Ontario so that we can attract local, national and international visitors?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member from Essex for the question. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about tourism in Ontario.

Ontario festivals and events play an important role in bringing excitement to the families travelling through Ontario. Promoting festivals and events generates interest and keeps tourism competitive here.

This is why we invest so much in our festivals and events. Since 2007 our government has invested almost \$37 million, through Celebrate Ontario, to support over 500 festivals and events.

This investment helps enhance celebrations, increases visitors and brings jobs and tourism dollars to local communities.

1130

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

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Minister, investments in the hundreds of festivals and events across the province are

undoubtedly important. However, in order to generate greater interest in Ontario, marketing needs to be more efficient and better coordinated at all levels. Marketing should not be a one-off effort. In order to generate greater interest in Ontario and to ensure that it is a destination of choice, our efforts in marketing need to be maximized.

Minister, what is the government doing to create an environment where the industry can generate greater interest in Ontario through enhanced efficiency and coordination in marketing?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I agree with the member from Essex: Marketing needs to be more efficient and better coordinated. This is why, with industry input and many, many consultations, we are moving forward with the implementation of the 13 new tourism regions. These regions will better coordinate marketing, attract jobs and stimulate the economy.

Since 2003, we have invested \$450 million in the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. There is also great efficiency here. The results speak for themselves. Third quarter numbers indicate that for every dollar spent, there has been a \$17.50 return on investment. We are really on the right track, and we want to move forward in that direction.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Last month, you announced 184 energy projects that will proceed without municipal approval. How many more energy projects do you expect to site this fiscal year?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The feed-in tariff program, for the most part, when it comes to the large projects, has been allocated. The 184 are the bulk that is approved as of right now. In terms of approved, I mean that they've been given contracts. They still have to go through an approval process.

I thank the member for raising that question, because I want to ask her whether she feels comfortable with her own policies in this respect. Just last week here in this Legislature, we had an opportunity—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We're trying to help him out, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You can't be helpful from the seat that are you're in, honourable member from Renfrew.

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Just last week, this Legislature had an opportunity to choose between their policy of relying on dirty coal and our policy of moving towards renewables such as wind energy, water and solar. I want to thank my colleagues here in this Legislature for choosing wisely. We have to move forward into the future with

cleaner and healthier sources of energy. Your side would—

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, not one of those 184 projects received municipal approval. None was necessary, and that's what I would like to talk about and get your answer on now.

Municipalities across Ontario are planning jurisdictions for landfills, for industrial areas and for residential sitings, yet you feel they are incapable of being part of the municipal planning process for renewable projects. Why do you not think the municipalities are up to the job, Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member knows full well that municipalities must be engaged in these decisions. They must be consulted, and communities must be consulted. We've said that in this Legislature—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will come to order. The honourable member from Dufferin-Caledon knows the rules: If she's not satisfied with the answer, she can file a late show.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford. Order. The members from Leeds-Grenville, Simcoe-Grey.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Not only does the other side want to bring us back in time, they want to bring us back in time even further behind the Harris government. Let me quote one of my predecessors as Minister of Energy. Mr. John Baird said "the government wants to move quickly in getting environmentally friendly projects for wind, solar and more hydroelectric power on stream. 'Conservation has got to be part of the equation and alternative fuels has got to be part of the equation.... We don't want to study the issue, we want to move forward on it.'" That was your Minister of Energy during the Harris days. You're not only moving back to their period of time, you want to move even further back—

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

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I guess my question is to the Acting Premier, because the minister—okay. Foreign ownership of Ontario industries has not always ended up being good for the workers and communities of our province. These foreign owners often end up in lockout positions or strikes due to the situations. Then our natural resources, our raw materials and our jobs leave Ontario to be processed elsewhere.

When will this government take action to ensure that our natural resources, our raw materials and our jobs stay in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It is absolutely a high priority, our top priority in Ontario, to make sure that we

have jobs in this province. Pretty much all that we've been doing, and the focus that we've put on Open Ontario, is about making sure that we have jobs. Whether we talk about tax restructuring or whether we talk about support for the auto industry, what we've been doing over the last number of months is making sure that we've got those supports in place. In February, jobs were up by another 7,000 in Ontario. Since last May, 91,700 net new jobs were created. Manufacturing is up over 32,000 net new jobs. I think that's the most important thing we can do: make sure that jobs are here, that innovation happens in Ontario and that we have people working in this province.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The workers at Stelco were laid off. Raw materials and our work were taken to the States. Steelworkers at Nanticoke were locked out, and their work was taken to the States. I suspect this is part of US Steel's plan to drive Ontario's steel working families to near economic ruin and then force them into inadequate contracts—the classic divide and conquer, just like Vale Inco and their scab labour.

Now we have Max Aicher buying up a steel plant in Hamilton, a deal that still needs government approval. When will this government push the federal government to ensure that their approval contains requirements that our natural resources, our raw materials and our jobs stay in Hamilton?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said, job number one for us is to make sure that we have more jobs in Ontario, and Hamilton is part of Ontario, so we want to make sure that we have the jobs here. What we know is that closing our borders to the world won't work. It will cost Ontarians jobs, not preserve them. There are no other Canadian provinces that close their borders to ore. We're proud, for example, that 100% of nickel mined in Ontario is smelted here, and 85% is refined in Ontario. It is our responsibility as the government, and it is our hope that members of the opposition will work with us, to make sure that we do everything we can to create jobs in Ontario and support industry. That's what we're doing. That's what we're going to continue to do, I hope working with the opposition.

#### BUILDING CODE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Building Code Act, 1992, is the legislative framework governing the construction, renovation and change of use of buildings. I understand that the building code itself is a regulation of the act and that it is the responsibility of municipalities to enforce Ontario's building code. That being said, it is the government of Ontario which sets forth what is the actual act and code.

I've been asked by constituents in my riding what role energy and water conservation play in the building code. I know that conservation is a priority for the government, as seen in the Clean Water Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and the Green Energy and Green Economy Act.

What I'm looking for today is information that I can bring back to my environmentally concerned constituents on what the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has done, through the building code, to require energy and water efficiency.

Can the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing please share with this House how the building code is making Ontario greener?

**1140**

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm pleased to be able to share with the member that, in fact, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, brought significant conservation-based changes to the Building Code Act. These include clarifying that energy and water conservation are purposes of the building code, requiring regular five-year reviews of the code's energy conservation provisions and mandate the creation of a Building Code Energy Advisory Council. That council was established to provide the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with strategic advice on the future direction for the building code energy conservation requirements.

The building code also supports the protection of drinking water supplies and environmental integrity through regulating septic systems.

We recently posted proposed regulations on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry that require re-inspection of such systems and certain vulnerable areas.

#### USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN HOUSE

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This issue around cellphones and, indeed, BlackBerrys I think they're called, has been raised numerous times. I know the Speaker from time to time has said, "Well, it's for the House to decide." The House could decide, I suppose, many things. Perhaps we could have portable televisions at our desks. We could be watching—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** See, we could be watching Kathy and Regis or whoever at 9 in the morning.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Speaker, however, as many times as you've admonished people not to bring cellphones in here, people continue to do it, especially during question period, which is probably the single most important—at least the single most focused or intense period of the day.

It's called Parliament because—well, we all know the derivation: "to speak." I don't mind being heckled because at least it demonstrates that somebody's listening to what I'm saying. Think about it. I don't mind other people heckling other members and interrupting in that way because at least they're listening to what that member has to say, and that seems to me to be an incredibly important thing at the very least during question period.

I appreciate that on a Wednesday afternoon at 5:30 things can get pretty tedious in here and people may be inclined to read a newspaper or a paperback novel. But,

Speaker, we need you to exercise your authority, your control, your jurisdiction to control what happens in this House. You will, for instance, call upon people who use unparliamentary language to withdraw. The fact is that now the Sergeant-at-Arms purports to seize a telephone that rings audibly and loudly during the course of a rather serious question and then the phone is returned.

May I submit to you, Speaker, at the very least that if you're not inclined—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:**—if you're not inclined to impose a complete ban on these devices, then at the very least you identify the offending party so that there is a record of people who hold this chamber in such low regard that they would allow a telephone of theirs to ring while they're in here. Obviously they don't think this is particularly important if they're ready to receive phone calls.

I submit to you, Speaker, you should at the very least identify the member. I also submit that it would be incumbent upon that member to apologize to the chamber for violating a direction of the Speaker, otherwise your directions have zero impact, and the failure of members to apologize and the failure of the Speaker to identify them, in effect implying upon that apology, renders the Speaker somewhat impotent and mocks the Speaker's authority. You're a Speaker in name only, and if people want to mock your authority, then you don't serve the valuable role that we've called upon you by electing you to serve.

I say it's a relatively simple proposition. I plead with you. This is a hortatory address to the Speaker. I plead with you to do something meaningful in response to these breaches of your guidance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member from Welland. As the members are aware, the use of electronic devices is prohibited. We have tolerated, collectively, the use of BlackBerrys being in silent mode, but even BlackBerrys in silent mode, I have warned you, are a health and safety issue for our good friends the interpreters sitting over in the corner. I frankly don't get it. I can survive an hour and 15 minutes without looking at my Blackberry and not answering the cellphone. I agree with the honourable member from Welland: I don't know why members can't. We can go back to the old-fashioned way: If there's something of urgent importance that your staff needs to send to you, send a little note in. That's why the pages are here: to provide that service to us. I agree with the point that it is disrupting. Here, you had an honourable member today asking a very serious question, an important question of public interest. In the middle of it, a cellphone goes off. That is not respectful to the member who was asking the question; quite honestly, it's not respectful to anyone in this House.

I will take the point under advisement. I don't want to be described as the honourable member described me. With respect, I appreciate it, but speaking of respect, I think we need to be respectful of one another. You know

what? For an hour of every day, when it's the most important time, when it is showtime for you as members, it is showtime for the Speaker and it is showtime for everyone, show some respect for one another and leave the cellphone outside or leave it in your office. Thanks.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would like to take this opportunity to welcome, in the west members' gallery, Richard Nancarrow, Karen Nancarrow, Anneke Van Heuven, Molly Van Heuven, Sophie Nancarrow, Carleigh Chambers, Jemma Waddell and Hanna Cordoso. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 231, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act / Projet de loi 231, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm
Albanese, Laura	Dunlop, Garfield	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Ramsay, David
Barrett, Toby	Hoskins, Eric	Ruprecht, Tony
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Sandals, Liz
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Smith, Monique
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jones, Sylvia	Sousa, Charles
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Carroll, Aileen	Leal, Jeff	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Van Bommel, Maria
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilkinson, John
Clark, Steve	Matthews, Deborah	Wilson, Jim
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Yakubuski, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Gélinas, France	Marchese, Rosario	
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 57; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm delighted to introduce my daughter, Allison Dawes, from Mr. Miller's riding, the fine riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to welcome some people who are joining us as I speak. They're my guests in the House today: Dr. Mark Macleod and Robyn Cassidy from the Ontario Medical Association; Kevin Smith, chair of the Ontario Hospital Association; and Ben Chan from the Ontario Health Quality Council.

Also, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize some of the Ministry of Health staff who have made today's introduction of legislation possible: Tai Huynh, Sylvia Moustacalis, Paul Kaufman, Vanessa Ciofitto, Julia Gallo, Barry Monaghan, Fannie Dimitriadis, Jennifer Baker and Stirling Lafrance. These are all very hard-working members of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. I'm very, very proud of the work they have done to make today's introduction possible.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to introduce, in the members' west gallery, Dawn and Ed Novak, who are accompanied by Ron Jacques and Joy McCormack. Dawn and Ed are here today to present a constructive analysis of the murder of their daughter.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to acknowledge those who have joined us in the galleries today from Parents for Children's Mental Health and Children's Mental Health Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to take this opportunity. Many of you know George, the CTV cameraman. Some of you are aware that we've had a pair of red-tailed hawks that have been nesting here at Queen's Park for a number of years. We have two new residents of Queen's Park as of today. George just informed me that there are two baby chicks in the nest out front right now. So keep an eye out for the red-tailed hawks.

By the way, have a look at the garden out front. There are Ontario white trilliums now growing at Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I would be remiss on this day of commemoration of Poland's constitution not to

mention the recent tragic plane crash that took the life of the President, his wife and so many other government officials, and the vacuum it left in Poland's leadership.

To Poles and their descendants, May 3 is a national holiday, for it bestows upon them a priceless heritage of humanitarianism, tolerance and freedom, conceived at a time when most of Europe lived under the existence of unconditional power and tyranny. The tyranny deemed the Polish Constitution too dangerous, and Poland lost its independence; its territories annexed by Austria, Russia and Prussia. In terms of a national life, Poland lost the entire 19th century, being reborn in 1918.

In 1868, the ancestors of my father, Paul Yakubuski, emigrated to Canada from the Kashub region of Poland. In 1963, he became the first person of Polish descent to be elected to the Ontario Legislature.

My riding is home to Wilno, Canada's first Polish settlement, where each year the Wilno Heritage Society gathers to celebrate our Kashub Polish heritage on the first Saturday of May. I was again able to join them in their celebration this year.

In spite of the recent tragedy, this will be a day of celebration for Polish people everywhere, as they mark the 219th anniversary of their constitution. We join them in that celebration.

### HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** May is Huntington Disease Awareness Month, and I believe we have unanimous consent to wear the Huntington Society of Canada lapel pin to support this campaign and to spread awareness of this devastating disease.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I believe the pins are in the lobbies.

Huntington's disease is an inherited brain disorder that affects both mind and body. Huntington's disease affects thousands of Canadians across our country, leading to profound cognitive and emotional impairment and eventually incapacitation and death. The disease remains incurable, and there are no known effective treatments.

May is the official month when the society educates the general population about Huntington's disease. Many special functions, raising funds, happen in the spring, along with the launch of their Amaryllis Campaign. The amaryllis, which appears on the pin, is the signature flower for the Huntington Society of Canada. The society's volunteers have been selling amaryllis plants since 1985 and have raised over \$1 million to fight against this terrible affliction.

Today, I encourage my colleagues in the House to join me in supporting the Huntington Society of Canada.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I wish to introduce Dawn and Ed Novak, who are here today to present their brief, A Constructive Analysis of the Murder of Natalie Novak. They're in the west members' gallery.

May 15 will forever be a day that Mr. and Mrs. Novak remember with great sadness. On that day in 2006, their daughter Natalie was stabbed to death by her former boyfriend, Arsei Hindessa.

The Novaks' brief puts this very personal act of violence into a context of what they see as a series of missteps and deficiencies in the way we deal with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. They reveal a pattern of Mr. Hindessa's arrest and release, his failure to appear at court dates and meetings with his probation officer and psychiatrist, and his failure to comply with no-contact orders.

The culmination of these events was when Mr. Hindessa was arrested for again breaching a no-contact order regarding Natalie. After this arrest, he was released into the Toronto bail program. Less than a month later, he brutally murdered Natalie in her Toronto apartment.

None of us can bring Natalie back to her parents, but Dawn and Ed Novak ask us to take something positive from their loss. They ask us all, as legislators, to learn from Natalie's experience.

I thank Dawn and Ed Novak for travelling to the Legislature today to present their brief. I also commend them for having the courage to share their story of Natalie's life and death so candidly with us.

I would ask a page to come over, so that I can have their brief delivered to the leaders of all parties, the critics, the Attorney General and other relevant ministers.

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#### COMEDY FESTIVAL

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On Tuesday evening last week, I had an opportunity to join a number of residents in the city of Timmins who went to a very special occasion which was sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association, and that was a comedy fest, where people suffering from mental illness went through a program of learning how to develop stand-up comic routines and had the opportunity to deliver those routines to a pretty packed house at TH&VS last Tuesday.

I've got to say it was one of the most delightful events I've been to in a long time, not only because my only sister was there and I thought she was the funniest of the presenters, but quite frankly I thought it was rather interesting as far as an approach of using humour to look at the lighter side of life in order to try to deal with some of the issues caused by schizophrenia and other mental health diseases.

To those who participated along with Louise Bisson, my sister, in both Timmins and Timiskaming as part of this event, I say congratulations. In fact, it was probably the funniest comedy show I've been to in a long time, because I learned what I've always suspected to be true: Humour can be extremely funny if you don't use vulgarities in that humour. All of the comics did an excellent job and we were all well entertained. We hope this becomes an annual event in northern Ontario.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** There have been many assertions from the opposition about how the Ontario government is letting patients down with our reforms to Ontario's drug system. Let me take this opportunity to set the record straight.

This government recognizes and appreciates the valuable contributions that Ontario's pharmacists make to patient care. In fact, patient care is what these reforms are all about. Our plan is focused on providing patients with better access to lower-cost prescription drugs. It's unfortunate that big pharmacy chain owners are putting patients in the middle of a policy disagreement with the government.

We are building on our commitment to pharmacists through measures that will increase dispensing fees, representing about \$124 million, as well as new funding of \$100 million to compensate pharmacists for additional services they provide to patients. We're also proposing more than \$20 million in new funding to boost financial support for pharmacies in rural communities and under-served areas.

The opposition members who are against these reforms are on the side of the big pharmacy chain owners, who are only interested in increased profits.

This government will continue to fight to improve patient care in Ontario with these drug reforms.

#### SPORTS AWARDS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak about an important event that happened in my riding on April 24. The 13th annual Whitby Sports Hall of Fame awards gala celebrated the achievements of four people from our town who have achieved excellence in sport: Samuel Dempster, Joe Jones, Andrea Lawes and Gary Roberts.

Samuel Dempster started his baseball coaching career as a coach in Whitby and Oshawa and was instrumental in the creation of the LOSSA high school baseball league in Durham region. He went on to become a major league baseball coaching envoy, and is currently an associate Canadian scout for the Milwaukee Brewers.

Joe Jones achieved great success in the sport of cycling. Canadian Cyclist magazine cites Joe's 10th-place finish in the prestigious British Milk Race, a gruelling 1,500-mile race, as a significant achievement, and Joe was the first Canadian ever to be invited to compete in this event.

Andrea Lawes was recognized for her long and distinguished curling career. She played in 25 various provincial championships, winning 10 of them. Internationally, Andrea represented Canada at the 1990 world curling championships in Sweden.

Gary Roberts needs no introduction. His long and illustrious hockey career started in Whitby, where he played minor hockey under coach Benny LaHaye. He went on to play for 21 seasons with the National Hockey

League, starting with the Calgary Flames, on to the Carolina Hurricanes, the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Florida Panthers. His NHL career closed with the Tampa Bay Lightning in the 2008-09 season.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients. We're all very proud of you.

#### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** As we all know, a series of earthquakes devastated the country of Haiti on January 12, 2010. About three million people have been affected by this disaster. Approximately 200,000 people lost their lives, not to mention the damage to their infrastructure.

It has been heartwarming to see the outpouring of help and support in Canada, in this province and from around the world. Although the earthquake which devastated Haiti took place in mid-January, the need to aid survivors remains as strong as ever.

I want to recognize and thank Bob Lauzon, the organizer of the Rockin' for Haiti benefit in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. This event took place this past Saturday in Cornwall, with all proceeds donated directly to the Sisters of the Holy Cross to help earthquake victims in Haiti.

It does not end there, as students from schools in my riding—East Front Public School, Central Public School, Gladstone Public School, Viscount Alexander Public School, Eamer's Corners Public School and Kinsmen/Vincent Massey School—raised an amazing \$6,700, which they donated to the Canadian Red Cross for the relief effort.

There are many more stories like this, in my riding, of people lending a helping hand to those in need. I want to thank all organizations and people who have been so compassionate during this difficult time in history for the people of Haiti. More support is needed, and I challenge organizations and businesses in my riding and across this province to join in the efforts in helping the people of Haiti through fundraising efforts such as Rockin' for Haiti.

#### ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Canada's navy was officially established on May 4, 1910. Since then, around a quarter of a million men and women have served in the navy and the country has sent nearly a thousand ships to sea. Sailors have come from every province and territory, and ships have ranged from the size of in-harbour vessels the length of two or three cars, to aircraft carriers longer than 17 school buses.

When the First World War broke out, the Royal Canadian Navy had two warships and fewer than 350 sailors. By the end of the Second World War, it had grown into the world's third-largest navy, with roughly 100,000 men and women and 434 commissioned vessels.

Throughout both world wars, Canada played a critical role in the success of many strategic objectives. One in particular was the navy's contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic. The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest continuous military campaign of the Second World War, starting at the beginning of the war in 1939 and ending with the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945.

By July 1940, all ocean-going shipping had to be re-routed around the north of Ireland and through the Irish Sea. Even this route was seriously threatened, and Canadian ships in British waters strove to fend off submarine attacks while rescuing survivors of torpedoed merchant ships.

In the spring of 1941, the number of attacks and shipping losses escalated. In June alone, over 500,000 tons of shipping was lost to U-boats. Canadians showed their resilience by developing new methods of locating and destroying the German submarines. By maintaining the Atlantic lifeline through convoy protection, the Canadian Navy played a vital role in this battle.

On May 28, 1945, at one minute past midday, all Canadian ships at sea turned on their running lights to signal the end of the battle of the Atlantic. This battle is commemorated every year on the first Sunday of May wherever the Canadian Navy is present.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Today marks the start of Education Week in Ontario. Our theme for this year is Preparing Our Students for Future Success. This theme reflects the great results we already see in Ontario's publicly funded education system, such as rising graduation rates, and the great results we expect to see from the implementation of full-day learning this fall.

More students than ever before are staying in school, graduating and finding the right career path. As a result, more students are gaining the skills they need to be successful and make a difference in our world. Our educators and school staff work with our students each day to enrich their lives and set them on a path to success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the educators and staff in Ontario's schools and the school boards for their continued commitment and passion. It is our educators who truly are preparing our students for future success. Please join me in celebrating Education Week and expressing continued dedication to making Ontario's education system the best in the world and for the world.

#### REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario entitled Rethinking Energy Conservation in Ontario: Annual Energy Conservation Progress Report—2009 (Volume One).

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 158, An Act to repeal and replace the statutes governing The Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario, the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario and The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario / Projet de loi 158, Loi visant à abroger et à remplacer les lois régissant l'Association des comptables généraux accrédités de l'Ontario, les Comptables en management accrédités de l'Ontario et l'Institut des comptables agréés de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? All those in favour?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On division.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On division.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

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## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will wait until ministerial statements.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX VICTIMES D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Mr. Chudleigh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to proclaim Victims of Crime Awareness Week / Projet de loi 47, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation aux victimes d'actes criminels.

**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. Ted Chudleigh:** Recognizing victims of crime each year reminds us that all victims deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We keep in mind the impact crime can have on victims of families and on friends. We pay tribute to those who have been victims of crime and those who have lost as a result of crime. We acknowledge the work of those people in our province whose commitment helps support victims of crime.

### CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS ET DES JEUNES

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to proclaim Child and Youth Mental Health Day / Projet de loi 48, Loi proclamant la Journée de la santé mentale des enfants et des jeunes.

**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?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** As per the explanatory note, the bill proclaims Friday, May 7, 2010 and the Friday of the first full week of May in each subsequent year as Child and Youth Mental Health Day.

## MOTIONS

### SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding sign-language interpreters for certain proceedings.

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

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that during introduction of visitors, oral questions and members' statements on Wednesday, May 5, 2010, sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the proceedings to guests in the gallery

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

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### HEALTH CARE

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I had the opportunity of introducing some guests earlier, and three more have

come. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Adalsteinn Brown, Susan Fitzpatrick and Sophia Ikura, also people who were instrumental in formulating this legislation.

I rise in this chamber today to speak to legislation that would, if passed, improve the quality and value of health care being delivered to Ontarians, and it will put the patient first. It is called the Excellent Care for All bill.

Earlier today, I met Robert Hawke. Robert is an actor who survived cancer. Through his experience, he learned how difficult it can be to navigate our health care system. He's developed a hilarious one-man play titled *Norm vs Cancer* about his experience. More importantly, he is the co-lead of the patient empowerment program at the University Health Network. Robert gets it. He understands how empowering patients and ensuring that they have a voice in the system matters, and giving patients a voice is exactly what we intend to do.

As my colleagues will know, our government committed in the recent throne speech to make Ontario health care providers and executives accountable for improving patient care; to ensure that, for more and more services, money follows the patient; and to have an independent expert advisory body that provides recommendations on clinical practice guidelines, based on the best available evidence, to ensure that future investments get results and improve patients' health. The legislation I'm introducing today, the Excellent Care for All Act, is intended to lay the groundwork for all of those things. I urge my colleagues to see the importance of supporting it.

The demands being placed on our health care system are virtually infinite, and as everyone here knows, government resources are not. Just 20 years ago, 32 cents of every dollar spent on provincial government programs were spent on health care. Today it's 46 cents, and in 12 years, it could be 70 cents if appropriate action is not taken. We simply can't let that happen, not if we value our universal single-payer system and not if we're committed to ensuring that that universal single-payer system is there for generations to come. So what do we do? And no, the answer is not to cut services, to increase wait times or to limit access to care for patients. Governments have tried that before, and we've seen the consequences. We have a different approach—a smarter, fairer approach.

The McGuinty government has focused the last six and a half years on rebuilding a system that was badly neglected by the previous government. The results have followed: lower wait times, more doctors and more access for all Ontarians. I stand here today knowing that we are at an important juncture when it comes to health care in this province. Thanks to this government's efforts to rebuild the foundation of our system, we now have a tremendous opportunity to refocus our priorities: to refocus on the patient.

By focusing on patients, we can make the overall experience for patients in the health care system that much better, and we get better value for money. For example, we know that there were roughly 140,000 cases of patients last year who were readmitted to hospital

within 30 days of their original discharge. That's far too many. It's bad for patients and it's costly. We all have to work together to change this. The McGuinty government will lead the way. The government's Open Ontario plan includes improving the quality and accountability in health care by ensuring that health care professionals work together in the best interests of the patient.

Here is what we are proposing doing: Our proposed bill would ensure that the quality of the patient experience is measured in a standardized way and reported publicly. We would hold executives accountable for the quality of care delivered. We would listen to patients and ensure that quality committees in each health care organization use the results of patient surveys to create benchmarks for improving the standard of care. Also, patients would have a formal mechanism to have their questions and concerns addressed through a patient relations process.

It is really very simple. If we want a health care system that delivers the best possible care today and is able to do so in the future, we have to act now. What we have to do is focus health care leadership on the task of changing the culture so that quality care for patients is the most important job that every single person in the organization does.

If this legislation passes, the following changes would begin to take effect in our health care system: Health care organizations, beginning with hospitals, would have interdisciplinary quality committees that would report to the board on quality-related issues. Health care organizations, starting with hospitals, would have quality improvement plans which would be publicly posted, and executive compensation would be linked to the achievement of outcomes identified in those plans. Patients would have access to a patient relations process and regular reporting of patient surveys. The results of those surveys would be used to inform an annual quality improvement plan and would be taken into consideration when determining compensation for executives.

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We would also expand the mandate of the Ontario Health Quality Council to enable it to provide recommendations on clinical practice guidelines for services delivered by health care providers. They will also provide advice on the services we fund provincially to reflect the best available medical evidence.

Through associated policy changes, we would gradually reform how hospitals are funded to create greater transparency.

Our current funding model penalizes hospitals when their volumes increase. Global budgets deliver a set amount of money for a year, and any increase in the number of patients coming into the hospital is a cost or financial liability. The result is that hospitals may delay or deny care in order to balance their budgets.

Along with our increased expectations of accountability for quality, we're introducing a new funding plan for large hospitals that has built-in incentives to encourage the delivery of high-quality, evidenced-based care. In this model, the funding will follow patients to the

hospitals where they receive services, and hospitals will be compensated based on the services they provide.

I want to be very clear that we recognize the unique character of small and rural hospitals, and these funding changes will be focused on hospitals with large volumes.

The proposed bill is a reflection of this government's strong commitment to the future of health care in this province. Health care is too important for us to allow inefficiency, it is too important for us to allow a lack of transparency, and it is much, much too important for us not to ensure that every single dollar we put into the health care system is having the desired effect and benefiting patients.

If passed, this legislation would reward high-quality care and would create a more positive patient experience within the health care system. In the process of doing those critical things, it would ensure the sustainability of our publicly funded health care system that we all cherish.

I know my colleagues care as deeply about the future of health care in this province as I do. I'm asking them to support this bill and to support excellent care for all.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK SEMAINE DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge Children's Mental Health Week, which is marked the first full week of May each year. This important week is about increasing awareness of the signs of child and youth mental health problems, decreasing stigma, and understanding that help is available and that it works.

Les statistiques révèlent qu'en Ontario, un enfant et un jeune sur cinq a un problème de santé mentale. Cela représente environ 500 000 enfants. Les problèmes de santé mentale incluent aussi bien l'anxiété et la dépression que l'hyperactivité avec déficit de l'attention, les troubles alimentaires et la schizophrénie, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns.

Aujourd'hui, j'encourage chacun à porter ce ruban vert pour promouvoir la sensibilisation à la santé mentale des enfants.

Statistics tell us that one in five Ontario children and youth has a mental health illness; that's about 500,000 kids. Illnesses range from anxiety and depression to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders, schizophrenia and more. Today, I encourage all of us to wear this green ribbon to promote awareness of children's mental health.

We all need to talk about this important issue in our families, in our communities and across the province. When a child has a mental health challenge, it can take an enormous toll on the entire family. A child suffers stigma, has trouble in school, and may be ostracized by friends and feel isolated. For the family, a child in crisis creates complete upheaval, and too often families feel there is nowhere to turn.

Étant moi-même parente, je peux seulement imaginer la difficulté et l'isolement que ressentent les parents que j'ai rencontrés et qui m'ont raconté leur histoire. Je tiens à dire à ces parents et à tous les parents de l'Ontario que notre gouvernement partage avec vous les aspirations que vous avez pour vos enfants.

As a parent myself, I can only imagine what a tough and lonely road it must be for the parents I have met and who have shared their life's journey with me. I want to say to those parents, and to all Ontario's parents, that this government shares the aspirations you have for your kids. We have dreams for your kids too, and that is why in 2004 we provided the first base funding increase in over a decade into children's mental health, and in 2007 we invested another \$24.5 million. We have also doubled the funding to the telepsychiatry program and expanded access in rural, remote and underserved communities. In 2004, our government established the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO in Ottawa. In 2008, we put in place the student support leadership initiative, which provides \$3 million per year to build partnerships between mental health agencies and school boards. And this year, we will fund the development of the navigator, a program where parents with lived experiences help parents to get the services and supports they need for their kids.

L'un des côtés à la fois les plus enrichissants et les plus déchirants de mon travail est d'entendre directement les témoignages des familles de l'Ontario, de comprendre leur vécu et de connaître l'impact positif et le pouvoir de transformation des programmes novateurs en santé mentale.

I am reminded of a visit I made to Niagara Child and Youth Services, where I saw first-hand the impact of art therapy. For kids who have undergone traumatic life experiences and are unable to verbalize their thoughts and feelings, art therapy allows them to express their views of themselves and the world around them. But perhaps most importantly, it allows them to heal. Through art therapy, I witnessed the progression of one girl's journey from self-hatred to self-worth through paintings of herself.

Although our government has undertaken some very important work, there is still much more to do. We take up the call of Children's Mental Health Ontario's latest graffiti campaign, and we will not write these kids off.

As Iris the dragon tells us in Gayle Grass's groundbreaking children's book depicting one child's struggles with mental illness and journey to healing, "Just keep believing in yourself and know that there are people around to help you. And when you grow up and see a falling star, catch it, shine it brightly, and throw it into the sky as high as you can."

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

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to make a few comments with respect to the new bill that was intro-

duced in the Legislature today by the Minister of Health, the so-called excellent health care for all bill.

Let me say at the outset that we in the PC Party are in full support of the concept of full transparency and accountability in health care. It's imperative that we ensure that best value is received for each precious health care dollar spent. It's also important to note that the Progressive Conservatives stand squarely behind the principle of universal access to an excellent, publicly funded health care system.

But I also think it's rather rich that the McGuinty Liberals are pointing a finger at health care executives and professionals with this legislation. In our view, the problem lies not with our excellent health care professionals, but with the McGuinty Liberals. They should be looking at their own practices and priorities. We have, and it's a pretty sorry record. I'd like to give a few examples.

Let's look, first of all, at their practice of raiding hospital budgets to pay the half-million-dollar salary of the former health deputy minister. That's hardly open and transparent, I would suggest.

What about the eHealth fiasco, in which \$1 billion was completely wasted, according to the Auditor General of Ontario, with no further progress made toward the development of electronic health records, which are absolutely vital to the best-quality health care for all Ontarians and also to achieve the kinds of efficiencies that we need to be achieving in order to make sure that each health care dollar is wisely spent?

As much as I look forward and support the idea of focusing on excellent health care for each and every patient in Ontario, I don't hold out too much hope that that's going to be attained under the McGuinty Liberals, given their past dismal record in this area.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I just met with the Parents for Children's Mental Health, and I'd like to use their words to respond to the minister's statement.

"As shown in multiple reports and studies, the devastating effects of having a child with mental health issues, the impact it has on the family and surrounding community has reached its breaking point. It is time for a call to action and time for all of us to come together in easing the pain and suffering for our children."

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Auditor General Jim McCarter in 2009 indicated that the estimated total economic cost attributed to mental illness in Ontario was \$22 billion per year. This includes things like health care, law enforcement, motor vehicle accidents, crime, and indirect costs resulting in loss productivity.

Again from the Parents for Children's Mental Health briefing that I just came out of: The recently released Ontario budget once again provided no increased funding for children and youth mental health services, meaning another year of no core funding increases, for three years

consistently. This lack of investment has caused immediate closures of services, staff layoffs, and realignment of many programs for children and youth mental health services across the province, further adding to the fragmentation of services available to the more than 656,000 currently suffering from mental health illnesses across the province.

The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, of which I am a member, has also released its interim report based on the numerous consultations held with agencies, professionals, researchers and consumers across the province. Throughout the report, the fragmentation of services, silos, and difficulty navigating the system is referred to.

It is imperative that Ontario begin to actively address the crisis of child and youth mental health services in Ontario. Families, children, and youth across the province are in acute need of accessible services, resources, support and assistance. Again, from Parents for Children's Mental Health: I couldn't agree more.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm responding to the Minister for Children and Youth Services for her statement earlier today. I have to say first and foremost that New Democrats commend Parents for Children's Mental Health and their partners for the attention that they draw to the unmet needs of Ontario's children and youth who have mental health issues here in the province. Of course, across Canada there is a drive to have a day designated as child and youth mental health awareness day in every province—and, of course, I just introduced a bill to hopefully have that happen here in Ontario. But I have to say, and I think we would all agree, that we need more than a day of awareness and recognition.

The minister, I would have to say, is disingenuous to suggest that the McGuinty government is responding properly to the crisis in children's mental health. How dare she say that help is available and that it works? Help is not available. That is why these parents are here. That is why awareness continues to have to be made about this issue.

This government has frozen funding for children's mental health for three years straight. That means that the help is not available because the services are not there for people. To avoid more service cuts and layoffs, Children's Mental Health Ontario recommends a regular 3% annual increase in the budgets. Families want much sharper government focus on filling the needs of children and youth and their families, and we agree with that.

Due to the government's shortfall, almost half of our community mental health agencies in Ontario had to cut programs during this year, eliminating a range of counselling and support services for approximately 1,000 children and youth. That means 1,000 children and youth for whom services are not available, and of course, therefore, it's not working.

More than half of these agencies—54%—anticipate further program cuts this year; two out of every three

agencies had to lay off staff; and one third of them had budget deficits as the needs outstripped the resources. The cuts meant less residential care for young people, fewer in-home services, less help for teens with both addiction and mental health challenges, and less help for families.

Is this the kind of Ontario that the McGuinty government wants—a province where children languish without services? Sadly, only one in four families who need mental health services for their children have access to those services.

I could go on and on, but I know that my colleague has something to say about the Minister of Health's statement, so I'll end with that.

### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will be responding to the Excellent Care for All bill. New Democrats are worried about the future of medicare, but we are especially concerned about the exponential growth in hospital executive salaries under the McGuinty government. This year's sunshine list revealed a new club, the \$700,000 club, which is filled with hospital presidents and CEOs whose salaries have continued to grow by 7% last year alone. No other working group got a 7% increase in 2009, but hospital CEOs did.

Since this government took office, hospital executive salaries have increased by 40%. How can it be that we have Premier McGuinty making \$208,000 a year and managing a budget of close to \$100 billion, and yet hospital CEOs make four times that amount to manage one one hundredth of that budget? It makes no sense.

We need the Minister of Health to stand up and send a clear message that this is not acceptable, and that those salaries have to be rolled back, but none of that is in the Excellent Care for All Act.

We're also very concerned about the failure to implement basic transparency and accountability. The minister talks about a new patient relations process. When a patient has a complaint with the hospital, they go through the hospital complaints process. Once this fails, they call the Ombudsman. But the Ombudsman can only say, "Sorry, I can't help you."

What people and patients really want is access to the Ombudsman. But, here again, this bill does not give the Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals. It's the same thing with freedom of access to information. If you want transparency, if you want accountability, why can you not have the hospitals under freedom of access to information?

We're also concerned that the interprofessional advisory committee will take second place to the long-established medical advisory committee. It will be interesting to see how the recommendations of those two groups play out and who will get the upper hand.

We have been told for months that this legislation could correct many long-standing problems in the hospital system. I'm afraid I may be disappointed. But I

do like very much that the Ontario Health Quality Council's role has been expanded. They do tremendously good work.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

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

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

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

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I am in agreement with this, and I will give this to page Sarah.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians living with life-threatening iron overload from regular blood transfusions have the right to the best available medical treatment, regardless of their financial means;

"Whereas the only publicly funded treatment for iron overload in Ontario, for patients with MDS and other rare anemias, is delivered through painful daily infusions lasting between eight to 12 hours, five to seven days a week, which many patients can't tolerate;

"Whereas an effective and well-tolerated oral once-daily treatment for iron overload, Exjade, is now available that addresses an unmet medical need for another treatment option, but Exjade isn't publicly funded in Ontario for patients with MDS and other rare anemias;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act now to ensure that patients with MDS and other rare anemias in this province have access to Exjade. We urge the government of Ontario to provide funding for Exjade through the Ontario public drug programs for all patients who require this treatment option, without further delay."

I agree with this petition, and I'll sign my name to it.

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to read a petition that was collected at a pharmacy in Minden, Ontario. I will read the whole text.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

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

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

And in very tiny font:

"By signing this petition, you are authorizing the coalition of CACDS, OPA and IPO to use the personal information you have provided to us, particularly your name and email address, to send you additional information and updates about the Ontario government's proposed amendments to pharmacy and drug reform. If you do not wish to receive these emails, please put an 'X' in the box next to your email address."

I turn this petition in to page Michelle.

1350

#### SALE OF DOMESTIC WINES AND BEERS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly and it's titled "Say Yes to Beer and Wine Sales in Convenience Stores."

"Whereas the province of Ontario restricts the sale of beer and wine to the LCBO, a few winery retail stores and the Beer Store, and the three large beer companies are owned by multinationals;

"Whereas other provinces (notably Quebec) have been selling beer and wine in local convenience stores for many years without any harm to the well-being of the public; and

"Whereas it is desirable to promote the sale of beer and wine in a convenient manner consistent with a contemporary society;

"Whereas it is essential to support local convenience stores for the survival of small businesses;

"Whereas it is obvious from the current market trends that the sales of wine and beer in convenience stores is not a question of 'if' but 'when';

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Liquor Control Act to permit the sale of beer and wine in local convenience stores to the public throughout the province and to do it now."

I'll send it down with Nicole.

#### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Friends of the Eglinton LRT.

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario to help reduce gridlock, improve air quality and create jobs;

"Whereas Toronto has the worst gridlock in the world, as noted in a 2010 study; and

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a much-needed link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station" all the way "to Pearson airport ... connecting Durham region with Peel region...;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create 10,000 green jobs in construction, engineering and public transit;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business and increasing property values for current retailers and homeowners;

"Whereas a rapid transit line has been supported" and promised to Eglinton Avenue "since 1975;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock on Eglinton."

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

#### SERVICE CENTRES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition from the good folks from Leeds-Grenville. It reads:

"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 certainly agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it with page Sarah.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education’s accommodation review process, used by school boards to accommodate students, and which includes closing schools, is flawed, lacks transparency and accountability;

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

“Immediately stop the closure of Crowland Central Public School and any disputed closures. Develop policies where school boards are more accountable and the ministry, school boards, municipalities and community members work together openly and transparently to deal with funding, schools and declining enrolment.”

It’s signed by Craig Hyatt, Nicole Jones, Mary McCutcheon, Margaret Taylor and hundreds of others, and I of course have signed it as well, and it has been certified. This is a certified petition that I present to you, sir.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from St. Matthew’s high school. Sarah Conway, Lisa Cater and Lindsay Leonard signed it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208”—now Bill 6—“An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I will sign this petition and send it up with Michelle.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any

renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed.”

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas” since October 2009, insured PET scans are “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.”

This is also a fully certified petition. I fully support it, will affix my signature to it, and send it to the Clerk with Caroline.

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from folks in Windsor, Burlington and Toronto, and it is indeed certified.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

“Whereas Tim Hudak’s Conservatives’ policies would stop access to affordable prescription drugs being available to Ontario families and seniors;

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

“To continue to pursue legislation that will put an end to this flawed system of professional allowances for generic drugs in order to reinvest the savings to the benefit of all Ontarians.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it and give it to the page.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

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

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

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

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

These petitions were collected over a period of three days during the home show, and I'm pleased to affix my name to it.

#### CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

**M. Phil McNeely:** J'ai une pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario soumise par l'école Gisèle-Lalonde—Zoé Black, Karine Boudreau et Janik Bilodeau.

« 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 208 —là, c'est le projet de loi 6—« la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

Je suis d'accord avec la pétition. Je vais y signer mon nom et l'envoyer avec M. Stig.

1400

#### TAXATION

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as ... gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals;

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

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

I agree with this and will send it down with Ana.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### LOWERING ENERGY COSTS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Mr. Phillips, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

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

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'll be sharing the vast majority of my time with the members from Pickering—Scarborough East and Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** The minister without portfolio and chair of cabinet is far too generous with his time. I think he learned that from the House leader, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, who is similarly generous with her time in sharing it in regard to legislation we have before us.

I'm pleased today to be able to rise on behalf of my colleague the Honourable Dwight Duncan, our Minister of Finance, and pleased to re-engage the discussion and the second reading leadoff debate on Bill 44, the Lowering Energy Costs for Northern Ontarians Act, 2010. I look forward as well, during the course of the afternoon, to hearing from the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, who will certainly be able to add a more localized flavour to the debate on this particular piece of legislation.

This was a key piece of the matters presented in our 2010 budget. Bill 16, which is the principal piece of legislation regarding the budget, is currently before committee, having had its witnesses this past Thursday. This coming Thursday, the members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will be dealing with the clause-by-clause matters of Bill 16 before that is reintroduced into this Legislature.

Bill 44 builds on the work that came out of the budget and addresses more specifically the matter of energy costs for northern Ontarians. To provide a bit of an overview, I think, is always important to do within the context of budget bills in particular, even though the matters within them may be a little more focused than would otherwise be the case. But it's important to recognize that we are, hopefully, at the tail end now of, but certainly have been in, a worldwide economic recession. It remains one of the most pressing challenges for many jurisdictions throughout the world. We only need to look the local, national and international media to see what's happening in places like Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland to understand how significant the economic challenges are not only to Ontario and Ontarians but throughout the world, and why each piece of legislation that's brought forward in the context of budgetary considerations has an impact on Ontarians, either within communities or throughout Ontario, and why those are important matters in the context of trying to manage our way through and out of the economic recession that we have all been facing.

Countries throughout the world—Ontario as a sub-national government is no different in this regard—have been facing sharp declines in revenue and increasing expenses as people turn to their governments for support. I was interested in today's meeting—I'm probably wrong about the number, since I was listening to it on the radio and not having a chance to hear the details, but I thought that the numbers in Greece were some \$161 billion, if I'm not mistaking the kind of numbers being tossed around, for the purpose of providing them with a system to give some context of the scale that's sometimes required. But in Ontario we're clear about what we have to do in these times, and that is we have to create jobs, we have to help families and we have to establish the appropriate conditions for future economic growth.

During the course of the throne speech we introduced the Open Ontario plan, which focuses the government's resources on areas that will open the province for new ideas, new investment and jobs. They will do just those kinds of things we need to do in the creation of jobs, helping families and making sure we have the right economic conditions for the future. To move the Open Ontario plan forward, the 2010 budget includes investments in posts-secondary education, health care and skills training, and we're ensuring that all Ontarians benefit from the Open Ontario plan.

In recent years, Ontario's resource-based industries have faced very, very significant challenges, including and not limited to the strong Canadian dollar. And we've

seen very recently how the Canadian dollar now has reached and even broken through par with its American counterpart, and hovers in the range of 98, 98 and a half, 99 cents parity or even slightly above that. Currently, there is no expectation that it is going to change very much any time soon.

And the resource-based industries are faced with increased global competition. How many times have people stood in this Legislature recently and talked about what's happening to resource-based industries, and the fact that it's not just an Ontario issue, it's a Canadian issue, an international issue; that we are competing now more and more so globally in the context of resource-based industries here in Ontario.

The mining and forest product industries are mainstays of northern Ontario's economy and they've been particularly hard hit by weak demand and soft commodity prices during this very significant recession that we are all still working our way through. But particularly interesting, a further challenge for northern Ontario is that many of its communities rely on single resource-based industries. In southern Ontario—many of us have our ridings here—we're not as familiar with it. We don't live in that world where the entire economy of a community is so strongly driven by single resource-based activity; we tend to be more diversified. When we are hit hard by a recession and by the economy, it tends to be in pockets in the community. In northern Ontario, more significantly when a community is hit by the result of an economic downturn or a change in the condition of their single most important employer in the community, it hits every family in the community in a very, very substantive way.

Northern Ontario faces significant structural changes and challenges as well. They are remote, in many cases, from major markets. We often talk about Ontario and southern Ontario and Toronto as its capital as being within a day's reach of hundreds of millions of people, of the major markets in North America. Well, that's not the case for those more remote communities in northern Ontario because they are much farther from those major markets, and that demands transportation networks and the capacity to move products and get products in there that are necessary to do the work they're doing.

They lack the industrial diversification, exactly what I was mentioning, in the context of what we experience often in southern Ontario, where we have a variety of industrial activity going on. Where one may be hit at some point, others pick up the slack for a period of time. Certainly, we saw that most recently with the economic downturn in the area of the auto sector, places like Oshawa in Durham region, which is, in part, within my riding—not Oshawa itself, but certainly Pickering as part of Durham region. Whether it's them or whether it's Windsor or St. Catharines, we saw the impact of the auto sector decline very significantly in those areas. Having said that, they weren't the single industry in those towns and communities, so at least they were buffered to some extent by virtue of other industrial opportunities. That's often not the case in northern Ontario.

**1410**

The government recognizes the very unique challenges and circumstances of northern communities.

I'm looking forward to the second reading debate both this afternoon and during the coming days. I'm particularly looking forward to the member—from our side—from Sault Ste. Marie, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, and even this afternoon, as part of the second reading leadoff hour available to us, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, because each of those members will be able to bring a perspective on the importance of this legislation from those who live in those communities, those who represent those communities and those who know first-hand on a day-to-day basis what the impact of a resource-based industry is and how important this particular legislation is going to be to support those industries within their communities.

As part of the Open Ontario plan, we want to strengthen the northern economy. That's a big part of what we're trying to do. At the same time as we're strengthening the economy, we also want to protect the environment and, most particularly, want protection for the boreal forest region. So we have to do this balancing act between generating, supporting and creating opportunities for economic growth, at the same time protecting the important environmental assets of this province.

Through the Open Ontario plan, the McGuinty government will help open northern Ontario to new investments and new jobs. At the same time, we're going to provide relief to northern industries and residents from the higher energy costs they face. This has been a matter of discussion over an extended period of time, both here in this Legislature and certainly amongst our members in caucus—calling upon government, as we move through these processes, not to forget the needs of northern Ontario as it relates to the cost of energy and particularly the cost of electricity.

We have responded to that in a variety of ways over time. This particular legislation is an important part of the 2010 budget submission, to provide relief from some of the high energy costs, particularly for industry and residents as well.

To help low- or middle-income families and individuals in the north with their energy costs, we're proposing a new, permanent northern Ontario energy credit. Northern Ontarians who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence will be eligible for an annual credit of up to \$130 for a single person age 18 and older, and up to \$200 for a family. This would include single-parent families, as well.

To target assistance for those who need it most, the credit will also be income-tested to some extent. The credit will be reduced for single persons who have adjusted net incomes over \$35,000, and it will be completely eliminated once those incomes exceed \$48,000. Similarly, for families with adjusted net incomes over \$45,000, the amount will be reduced.

As noted in the recent budget, in order to provide northern residents with timely assistance, the government

is proposing an interim method of payment for this particular year. Northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence will be eligible for the credit. Northern residents who live on-reserve and pay energy costs for their principal residence there as well would also be eligible for this credit.

For this year, 2010, they will apply to the Ministry of Revenue to receive the credit. It will be delivered this year in two instalments, the first this November, and the second would be in February 2011 as part of the 2010-11 fiscal year. Since this is a permanent tax credit and not a one-time-only tax credit, applications for subsequent years will be part of the personal income tax return. So, once it's all in place, it will be much easier for those credits to be rolled out to individuals and families without them having to apply for it specifically. But, for this year, since it's new and it will take some time to get it in place, there will be a requirement to make that application through the Ministry of Revenue.

Some applications will be distributed by mail. They'll also be available over the Internet and at designated northern locations.

The effort certainly will be to make sure that the availability of the applications are widely spread using a variety of technologies, everything from hard copy, to receiving them by mail, to being able to acquire that information online. Information regarding the 2010 credit will become available once the application forms are ready for distribution. I'm saying all of this, obviously, in the context of and subject to the legislation being approved by this Legislature. None of this will occur, obviously, in the absence of that happening.

The credit will be available to eligible residents of the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timiskaming. For this year, 2010, about a quarter of a million families and single people, over half of those in northern Ontario, would benefit from about \$35 million in assistance. I think that bears repeating: Over half of northerners would be eligible to benefit from this energy tax credit and that assistance would be some \$35 million in 2010.

It will be the objective of the government, subject to the induction of this legislation, to see that that credit is paid quarterly in subsequent years, and it seems better if one can do that because it means that those credit dollars literally are available at points in time closer to when people are paying their energy bills as opposed to having them come, say, semi-annually or annually, at a time when the money wouldn't necessarily be there, but it wouldn't be available in the fashion when the bills are coming to them.

The northern Ontario energy credit is just one of the government's initiatives for northern Ontario. We're proposing a number of measures to further encourage job creation and economic growth as part of the Open Ontario plan and certainly as part of our 2010-11 budget.

The northern industrial electricity rate program is a three-year program, averaging \$150 million a year

annually, that would provide electricity price rebates of two cents per kilowatt hour to qualifying large industries that commit to an energy efficiency and sustainability plan. On average, it's projected that this would reduce industrial electricity prices by about 25% for those large facilities, based on 2009 consumption. This incentive is obviously intended to protect and create jobs, so it has obviously a twofold purpose: One is to ensure that jobs that are there are retained; and two, it's to build opportunity to create new jobs in northern Ontario.

The government is also enhancing economic development opportunities such as in the Ring of Fire, an area with potentially large deposits of minerals such as chromite, nickel, copper and platinum. I'm not sure whether the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane will be speaking to this but I'll make a couple of comments, and I know his background is such that I hope he will pick this up. From my limited understanding, as part of this process, our budgetary process and discussion about the Ring of Fire, this could very well be an opportunity that will be unparalleled in many, many decades, maybe even since the 19th century with the discovery of nickel. The opportunities that exist for real economic growth in the north, sustained economic growth, are very significant and I'm hoping that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane can provide further enlightenment in that regard as well.

We're providing as well some \$45 million over the next three years for a new project-based skills training program to help aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians participate in and benefit from the emerging economic development opportunities. This particular program will help build community capacity to undertake base mapping, develop resource inventories and gather other essential information about the Ring of Fire. It would support community land use planning and environmentally sustainable development that would benefit aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians, and help implement the proposed Far North Act, 2010.

We will be putting in place a new Ring of Fire coordinator to help lead the collective efforts in advancing the economic promise and opportunity in this area, while protecting the boreal forest region.

The opportunities with the Ring of Fire area as it's described, and the potential is almost unlimited. But it will take time, obviously, and it will take investment and significant effort to realize the opportunities that present themselves.

#### 1420

Also, we're partnering with Sudbury and Thunder Bay to establish pilot economic development planning areas. These are two significant urban centres in northern Ontario. They're significant to large geographic regions around them. People in communities very much depend on these urban centres in northern Ontario, because there are fewer of them and they tend to be further apart than in areas like southern Ontario, and it's important that we partner and provide assistance with economic development initiatives in those areas.

We want to help unemployed older workers by implementing the targeted initiative for older workers. I had a chance to speak about that briefly when we were debating Bill 16 and the importance of working together with our federal partners—with other orders of government. In this particular case, this is a joint federal-provincial initiative.

I said at that time, and I think it bears repeating often, that our constituents expect us more and more to be working closely and in a co-operative way with other orders of government. They don't expect us to be going it alone. They expect we will use the limited resources—their tax dollars, our tax dollars—to ensure we get the best bang for our buck. One of the significant ways of doing that is through partnerships between the federal and provincial governments. This targeted initiative for older unemployed workers is exactly the kind of thing we need to do on a going-forward basis.

As well, we're making significant infrastructure investments in the north. It's not just about energy costs, although this bill is specifically about energy costs in that sense, but in the context of the budget, as part of the budget deliberations, it's a significant part of what we need to do in our infrastructure investments.

The government is making investments in infrastructure of nearly \$1.2 billion to strengthen northern communities through improving highways, hospitals, water and waste water systems, and other infrastructure in those communities. That's about \$1.2 billion in infrastructure investment. That will create a lot of jobs and help to enhance, re-establish and rebuild infrastructure that maybe has deteriorated over many decades. The investments are expected to support some 10,000 jobs in 2010-11.

A little more specifically, some of the things this \$1.2 billion and these 10,000 jobs will be engaged in are things like the Thunder Bay consolidated courthouse, which obviously will improve access to justice and spur downtown revitalization in Thunder Bay. I can speak to that in the context of areas close to me: the Durham consolidated courthouse in Oshawa, and how significant a project that has been from a build standpoint. I can appreciate what people in Thunder Bay can expect from building a consolidated courthouse: the jobs that is going to provide and help revitalize the downtown. Part of what was achieved in the city of Oshawa through this very kind of initiative was a revitalization of their downtown, exactly the kind of thing we're going to see in Thunder Bay.

The Ontario Provincial Police modernization project is going to include the construction of new detachments, regional command centres and forensic identification units in 16 communities, including nine northern locations.

We're going to see the expansion of the 100-kilometre corridor of Highways 11 and 17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon to four lanes. That obviously can't all occur during one single year—changing 100 kilometres plus of highway from two to four lanes—but construction on two

projects along this corridor will begin in 2010-11, with work on the remainder to follow.

We'll be providing up to \$15 million to support Huron Central Railway's proposal for \$33 million of infrastructure investment on the rail line from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury. We're all well aware of the importance of rail traffic as a means of moving goods and people in northern Ontario, in addition to the road network that exists.

In the past six years, we have implemented a number of initiatives that build on existing investments. These include substantial assistance to the forest products sector since 2005 and in energy cogeneration to help it reposition itself in the global marketplace.

In 2007-08, there was some \$82 million for the northern region through the municipal infrastructure investment initiative, some \$39 million through the rural infrastructure investment initiative and \$36.5 million for municipal roads and bridges. Now, if someone sits down and does a bit of math on that—I can't do it off the top of my head quickly, but I'm going to say it probably comes out to about \$115 million in 2007-08 in the northern region for municipal activity and rural activity and roads and bridges—not a small sum of money, even though it's spread out over a large geography.

We're establishing a new northern Ontario entrepreneurial program, and that'll be established under the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. The fund has already provided grants to more than 940 projects in 2009-10, which has created and retained more than 2,300 jobs in northern Ontario.

A few years ago, we set out on a strategy to reduce the business education tax. We heard broadly across the province that the business education tax was a disincentive to business, it was unfair across the province and it was utilized across the province in different values. There were no fair comparatives between communities. Although that money is coming back to the province at this point, it's not staying in the community as part of our investment in education. We made a determination that we were going to reduce the business education tax rates across the province to a more normative level that would be equal throughout the province at the very least, and those who might have had a low rate could have retained that, but those with higher rates were going to be brought down over time.

We have accelerated the business education tax cuts for northern businesses. They've benefited from the full implementation of the reduction this year and the savings from that will be \$70 million over three years. When we find opportunities to accelerate initiatives and put them in place to provide opportunities for northern Ontarians and their businesses to benefit from it and to support them in times when the economic climate isn't as good, we're certainly going to seek ways of doing that.

There's some \$40 million over three years invested for initiatives to support the mining modernization act, and these were announced in the 2009 budget.

One of the initiatives that's important that we take throughout the province, particularly in rural and

northern Ontario, is the introduction of broadband. We all like the fact that if we had the opportunity to use it, our access to broadband and high-speed Internet access—but that hasn't been the norm in Ontario. It has been fairly isolated. I know that in eastern Ontario and northern Ontario there has been a great call to be able to participate in the economy through access to broadband and effectively high-speed Internet service.

We're investing up to \$32.75 million towards the province's building broadband in rural and northern Ontario program. This was launched in September 2009. This will be to support projects in partnership with the federal government, such as the federal government's own Broadband Canada: Connecting Rural Canadians, another example where we found opportunities to work together with our federal counterparts by each of us investing money in matters that are important to Ontarians, rural Ontarians, but particularly to northern Ontarians, and that's to begin getting more ready access to broadband.

We're investing some \$30 million to support the consultations necessary via the Northern Table on sustainable land use planning and resource management in the Far North. These were commitments that were made a couple of years ago in the 2008 budget that are being carried through at this point. To the extent that we can figure out methodologies by consulting and working with experts for sustainable land use and sustainable resource management, that will speak well for northern Ontario as we move forward.

There are any number of other matters—and I'm not going to go through them—that we have been investing in, the principal point being that the particular legislation, Bill 44, is going to assist with energy costs in northern Ontario for businesses and residents, but it's not a one-off. It's not a one-off decision because it's a matter of electricity costs. It's part of a more overall strategy agenda, one that either identifies opportunities, such as the Ring of Fire, the most current activity, to figure out ways to invest and make that happen, or finding areas in northern Ontario where their support is necessary, giving that support and, where possible, expediting, such as the business education tax reductions and moving that more quickly forward than was initially anticipated.

I want to speak to a couple of improvements in the health care area and then I want to make sure that there's more than adequate time for the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane to be able to make his comments as well.

It's important to northern Ontarians that the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which opened in 2005 and celebrated the graduation of its first 55 students in the spring 2009—just a year ago, we put in 55 new docs who were trained in northern Ontario and who ideally were able to practise close to home and provide the service that's so desperately needed in northern Ontario.

**1430**

We invested some \$40 million in land ambulances as part of our 50-50 cost sharing, as part of the funding arrangement we had for—

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** On a point of order, Speaker: I look at orders of the day, and it says, “G44 ... northern ... energy credit.” I’ve been listening, and nothing the member is saying has anything to do with the northern energy credit. I thought it was a requirement of the rules that we speak to the legislation which is being debated.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you very much. I would just remind the member of the rule and ask him to ensure that his comments are consistent with the bill being debated.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Thanks, Speaker. I appreciate that, and I appreciate the interjection from the member opposite.

I think I clearly stated that Bill 44 is part of our overall budget package. It’s part of the initiatives to provide for northern Ontarians—in this case, through rebates for electricity costs, both as residents and businesses. I thought it important that, as part of that, we put it into that broader context of the investments and initiatives that make northern Ontario a great place in which to live, work and invest, and to be able to communicate that to Ontarians. It’s important that we keep it in a slightly broader context, and the member opposite might like me to, at this point in time. Thus, I felt it was incredibly important that we speak to some of those other investments and opportunities that exist.

The time—as I say, it is short. I do want to hear most particularly from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I’m very pleased to be able to stand today as we lead off second reading debate on Bill 44. I’m looking forward to debate here in the Legislature during the coming days.

I hope, as we complete this, that all members of the House will see the value in supporting Bill 44 particularly, though, not in supporting the bill for the bill’s sake but supporting the bill for the sake of northern Ontarians, both residents and businesses, as we try to make for a better living environment and, more importantly, to build the economy in northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I’d like to thank the member from Pickering–Scarborough East for helping us share the minister’s time, and I thank the minister for kicking off the second reading of this bill.

I liked the member’s approach, in fact, because he really put a lot of the economic development initiatives of this government into perspective. While it’s certainly about this particular energy credit today, it is part of a whole package directed towards northern Ontario and helping northern Ontarians prosper.

Primarily, it’s about the cost of power. If the truth be told, the cost of power is going up, and it’s going up because we have to find clean, sustainable ways of producing power today. Long are the days gone when we could rely on dirty power. Ontario is one of the first jurisdictions in the world to start to eliminate coal power. That’s a firm commitment of this government, and it’s a good thing to do. It’s a difficult thing to do, and you can’t

do it overnight. We certainly wanted to do it sooner, but we had such a high reliance on coal generation that it does take time. New sources of green, sustainable power are more expensive, so you can’t bring those in just as fast as you might want to because you’re going to be raising the cost of power up far too fast.

It’s very exciting what we have here in Ontario with the Green Energy and Green Economy Act. Basically, Premier McGuinty has positioned us as the foremost jurisdiction in North America. To say that, we’re lagging some of the rest of the world—the Europeans, especially—but Ontario is the first jurisdiction in North America to start to take that clean energy ethic from Europe and apply it here. It’s positioning us in a very favourable place, as we are starting to dig our way out of this recession and retune our manufacturing pace.

We now have an opportunity, because of our Green Energy Act, to start to invest in green energy products. In fact, we insist that 50% of the products installed in Ontario are made in Ontario. Now we’re going to be in a position where, because we’re the first into this, when other jurisdictions attempt to catch up, they will be buying their turbines and solar panels from Ontario manufacturers down the road. That’s going to create more and more jobs for Ontarians and create prosperity for Ontario families. That’s what it’s about, and we are very, very pleased to be able to do that.

We have a system of what we call a feed-in tariff; again, the first jurisdiction in North America to basically guarantee a rate of return for people who decide to invest in green, sustainable electricity. We call that FIT, a feed-in tariff.

We’ve recently had a competition where about 184 projects were awarded across the province. The interesting thing is that northern Ontario did very well in that. One of the reasons, which is kind of surprising, maybe, for a lot of people, is that the generation of electricity using a photovoltaic sail, using the sun to generate that power, is very, very effective and efficient in northern Ontario. It works better in cold climates than it does in warm climates. Traditionally, we’ve sort of thought of solar power, when it was first brought in in North America 20 or 30 years ago, as something that happened in New Mexico and Arizona. There were and still are some farms down there. But they work very, very effectively in cold weather. That’s going to be a wonderful boon for northern Ontario.

Also it’s a boon for northern Ontario because we have a bigger sunlight footprint in the north than many places in southern Ontario. Unlike the wind, which only blows in certain areas, usually off big lakes, the sun, by and large, shines very evenly across northern Ontario. What it means is that all northerners will be able to share in that bounty, which is really excellent.

It’s going to take a while to start to get these developed, but there were many of these projects awarded in northern Ontario. I’ve had some in my area, as they are across the north. Major companies and some co-operatives have applied and been award winners for this.

Because of the high rate of return, we're going to get a good investment. In the case of a Canadian solar award in Temiskaming Shores, in my area, the city of Temiskaming Shores is going to be getting a sum of money every year. There's going to be a donation to the community foundation every year because the revenues are so great for this. So it's going to be of great benefit for our community as well as the electrical power grid of this province. We're very, very pleased to see that.

Part of what we're doing also that's going to take some time as we ramp up for this so that we have the capacity is a green transmission system. It was the previous Minister of Energy who announced the start of new construction for a green transmission system in Ontario that will not only facilitate the efficient movement of electricity throughout the province but, eventually, when we get to the point where we can export again, we'll be in a good position to start to do that to help other jurisdictions.

What's very nice also about the solar power and wind power is that, unlike the traditional megaplants that had to be only in certain parts of the province, we have what's called distributed generation now, which means many of us in less-populated areas of the province are going to be able to share in some of the wealth generation coming from the generation of power. It's nice to see that generation distributed across the province, and the north getting its share.

One project I'm working on with a co-op in my area is to find ways to harvest biomass material both from wood waste and agricultural waste to generate heat and power. That would have tremendously significant economic impact to northern Ontario, if we, for the very first time, could start to produce green, sustainable power in our own backyard.

Part of the act that we're talking about today and why we want to help, in this transition, northern Ontarians with the cost of their energy is the fact that we live in a cold climate. We live in a harsh, cold climate that also is a long, cold climate, more so than southern Ontario, so our energy costs are higher. With that, not only do our costs increase compared to those for southern Ontario consumers, but also, because we don't produce any of this energy in the north, we basically are exporting our dollars to buy this power, especially for fossil fuels. If we can start to harness green, sustainable biomass material both from the farms and from the forest, then we can start to basically create our own economy based on energy rather than boosting Alberta's economy, Saudi Arabia's economy or Venezuela's economy. We have to purchase those goods, so this would be a great advantage to us. The material is there.

**1440**

It also gives us a new use for forest fibre, as we are obviously in a very bad slump in the forest industry right now because of market conditions. We have to look at new markets, because the Americans aren't building houses like they used to anymore and people aren't reading newspapers like they used to anymore. We have

to diversify the products that we create from wood and wood fibre. So there is great opportunity here.

There are people up in my area who want to create district heating plants, not only to create electricity but to create steam that could heat industry and residences. There's a lot of opportunity, but right now we need some immediate help.

That's why the Ontario government is coming with a program that is going to help single people and families with the cost of energy in northern Ontario. As my colleague has mentioned, those grants are up to \$130 per single person and \$200 for families. It is targeted to income—so that after \$48,000 of income for a single person, they're no longer eligible for that; as for a \$65,000 maximum family income, that family is no longer eligible for that—because we want to target the people who need it the most so that we can really benefit those people. So I'm very pleased about that.

I would like to congratulate our northern caucus on the work they have done with our finance minister on this. We did great work, and I'm very pleased with my colleagues who pressed the point, but I have to certainly compliment our finance minister, Dwight Duncan, for listening to our pleas that we felt this was really necessary for northern families; that energy costs are getting tougher and tougher up there to bear, especially in such harsh economic times. So we're very, very pleased that he listened to that.

On the other side, we also know that on the industrial rate of electricity, the cost of power also hurts our heavy industry in northern Ontario. While electricity rates in southern Ontario are fairly competitive with the neighbouring Great Lakes states, in northern Ontario our competitors are basically Manitoba and Quebec. Because of the wonderful topography they have, they are able to produce clean, low-cost hydraulic electricity. Our north is fairly flat, so we don't—we're a bit topographically challenged, compared to our neighbouring provinces. I wish it wasn't so, but that's the way it is. We can still develop good run-of-the-river projects in northern Ontario without flooding land, and we are embarking on that and improving many of our sites today, and there is still maybe 5,000 megawatts of potential in northern Ontario for that.

As we do all that, though, we're going to need to help out. When I was Minister of Natural Resources, we brought some help for the paper industry. Now we're looking at major electricity consumers, industrial consumers, to help them out at this time. That's a program that we also had fought for. We're very happy to be able to bring that in.

My colleague had mentioned that another area of interest in the big economic development project in northern Ontario is the so-called Ring of Fire. This is kind of a sleeper. This is a huge mineral deposit of various base minerals, many of which we mine today, except for the big one there that's new, and that's chromite. That's very necessary for stainless steel. This is a massive deposit in a very isolated part of northern

Ontario, and it will have to be developed carefully. It will have to be developed in full partnership with our First Nations people, who reside in that part of the world, like what I saw with the De Beers diamond mine, a little west of Attawapiskat along the Attawapiskat River. When I was there on the first visit during the construction phase, 40% of the people there were from First Nations. It was really great to see that in such isolated places we have great participation of our First Nations in that area. The Ring of Fire is another big potential for northern Ontario.

This bill, as we're helping today with the immediate cost of power, is just one small piece of a full economic development package for the north in order to make sure that our families prosper. That, with the highway development and everything else that we're doing in the northern Ontario growth plan—we're very excited that this government has a vision for the north, that we're going to be prospering, and that northern Ontarians who reside in the largest part of this province have confidence that this government has a vision for our future and is working in partnership with northerners and is listening. I think that's the most important part of all of this: that northerners understand that their government is listening. I think the test of that is what we've seen in this budget. If any region of the province—embarrassingly so, I must say—northern Ontario certainly got its fair share. I'm very pleased about that. Again, I want to thank our Minister of Finance for that.

We would hope that we would get the support of the House to make sure this bill passes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I am happy that the government is trying to assist people in northern Ontario who are suffering very much under a recession partially caused by the government themselves and particularly with regard to the high energy prices that we are now experiencing. No one who has read anything with regard to energy costs can deny that this government has had a great deal to do with the rising energy costs that we are experiencing now. The only thing that's saving this government at the present time is that we've lost so many manufacturing jobs that the manufacturing sector is not using our electricity as they were in the past, when we had previous governments, and that that surplus of energy is allowing some flexibility with regard to going forward.

My concern is not only for the poor people of northern Ontario who are going to be helped with their energy bills; my concern is with the fact that this government seems to want to recognize and help people in northern Ontario but ignore people in rural eastern Ontario who have lower household incomes and need the help, arguably, as much as or even more than some people in northern Ontario. But they are left out in the cold, so to speak. People in rural eastern Ontario suffer from very, very harsh winters. In some cases, they have further to go than many of the people who live in northern Ontario who will benefit from these particular breaks in terms of their energy costs.

I only ask the government: Why have you forgotten rural eastern Ontario, where the people are suffering just as much as the people in northern Ontario? Thank you for doing something for northern Ontario, but why have you forgotten eastern Ontario in this bill?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I think the member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills make a good point: What about the rest of Ontario? I think that's a fair assumption to make because all of us are having to pay higher energy prices, especially after the HST gets kicked in this summer, and the proposed increase that we're going to see come on to Ontario hydro bills, for a total of about 18% this year.

But I want to ask the member across the way, my good friend the member from Timiskaming—

**Mr. David Ramsay:** Cochrane.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —Cochrane—sorry; it used to be Timiskaming at one time—but Timiskaming—Cochrane why he didn't take time to speak to the actual bill. Instead, he chose to talk about how well things are in northern Ontario and about how northerners are very, very happy with the Liberal government. I'm just wondering where he is travelling in northern Ontario, because I can tell you, that's not the case.

I was just at a meeting on Sunday in Cornwall with school board trustees from northern Ontario. As I spoke to them, they were far from being happy. It didn't matter if they were from Sturgeon Falls, it didn't matter if they were from Cochrane, it didn't matter if they were from Thunder Bay, it didn't matter if they were from the Ottawa area: People were somewhat upset with this government in regards to the latest move in regards to the full-time JK and how it affects French school boards.

**1450**

But overall, people in northern Ontario are mad as hell at this government, and I'll tell you why. If you go to Sturgeon Falls, Smooth Rock Falls, Iroquois Falls, Timmins, Hearst, Terrace Bay, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Fort Frances, Nairn Centre or Sault Ste. Marie—it doesn't matter where you go in northern Ontario, there are huge job losses as a result of this government's inability to deal with the economic problems that face northern Ontario. For this government member to say, "Everything is wonderful and these wonderful investments we're making in the north are making people happy," I just want to let you know that that is a big stretch, because I can tell you, people in the north are not pretty enamoured with this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Essex.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** It's a pleasure for me to make a few comments with regard to those made by my colleagues from Pickering—Scarborough East and from—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Timmins.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Timmins—no.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Cochrane-Timiskaming, isn't it?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Timiskaming—Cochrane. Thank you very much.

As always, they have a great ability to enlighten all of us on some of the aspects of the bill that we have before us. One of those things that was mentioned and that I would like to emphasize is that this northern energy cost bill will help some quarter of a million families, both single people and married people in the north.

I don't think any of us want to try to minimize the issues that the north faces. I, for example, being from the most southerly riding in the province—we don't face a lot of these issues. But what this is trying to do is at least help mitigate those. For example, the maximum credit that a family receives would cover any increased costs from the oft-mentioned HST, to the tune of about \$2,500. I think if you put that together with the other tax credits—property tax credits that are available for seniors in the north, and tax credits that are available to low-income families in the north—if you put all of these together, I think it goes to show how the government is bent on mitigating some of these additional costs that we all recognize we face, but which we have to deal with.

I'm pleased to support this bill because it supports the north. Being from the most southerly riding, I want to show as much support for the north—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Halton.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I would call this bill typical of the Liberal government: There's not much there to support, but there's nothing there to vote against. It's kind of a wishy-washy bill. It's going to supply a small grant to northerners, probably a little less than half of one month's power bill. There is an aspect of it, I believe, that gives an industrial credit. Again, it's in a very small amount, especially given the price increases that the north has had for their power. It doesn't get them back to where they were in 2003, for sure.

The north has a particular situation in that it has a surplus of power—certainly, the ability to produce power in the north. It has a surplus of power. Those power plants were put in in order to supply pulp and paper, forestry mills and mining operations. Because it's now part of the great Ontario power program, that power has increased far beyond its cost of production.

This government has failed to recognize that that electricity in the north is tantamount to jobs. You can't have jobs without pulp and paper and mining in the north. In order to get those jobs back, that power has to become competitive. It's a simple thing. You've taken a very, very small step in the right direction, but the step is so small it's difficult to see that you have progressed beyond the point where you started. In fact, I think this government has retrogressed, certainly in the north in the destruction of the pulp and paper and forest industry and the mining industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Pickering–Scarborough East has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Unfortunately, although we could share our time earlier, it's not possible for me to share my time now with the member from Timiskaming–

Cochrane, so you probably won't get a direct response from him, member from Timmins–James Bay, but you may get a response at a future time during debate.

Very quickly, I appreciate the comments that have been made, the expression of support both by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and the member from Halton: not an overwhelming endorsement but a signal of support for northern Ontario, which is important. I would remind the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills that I don't think we created the great recession we just went through. I think we inherited that from others along the way.

To the member from Timmins–James Bay, I can only say that my friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane certainly has the ear of his constituents. I'm sure that when the economy is not great, people are never enamoured with their governments at that point in time. But I think probably he's hearing from his constituents that he is working as hard as he can and we are working as hard as we can to provide initiatives and opportunities for them and to support them where the need is the greatest.

To the member from Essex who, like myself, represents a southern Ontario riding, although mine is not nearly as far south as his, it behooves us to pay close attention to what the needs are in northern Ontario—and in eastern Ontario, but today we're talking about northern Ontario—to ensure we understand as best we can those needs and extend our support, where it's available to us, to those in northern Ontario, because their needs are very much different. Certainly, the industrial electricity rebate program, a three-year program averaging \$150 million annually, is not a small sum. It's a large number of dollars, and if it can reduce the electricity rate costs by about 25% for large facilities based on 2009—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The time is up. Further debate.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon on Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit, 2010.

Before I really get started, I would like to point out that I may be sharing my time with our energy critic, Mr. Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I say “maybe” because he's off celebrating Polish Constitution Day today and it's off-site. I know he was planning on sharing this lead-off with me, because this bill has mainly to do with energy. However, he may not make it back in time. I'm sure if he doesn't make it back to share the time, he'll speak in another rotation.

I should just point out, though, that the government is not giving us a lot of time to prepare for these bills. I note the health critic sitting beside me, the member from Whitby–Oshawa. There was a new health bill introduced just this afternoon, and she's expected to deliver her one-hour leadoff speech tomorrow morning. I would simply say that's not very fair, especially if the government is hoping to have a reasonable critique of what could be a complicated health bill. There should be a little more time allowed for the opposition to be able to analyze the bill and also to be able to caucus it, because we won't

have had a caucus meeting before our health critic needs to do that leadoff. As with this bill today, we just learned on Thursday that they were introducing a finance-area bill, without any knowledge of what it might be about until it was introduced on Thursday. Now here I am doing the lead. Once again, we have not had a caucus meeting to actually discuss the bill, so most of our caucus would be unaware of what's in the bill. It's not fair for me to be stating the position of our complete caucus before we've had a chance to talk about it at our caucus meeting.

I think if the government was truly interested in getting the best-quality bills, they would give us a little more lead; they would warn us a little bit ahead of time and give us a little more time to be able to prepare for the debate.

**1500**

As I say, this is a finance bill, but it really has more to do with energy. It is mentioned in page 16 of the budget that northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence would be eligible for an annual credit of up to \$130 for a single person and up to \$200 for a family, including single parents, to target the assistance to those who need it most. The credit would be reduced for a single person with adjusted net income over \$35,000 and eliminated when income exceeded \$48,000, and reduced for families with adjusted family net income over \$45,000 and eliminated when income exceeds \$65,000.

Really, this bill is going to mean that families and individuals in the north will receive a tax credit that I would say is a pretty minor tax credit—as I mentioned, up to \$130 for an individual and up to \$200 for a family.

Yet when you start adding up all the increases that this government has brought about for people's energy bills, the increases are going to outweigh this tax credit. Unfortunately, this is just for the north and as the member from eastern Ontario—what is it?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** —Carleton–Mississippi Mills pointed out, eastern Ontario won't be able to benefit, nor will Haliburton. Haliburton has one of the lowest family incomes in the province and yet they won't be able to benefit from this tax credit.

I would also question the way it's being done. For 2010, it's an application-based system, so you have to be aware of it and you have to apply for it and then you will receive two cheques. If you are aware of it and apply for it and qualify, you'll receive two cheques for the year. For 2011 and beyond, it switches to the federal government, to Revenue Canada, who will get the job of issuing four cheques a year, so if you're getting \$200—four cheques at \$50—it goes down, so you might be getting a \$10 cheque four times a year.

I would simply say that if you did the math and figured how much it costs for the government to actually go through the process of doing that, it probably costs more than \$50 to issue each one of those cheques, so I

really wonder about the way this government is going about actually doing the mechanics of being able to issue this very minor help for people with their energy bills.

Lord knows they are going to need it, particularly those in the north where it is colder, where you do use more energy. It's in large part because this government has made such a mess of their energy policies and the result has been great increases. They've made no progress on nuclear energy, despite—how many years is it now? Six years in government. They've really made no progress. They keep making the promise over and over to shut down coal-fired electricity generation; many, many times they've made this promise. The only person to actually shut down any coal-fired generating stations was Elizabeth Witmer when she was part of the PC government and she was the minister.

This government has made no progress, despite talking a good game all the time, bringing it up countless times and revising the date further outwards all the time. They've made no progress. The one thing they're very successfully doing is driving energy prices up, and they've been very good at that. We just learned recently that there's another 10% increase approved by the Ontario Energy Board—10%. That's ahead of the July 1 8% increase. We've got that 10%, plus 8% when the HST comes into effect on electricity, but not only electricity, for those people living in the north and around the province; electricity and gasoline for your car, and if you live in northern Ontario you're probably going to have a truck and it's going to burn a fair amount of gas and that's going to be a big extra charge. But you may also heat with oil. It's going to be on heating oil, or, if you're lucky enough to have natural gas, it'll be on that as well. So we have that 18%.

We just also learned about the \$53.7-million back-door charge that the government is putting on to fund some of their so-called green energy programs like the energy audit program. I note in the Toronto Star from April 28 that a watchdog group, the Consumers Council, is challenging that particular tax, that \$53-million new tax on energy. It says:

“Watchdog Takes Aim at ‘Green’ Tax; Consumers Council Challenges Plan to Put Charge on Hydro Bills to Pay for \$53.7-million Energy Fund.” It's written by John Spears, the business reporter. It goes on:

“A consumers group has mounted a legal challenge against a \$53.7-million green energy fund that will be raised through a charge on hydro bills.

“The Consumers Council of Canada has filed a motion with the Ontario Energy Board challenging the levy, saying it amounts to an illegal tax.” This government is very good at coming up with new taxes, new creative ways to find taxes that they usually don't call a tax. I think of the health premium; I don't believe they called that one a tax either.

“The levy, imposed by the provincial budget, will cost a typical consumer about \$4 a year.

“Consumers council lawyer Robert Warren said Ontario will likely impose similar levies on customers of

the province's two big gas utilities"—so they hit you on gas, too—"raising an additional \$100 million or more in total.

"The money in the electricity fund is to be used for such programs as home energy audits, or helping companies use solar power.

"But Warren says the levy is flawed, because it's imposed on local hydro utilities, who in turn raise it from their customers.

"It meets the classic definition of an indirect tax,' said Warren in an interview." I would call that a sneaky tax.

"Since the Constitution doesn't allow provinces to levy indirect taxes, that makes it unconstitutional, he said.

"A province can levy what's called a 'regulatory charge' for a specific regulatory scheme, but the levy doesn't meet that test, either, he said.

"This is general revenue for general use by the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure,' he added.

"The C.D. Howe Institute has also argued that the levy is unconstitutional....

"Warren said the levy is bad policy as well as bad law.

"These burdens are all really in essence taxes, and they're regressive taxes,' he said.

"They're levied on consumers on the basis of the volume of electricity they use, and not on the basis of their income."

That's one small part of the layers of new charges that people are finding on their electricity bills.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** And all this, member from Nipissing, before the Green Energy Act comes into effect.

I think we're all in favour of green energy, but we don't want the economy to grind to a halt and we also don't want people to be forced out of their homes because they can't afford to pay their hydro bills.

With the green energy plan that the McGuinty government has come up with, they have this "buy high, sell low" policy, so they're paying up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour, when you get to the high end, for some solar power. That's being subsidized by all ratepayers and users of electricity, so that will definitely have the effect of driving the cost of electricity up further and further.

When the green energy bill was being introduced, we actually had a company, London Economics, do a study of some of the promises the government made, like the 50,000 jobs they promised on that one. They said that that couldn't be substantiated. They also said that there could be a range of increases in costs but that definitely the price of electricity would be going up, and quite significantly.

We have another recent initiative the government has brought into effect, the smart meters initiative, where we will be switching to time-of-use metering for families and small business. I would simply say that it's interesting that when you go around your constituency, you get a feel for what issues are important to people.

Two weeks ago, I was in Parry Sound and stopped at Orr's Meats, and the first issue Murray Orr wanted to talk about was energy costs and time-of-use metering. He pointed out that he has a butcher shop, and he can't shut off the compressors and the coolers and the freezers during the day, when prime time is. So his bill is going to go—I believe it's from about five and a half cents or six cents up to 9.2 cents for prime time. He figured that would cost him an extra \$800 a month—a very substantial increase. He was wondering how he was going to adapt to that—no choice but to turn things off during prime time, during the day.

**1510**

The other strange thing that seems to be happening is these smart meters. A lot of people have them installed in their homes, but they're not turned on yet. We're not yet on this time-of-use metering, but I can tell you that my office is receiving letters and emails and calls from people who are seeing their hydro bills go up significantly and don't really have an explanation for it. I know I've talked with other MPPs who have expressed the same concern, that for some reason, energy bills are going up, and the only thing they know is that they had a smart meter put in and all of a sudden their energy bill has gone up.

I wanted to give a sample so you would know it wasn't just me making this stuff up and that people were actually writing to me. For example, here's an email that just came in, actually, on May 2 from someone in Muskoka. I won't use their name because I haven't got their permission to use their name, but I will give the gist of what they are saying:

"I would like to add our concerns about the new hydro smart meters to others that I'm sure you have received. Our new meter was installed last August at our home on Kabshe Lake. We live here for six months of the year and it is closed up the other six months.

"Our actual usage from October 15 to January 13 was 15 kilowatt hours per day. Most of the time, except for a few days, we weren't here and everything was off except for heating our little storage area to 10. Then, under the same conditions, from only January 13 to February 11 our actual usage was 62 kilowatt hours per day! That's four times the usage per day under the exact same conditions! January may be a cold month, but not enough to make anything like that difference!

"Then, the next month, under the exact same conditions and probably just as cold outside, we used 45 kilowatt hours per day!

"I believe that these meters have some kind of fault. Please take the time to question Hydro One about them. We would like action sooner rather than later as many people are being over-billed, and the longer this goes on, the harder it will be to compensate people for the errors. In fact, I believe there may be a class-action lawsuit in the offing."

That's just one email. Here is another email that I have received. Let's see, which one makes more sense?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Oh, he is back; okay. I'll try to leave Mr. Yakabuski some time, then.

Here's another email I received:

"I, along with many friends and family, have huge concerns over the direction our hydro rates are going." I think it's safe to say "up." That's my editorializing.

"Many people I have spoken to over the last week have stated their hydro bills have increased anywhere from 20% to 75% in the last month. Since this winter was to be considered easy by many standards, an increase such as that is unfounded.

"As it was explained to me by a customer service representative at Hydro One, the smart meters in this area have not even been activated as of yet. This creates even more concern since last month's rate was 5.5 cents per kilowatt hour, on average. With smart meters the rates will increase to as high as 9.3 cents per kilowatt hour, except between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m., weekends and holidays [when] it will drop to 4.4 cents per kilowatt hour.

"So if I understand this correctly, we are all supposed to wait until after 9 p.m. to cook, do laundry, wash dishes etc. or pay through the nose for hydro. Where is the reality in that? I would have to think that if everyone were to wait until 9 p.m. or the weekend time periods we would end up taxing the grid even more" then. That was from Mark Holmes in Nobel, Ontario, who is quite concerned about his energy bills.

I received an email, another fairly recent one—I won't use the name—also from my riding, in Emsdale. That's just luckily to be considered northern Ontario for the purpose of this bill. "I'm currently 27 years of age, and currently reside in Emsdale, Ontario, in the township of Perry. I have been living in Emsdale for approximately three years now, and absolutely love everything about it. It is the gem of Canada, and I feel proud to tell people where live." That is in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, if I can editorialize some more.

"The reason I write to you today, Mr. Miller, is an ongoing concern of mine, and many other Canadians as well. I currently live in a two-bedroom, 900-square-foot home, which I rent, and my electricity bill is quite high. On average we have been paying \$350-plus a month. Last month was \$389, January was \$271...."

He goes through about six months, and says, "Payment due for March is \$908.

"That makes it a total of \$2,834 in seven months. Unfortunately the house is heated by electric (which we keep low, and wear sweaters). We use one or two lamps every day for the most part, and we only use the lights in rooms where needed, and shut them off after we leave. We try our best to be energy-conservative, but always get huge hydro bills. Just recently I received a notice on my bill telling me energy costs have gone up again. Hydro costs way too much. The hydro companies always seem to give people huge bills, even already having to pay \$400 a month for a two-bedroom home. The sad thing about this is that half the charges on my hydro bill are not actually electricity used. There is \$400 on my March bill just in charges," and he goes through some those charges.

"This is quite a concern of mine, because this month's hydro bill is more than my rent. I am currently unemployed due to being laid off in the month of November, and have been looking for work since. Since November I have put out well over 30 resumés, and have not got a job yet. My girlfriend has a job working for the Red Cross, and I stay home with our 21-month-old son. I have tried to get funding through government programs for schooling, but do not qualify for any." That was probably their Second Career program they were talking about. "I would love to start my own transportation business for people who have no means of transportation to go to appointments, (the elderly, cancer patients, and others) but do not have the funding or backing to start. We can't get a loan for a vehicle. The two vehicles we have are on their last legs, and my girlfriend needs hers for work (she does home care for Red Cross), and eventually so will I for work. We are certainly not swimming in debt. We walk the line, pay our bills on time and have great payment history with the companies we deal with (Hydro One, Bell Canada, and Primus Canada). My unemployment cheques are helping, but still just getting by. We are both hard-working and honest people who stay positive every day. We have our priorities in order, and try hard to save money, but unfortunately my whole ... cheque is going to Hydro One (\$577 biweekly...).

"I guess to sum this whole email up, I am saying hydro companies need to stop taking advantage of people. It is hard enough to keep a job these days, especially up here (Muskoka area) and at a decent pay.... I am having a hard time just finding one. A lot of Canadians such as myself feel the same way about hydro prices and charges."

Just one final email from the riding: "Good morning, Norm. I was shocked to receive a note from Hydro One announcing that they are going to try to levy another increase on delivery charges. Already our delivery/debt retirement/regulatory charges/GST (and soon HST) amount to half our \$196 monthly bill. I understand this increase will be \$4.78 per 1,000 kilowatt hours, which for me will be about \$10 per month since I use about 1,750 kilowatt hours (although I don't know how that's possible and am going to invite a representative to come and show me how...)"

At any rate, they are concerned about those increases; just to give you a bit of a sample of the many, many emails that I'm receiving from people who are concerned about increasing energy bills.

As I've pointed out, the actions of this government are definitely driving costs up. Some of the other members were talking about another bill—and I guess you're probably going to want a fair amount of time for this, I would think, energy critic?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes, he says. So I will start to think about wrapping up soon, then.

I would like to talk briefly about, as the government members mentioned—even though it's not covered in this bill, Madam Speaker, the government members did talk about the industrial energy pricing that they're

proposing. I would simply say that they're going to need reduced industrial prices in northern Ontario because of the energy policies of this government, which are driving up electricity prices so that even though they talk about creating jobs, I think we are at a much greater risk of losing far more jobs because of the increasing energy costs. Even the way they're doing this industrial program for the north—which has not yet occurred. It's going to apply to big companies, so I'm hearing from smaller mills, those that are left in the north—because most of them have shut down. I'm hearing from smaller mills that use one megawatt of power, not five megawatts, so they won't qualify for that industrial program that's proposed. I have pointed out that I have companies in Muskoka; the dividing line set up by this government for northern programs is Parry Sound and north. So I have companies like Kimberly-Clark, which is in the forestry sector making tissue; Panolam, which is doing fibreboard; Tembec, doing hardwood flooring—all in Huntsville. Even if they use five megawatts of power—and I don't know whether they do or don't—they won't qualify for that northern program. But go 20 miles north and companies that are located there, if they're big enough, will qualify, so there's going to be this uneven playing field that the government is so good at setting up with their various acts, instead of having a level playing field.

1520

As I previously pointed out, there are lots of places that Mr. Yakabuski is going to speak about in his riding that won't qualify for this proposed energy credit. I think it's safe to say that it's hard to argue why Parry Sound should qualify—even though I represent Parry Sound—and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke should not.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Part of my riding will: the district of Nipissing.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Okay. I hear that part of it will.

In conclusion, as I pointed out, it's a relatively minor program: \$130 per year for an individual and \$200 for a family. I think all the various increases this government has brought about to do with energy cost, including the HST happening in July, are going to be much higher than the value you're going to get from this. And as I previously pointed out, it seems like a very bureaucratic and expensive way to administer it: They're actually going to send four cheques out each year, starting in 2011. Those cheques could be as little as \$10, as it is prorated, and it would be interesting to know just what it costs the government to administer the program and send out a cheque. I suspect it's more than \$50 per cheque.

With that, I think I've probably added enough comment, and I will pass it on to our energy critic, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who I see is writing his speech right now as I speak, now that he's back from Polish Constitution day.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you to my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka for speaking to the bill. This is actually a finance bill, but it deals with a specific rebate, if you want to call it that, for the purchase of energy. I guess I use the term “if you want to call it that,”

because it ain't very much. And as my colleague said: \$130 if you're an individual, and only if you're making \$35,000 or less—it drops down after that.

I wasn't able to go to the briefing because, as my colleague has intimated, I was gone to—actually, I was honoured to join the Speaker to lay a wreath in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre. I was honoured to be a part of that presentation with the Honourable Steve Peters, our Speaker. It's a beautiful day out there. We don't get outside very often when debates are on in this Legislature, but it is gorgeous out there. Actually, this morning I thought it was going to be raining this afternoon, but the sun is shining, and it's quite beautiful. For those people who are here, my thoughts are with you; you'll have to put up with it.

Anyhow, let's talk about this \$130 for an individual, if you're making \$35,000 or less, that then goes down until you get to \$48,000, I believe, and you get nothing. At \$47,000, you get \$10, and the government is going to spend \$20 to write that cheque. It's going to spend \$20 to write that cheque to send you a cheque for \$10. That's McGuinty economics.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** McGuinty math.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** McGuinty math. They're going to spend \$20 to write a cheque for \$10. You see, it isn't the amount of money they're sending out; it's the thought. And the thought they want the public to have is, “My goodness, hasn't that Dalton McGuinty been kind to me.” They hope that the person who actually looks at that cheque somehow has this reaction of gratitude toward Dalton McGuinty. But what's going to happen—

**Interjection:** They don't have the Liberal logo on them.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My friend from Sault Ste. Marie says they don't have the Liberal logo on them. Well, I'm going to tell him something: He hasn't seen the cheques yet. Don't be too sure what kind of logo might be on those cheques, because you know that as we get nearer the election the games that get played get a little more obvious.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, yes. They're going to be sending out these rebate cheques for some energy, hoping that people are going to say, “Oh, my. Who sent that to me?” And it will probably have the signature of one of the cabinet ministers on it, or maybe a picture of the cabinet minister.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Peterborough says his picture could be on it. I'm not sure they'd go that far, but anything is possible in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Anyway, a little bit of money in a big cheque—big message: “Vote Liberal.” That's what they're trying to do.

It's the same thing with the GST rebate. When people actually look at the value of that cheque—if you're a family, it's \$200 maximum, and it disappears, I believe, at \$65,000. If you're a family with five kids—not like my

family; I'm one of 14. We don't have many families like that anymore. Let's say they have a big family and they're getting back \$200—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** A year.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:**—a year on their hydro in four separate cheques—two this year, but every subsequent year it's four cheques, right? They're getting a little bit back, but how much more are they paying for that energy in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario? I can tell you this much: The price of electricity in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is up 74% since 2003, when they were elected.

That doesn't talk about the HST you're going to be hit with. That doesn't talk about the increases in the distribution charges. That doesn't talk about the green tax; the smart meter program fees; the \$53-million backdoor energy tax; the bill that will be put on to your hydro bill; the \$437-million sweetheart Samsung deal.

What's going to happen when Hydro One has to go ahead with the \$1.6 billion or \$2 billion in transmission upgrades to accept all of the power that they're signing contracts on for 20 years—20-year contracts with large developers who are driven by profit. I know I sound like a New Democrat, just very temporarily. Those developers are not driven by an interest in saving the world. They're driven by an interest in making money. That's how business operates. If you can't make money, you can't stay in business.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** That's a good thing.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's a good thing, of course. We have to make profits. They are driven by that. Yet the government is trying to somehow spread some ideological message that they're doing this because they're somehow committed to making Ontario better.

When I talk to people in my riding, they're concerned as to whether or not they're going to be able to pay their hydro bills. Every year we have more and more times when we have to actually call Hydro One on behalf of ratepayers, on behalf of electricity customers, and ask for some compassion, ask for some time so that a ratepayer can get through the winter or through some difficult times when they're maybe on layoffs or whatever, in order to pay their hydro bills.

It's becoming an increasingly challenging problem, and it's just going to get greater in McGuinty's Ontario, because they've done everything on the quick. They've put themselves in a box. They made a promise they couldn't keep. They made a promise in 2002 that they would shut down the coal plants by 2007. It was so ridiculous. There wasn't a single expert who agreed with them, but they said they had expert advice. When I challenged the Premier in the House to name one expert he consulted with on that policy—because there has to be some logic to doing something. You can't just make a promise and then hope that the tooth fairy comes along and makes it happen. You have got to be able to actually institute a program that works. When I challenged him on that, he wouldn't answer.

1530

Later that year in estimates, I asked the Minister of Energy, who was Dwight Duncan at the time, for the

names, and he said, "They'll be coming forward in the House." That was three and a half years ago and we're still waiting, because you know what? They don't exist. They invented that on politics and politics alone. Because of that, they put themselves into a corner, in a box, so they had to create a policy that kind of supported what they had promised. But the people who are paying for that are the energy customers. As a result of this government's so-called green energy initiatives, they're going to be paying a whole lot more without significantly affecting the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced in Ontario.

They had reductions in coal power usage last year, but Mother Nature took care of that. Why were they up so much in 2007? The government didn't say, "Oh, boy, we've fallen back on our plans," in 2007. No, the weather will dictate what the power demand is in the summer here in the province of Ontario.

They are bragging right now about their numbers and telling us how good they were in 2009. Well, when you had everybody laid off from their jobs across the province in manufacturing and otherwise, then of course the demand for electricity is going to go down. But as the economy begins to recover and we have a summer that all the prognosticators are saying is going to be a hot, dry one—well, we'll see what their numbers are like this summer. We'll see how committed they are. We'll see how honest they are about their policy when the numbers come back in September as to what happens this summer with power produced from fossil fuels. We'll see if it continues to decline. I know there's not a member over there who wants to stand up and put his seat on the line saying that they will, because they know they're not going to. They are going to go up this summer. You hear that, Madam Speaker? They'll go up this summer. They won't go down.

What are the Liberals going to do? Are they going to admit and say that they pulled a fast one? Are they going to admit that they misinformed people?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** No, it's called an environmental crisis.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They've got a crisis over there, Madam Speaker; there is no question about it. They have a crisis over there, and they are trying to export that crisis onto the backs of families and small businesses in this province. That's what they want to do with their crisis. They want to export that crisis onto the backs of the people who can least afford it.

Let's talk about their smart meter initiative. Here's how much they thought this out: I was talking to a constituent in my riding, an elderly person, who has—how do you say that? Chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** COPD.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He has to be on oxygen 24/7. He's on a fixed old-age pension, the government pension—he didn't work for the government; no, it's the pension that comes from Canada pension. In the summertime, he has to have air conditioning because the humidity exacer-

bates his condition. What's going to happen to that man when they come in with their time-of-use pricing so that in the middle of the day, all summer long, when it's hottest and most humid and he needs the air conditioning most to allow him to breathe—not to allow him to go golfing or yachting or some of the stuff that maybe these cabinet ministers do on their free time, but to allow him to breathe. What's going to happen when he has to pay, off his meagre pension, hydro rates that are significantly higher than the other times of day because he has a so-called time-of-use smart meter?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** And he doesn't get this program.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He doesn't get this program because he's not in northern Ontario.

This is the way these people go about things on the other side of the House: They just decide that they're going to go with this policy because they like the politics of it, because some of their advisors, their deep thinkers in the ivory towers, have told them, "This is going to sell well with the latte crowd at Starbucks. They're going to like that." That, all of a sudden, becomes Liberal Party policy. That's how they get their policies. But they don't go out and ask Mr. Senior citizen who's suffering from COPD. They don't ask him how this is going to affect them. That's the kind of attitude they have: They know best. Why would Dalton McGuinty have to consult with people? He knows best. Just ask him. He'll tell you.

Look at what happened with the sex education fiasco. They have been working on this, apparently, for two years. They tell the world that they've been out consulting with everybody, but the minute the story hits the airwaves, the you-know-what hits the fan. Who did they consult with? Apparently not your average person, not the real parents who have real children going to real schools. They must have had those virtual parents with virtual children going to virtual schools. They never talked to the real people because as soon as the real people found out about it, they were tremendously upset that the government would go ahead with a policy like that without talking to them.

What is wrong with consulting with the public? Is there something wrong with talking to people and getting their views? Parents have a pretty good idea of how to raise their children, what they think is right for their children and what they think is best for their children. Unless you want to adopt all the children—is that McGuinty's plan? He's going to adopt everybody? It's going to be Daddy Dalton for everybody in the province? I don't know.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Anyway, I pay heed to the member from Essex who is curious as to whether or not this is about Bill 44. I appreciate that he didn't rise on a point of order like his colleague from Mississauga normally does.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** We know you're on message.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right. My friend from Sault Ste. Marie says we're on message.

This bill, let's just talk about my own riding for a second. It's interesting because this is a northern bill, and

my riding actually has a very small portion of it that is in northern Ontario according to where they draw the line, because it's in part of the district of Nipissing. My residents, a very small number of them who live in the hamlet of Madawaska and Whitney, they will actually be able to get some of this credit.

Oh, I want to make one thing clear. We're going to support the legislation because—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** We haven't caucused it yet. Come on.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We haven't caucused it? I thought—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** No, we didn't talk about it.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, okay. Well, maybe we're not. I have to talk to the finance critic, here.

But from the perspective that if you're going shopping, and you can't have the whole loaf of bread, but you're going to get a slice of it, I guess that's better than no bread at all. For the people that are going to get something from it, I don't oppose that.

But is it really meaningful? Does it really make up for what they're going to pay? This won't even cover the HST for some people, for goodness' sake. That won't even cover the HST on some people's hydro bills. It's sort of like giving with one hand and picking the pocket with the other. This government is sort of taking with one and giving with the other, giving with one and taking with the other, because they like the politics of the giving and because they want you to have a great deal of gratitude and be thankful to the government for something they've given you. But through one incremental bit at a time, they have been whacking the energy consumer in this province over the last few years.

**1540**

Tom Adams, who is a very, very learned person in the energy field, believes that energy prices will go up 25% in 2010 alone—25%. I'm going to ask you: Has anybody out there been getting a raise of 25%? Is anybody seeing their incomes rise 25%? But the Liberal government feels that they can take 25% more from you, and that's just the energy bills.

Every time people turn around—what about gasoline for their cars and trucks? I come from rural Ontario. Some of the members sitting there come from rural Ontario. They understand, but why are they not standing up to their Premier about what this is going to do to them, this HST on gasoline; what it's going to mean to those rural residents when they pull up to that pump on July 1, and the price of gas, for the sake of argument, if it was \$1 on June 30—\$1.08 on July 1? Talk about being kicked when you're down.

The HST already kicked in if you're buying a gym membership. We encourage people to be physically fit. We encourage people to take steps to join clubs so that they can exercise and maintain a level of physical fitness because most people believe that if you maintain a healthy level of physical fitness, you will require fewer, not more, health care dollars to be spent on you as you

grow older. Anyone can get critically ill, but for the most part, if you take care of yourself, that probably will be helpful to our health system.

What does the Liberal government do? They don't even wait till July 1 to whack you. You got that on May 1.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Why wait for spring? Do it now.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Why wait for spring? Do it now. HFC used to say that when they were giving out the home loans at about 32%: "Why wait for spring? Do it now." Household Finance; I remember that well.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Did you ever have a loan from them?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, I never had a loan from Household Finance. I had a loan from daddy. His interest rates were better.

They go and whack you on May 1 if you buy a gym membership, or if you purchase airline tickets on which you travel after July 1. If you buy a golf membership and want to enjoy some summer recreation, you're getting hit now.

Now the government is talking about coming out with an industrial hydro policy as well. We'll have to see that as well, an industrial hydro policy, in another bill. They could have wrapped all of these up in schedules in the budgets, quite frankly, because they really have no agenda. They have no new legislation to bring forward. They give this all off from the budget. They could have done it as part of the budget bill. They could have had it as part of the budget bill, but they wanted to bring it in separately.

Do you think they wanted to bring it separately because they wanted to listen to me debate this? Of course not. They wanted to bring it in separately because they wanted to be able to try to play the politics of this issue. That's all it's about. That's what it has gotten down to in the last 15, 16 months of their term here in the province of Ontario: Every bill that's coming forward now is motivated by the politics, not motivated by, is it a good thing for the people, is it something that is absolutely necessary, is it something that needs its own piece of legislation in order to be enacted? No. It's about, how are we going to be able to message this and spin this to the people and try and get more people to be on our side?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** You would never do that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That is kind of cynical because I would never do that.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Essex made the statement, "You would never do that" to me, and I'm simply agreeing with him. You're right.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** And I'm being cynical.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, no, but he is being facetious, most likely.

You have to ask yourself, what are we doing here? What are we doing here in this Legislature if we're bringing forth legislation that could have been dealt with in another way? And then, when we should have legislation, like we should have had to deal with the \$53-million backdoor energy tax, as the C.D. Howe Institute

has said, which is taxation by regulation, which is illegal under our constitution—it's just a matter of time before someone challenges the constitutionality of that move—when they should have had legislation brought before this House to be debated, they chose not to. They chose not to bring a piece of legislation on a \$53-million backdoor energy tax—terrible. People as reputable and non-partisan as the C.D. Howe Institute have said, "That's illegal." I guess it's going to be up to someone to decide whether or not they're going to challenge the constitutionality of it, but the C.D. Howe Institute says that this government is guilty of doing something illegal with that \$53-million backdoor energy tax.

And they're not done; they're not done. That adds \$4 or so to your energy bill. They're not done. We know that we caught them; we caught them in the hearings on Bill 235 because we asked the question of the gas companies, if they had had discussions with the government about the government inflicting a tax on them, making the gas companies the tax collectors as well. Well, that's going to be a \$100-million tax. They couldn't get it in before the end of the last fiscal year, ending on March 31, 2010, but they fully intend to whack you with that one in fiscal 2010-11. That's another \$100-million tax that will be on your natural gas bills in the province of Ontario, which they are going to try to put through by regulation and not legislation—again, something that, according to the C.D. Howe Institute, is patently illegal.

Where does this leave the energy consumer in the province of Ontario? Well, they're making sure that in the north they have what they purport to be a good news story, that you're going to get a little bit back on your energy bill. Nobody is going to refuse a cheque from the government, because even as badly as Dalton McGuinty has run this province, the cheque from the government still doesn't bounce, so it's a good cheque. They're going to be happy to get that cheque from the government. What they're not happy about is how much more the government continues to take from them.

But in the rest of the province—and there are low-income people in the rest of the province, under \$35,000, who are struggling every day with their hydro bills. Where's the program for them? Where's the plan for them? I guess the government didn't feel that it was something they could get a political win out of, and if they couldn't get a political win out of it, they weren't going to go ahead with it. Why is there not a plan for low-income Ontarians all around the province who are paying the ridiculous increases in energy costs as a result of this government's energy policies? Should there not be a rebate for them? Should there not be something paying them back for what's being taken from them?

I hope everybody out there examines their hydro bills. Go back and look at your hydro bills from a few years ago and see what you were paying. Ask yourself, how much more does this government think you can pay? They're very sly in the way they do it. They don't hit you with a 40% increase; no, it's a 5% increase and a 4% increase and an 8% increase and a 7% increase. But

sooner or later—I know we all know the story about the straw that broke the camel's back. They are stretching the ability of the taxpayers' camel in this province to the nth degree. There is not a whole lot more that people can take. Every time they turn around—today I'm just talking about increases in energy costs. But every other fee and every other tax is going up.

1550

The other day I was here and the revenue minister was telling people to pre-book their funeral before July 1. Well, I happened to ask one of the funeral directors how much that would cost me. It was not insignificant. It was in the thousands of dollars. I asked the revenue minister, for those people who are having a hard time paying their property taxes under Dalton McGuinty, having a hard time paying their increases in auto insurance this year under Dalton McGuinty, where are they supposed to come up with maybe \$5,000 to pre-book a funeral to save the HST? That was the advice of the revenue minister: Just pre-book your funeral. Maybe he'd like to help them out. Maybe he'd like to cut a cheque to help those folks out in pre-booking their funeral, because not everybody has that kind of money sitting around just waiting to invest in pre-booking a funeral.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's prepaid, not pre-booked.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Pre-booked, prepaid; what's the difference?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, that's true.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** If you're pre-booked, are you giving us a date?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I'm not pre-booking mine, but I'd be prepared to pre-book others'.

Anyway, I have to accept the correction of the members from Algoma-Manitoulin and Peterborough. Yes, it's prepay your funeral. I guess you wouldn't want to pre-book your funeral. So there is a difference. I misspoke, and I'd like to correct my record, that yes, it is to prepay your funeral.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Perhaps the member from Peterborough wants to talk about prepaying funerals and how much HST they're going to pay after July 1 if they don't prepay that funeral, how much it's going to hit them on that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:**—depending upon what level of funeral you choose, I say to the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. We don't know what funeral you're prepaying yet.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's 8%.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's 8%; that's right. But if you buy the basic, it might be 8% of one figure; whereas if you're buying the better one, it's going to be 8% of a higher figure.

Getting back to the bill—because, believe it or not, I'm running out of time—my colleague from Parry Sound went on longer than I had expected.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Or the Polish embassy thing went on too long.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, I was there. The ambassador was there as well, I say to my friend from Timmins-James Bay.

The member for Timmins-James Bay, I must say I was disappointed to hear that your private member's bill that actually would have helped the north, I believe, didn't go through on Thursday here in this House. This bill, Bill 44, is a lot of paper, but it's not going to amount to a whole lot. It's not going to amount to anything significant to the electricity consumers in northern Ontario. But I do think that the member from Timmins-James Bay had a good suggestion on Thursday, and the government wouldn't support it.

I've got a good suggestion for Thursday, too. In my last couple of minutes I want to remind the members of this House that they will have an opportunity to stand up for rural Ontario this Thursday, because once again we will be debating my gas tax fairness bill.

Here's the fundamental issue: I think that anybody who looks at this from a logical point of view is going to say, how could you take a tax from all people and only give it to some based on where they live and what kind of a transit system they have in their communities? The gas tax in the province of Ontario is dealt with completely differently than it is by the federal government. The federal government gives a gas tax rebate to all municipalities, but here in Ontario, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, they don't give that gas tax rebate to rural communities. They only give it to those that have a public transportation system.

Rural people pay a greater percentage of their disposable income than urban people do on gasoline, because by our very nature we have to drive to get to places. We don't have the option of taking the GO train, the subway or the buses. You have to get into your vehicle and drive.

There is going to be an opportunity for these members on the Liberal side of the House to stand up for gas tax fairness so that a portion of that gas tax would then be rebated to all communities so that they could devote it to the priority transit programs in their communities. In some communities, it's going to be buses, but in another community, it might be streets, roads or bridges, because they don't have a public transportation system. It is going to be an opportunity, on this Thursday, in my private member's time, for members on the opposite side of the House to do just that.

I hope those rural members will stand up for rural people and their constituencies as well, because your people will benefit. Not just the people of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, but everyone in the province of Ontario will benefit equally, based on the number of inhabitants they have in their community and the kilometrage of roads they maintain. This is an opportunity for fairness, coming up Thursday. I hope the members on the opposite side of the House will support that.

And you're going to have to think about this one: \$10 cheques that cost \$20 to write, and you're still going to

be doing that if somebody makes \$47,000. There should be a better, streamlined way of getting the money to consumers. You could start by stopping with the hosing you're giving them on the hydro rates, to begin with. If you weren't so ridiculous in the rates you're charging, you wouldn't have to offer a rebate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to make a few comments in regard to what I heard from both the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member from—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The reason I would never be the Speaker of the House is, after 20 years, I can't get all those ridings straight. I know you by name.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's the only reason.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's the only reason, because I know you all by name. You're good friends and stuff, but your ridings escape me.

I just want to say the members are right: If the government is putting out this 25% savings to industry as the thing that's going to save all the jobs in northern Ontario, I just want to say, boy, you got a long ways to go to figure that one out.

Just recently, we saw Xstrata in Timmins—after we sat down with the Premier—and we said, “Listen, the government has offered up a 25% saving. Is that at least a beginning? Is that even a wedge to get you to change your minds about staying in Ontario?” They said, “Energy prices now and in the future will continue to rise, and we do not see Ontario as a place that is competitive when it comes to electricity prices.”

I just want to say to the members, I agree that, yes, 25% is a step in the right direction. Nobody's going to say 25% is something to sneeze at. But please don't put it out there as being the thing that's going to save all those jobs in northern Ontario.

I've got to take this opportunity because he spoke on my private member's bill. I was here during the debate, obviously; it was my bill. I was extremely disappointed in the result of that vote. I would have thought that government members would have stepped forward. Unfortunately, they didn't step forward to support that bill. Northern members could have gotten up in the House and spoken for it or against it. They didn't do that, the Liberal members. They decided, by and large, to be absent from the vote and be absent from the debate. That is their choice; I understand. But I've got to say to the members across the way, the seeds that you sow will be the ground that you've got to hoe in the next election. I can tell you, you didn't help yourselves by not supporting northern Ontario last Thursday.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm kind of interested in the speeches made by the energy critic for the official opposi-

tion and the finance critic for the official opposition. I'm kind of waiting to understand whether they are for or against this energy credit. There seems to be some discrepancy over there. I'm just going to speak for one second about what we are really talking about, because I think they wandered a bit in their conversation here.

What this actually does is provide northern residents who are age 18 and older, who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence—they would be eligible for an annual credit. A single person would be eligible for a credit of up to \$130, while a family would be eligible for \$200, including single parents. This credit would benefit about one quarter of a million families and single people, or more than half of northern residents, providing about \$35 million in assistance for the first year of implementation. It would be available—and I know these members are interested in this—to people across the north: to residents of the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timiskaming. People living on northern reserves who incur residential energy costs would also be eligible for the credit. To help those who need it most, the credit would be income-tested; it would be reduced for a single person with an adjusted net income over \$35,000 and eliminated when his or her income exceeds \$48,000. It would be reduced for families with an adjusted family net income of over \$45,000 and eliminated when their income is more than \$65,000.

This will help my constituents; it will help the people of the north. It is one more measure where this government recognizes the unique opportunity—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** Thank you. The member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide just a few comments in response to the very, very eloquent addresses from the members for Parry Sound–Muskoka and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke in regard to Bill 44. I know that when I've spoken before in this House, in the short time that I've been here, I've talked about what I've heard from people when I've been on the election campaign. They just went to the polls in my riding on March 4. I can appreciate—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What a win.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, honourable sir.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Was it 68%?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It was 66%, but thank you for bringing it up.

I can appreciate that Bill 44 is a northern Ontario bill and speaks to those in northern Ontario. However, having just been to the polls, having just talked to people in my constituency, the cost of energy—the energy bills that people are getting in my riding, not just residential bills but also the commercial bills, have just been unbelievable. I think it was the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke who talked about the cost of energy. Since this government came into power, it has increased 74%—shameful. That doesn't include anything about smart

meters or about the green tax. I worked in a constituency office. This is a huge issue.

Just before my time runs out, I want to talk about someone who I met during the campaign. His name is Ed Lypchuk. He lives on Meighen Crescent in Brockville. He wrote a wonderful editorial: "Hydro Pricing Schedule Great for Vampire Lifestyle." Mr. Lypchuk talked about the fact that he's going to lead a double life as a senior vampire. Not only is this government causing him grief with the HST, but the fact that the government should realize that he will not be a blood-sucking vampire like this government, but one who will be gentle. I wanted to put those comments on record—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** Thank you. The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to be able to offer some comments on the speeches given by my two colleagues in the Conservative Party. While New Democrats do not agree with the Conservative approach in respect to many areas of energy policy, I do want to give my colleague the energy critic for the Conservative Party credit for actually dealing with the numbers. I sat here earlier this afternoon and I listened to the two principal spokespersons for the government who talked about mines, they talked about medical schools, they talked about highways, but they didn't talk about the bill, and there's a reason they don't want to talk about the bill: The reason is because the hydro bill and the heating bill in Ontario are skyrocketing, and then when the government puts the HST on the heating bill and the hydro bill, they're going to skyrocket even more. People who are already having a hard time paying the heating bill and the hydro bill are going to have an even tougher time. When you add in the little bit that this bill, this energy credit, will put on the table—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A pittance.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** It is a pittance compared to how much people's hydro bills and heating bills are increasing. Pensioners, people living on low incomes, people living on modest incomes and, I can say, most First Nation residents in this province have no idea how they're going to pay their hydro bill or their heating bill, even with this so-called northern energy credit. That's why government members wouldn't talk about the bill. The member for Timiskaming wouldn't talk about it. The member for Pickering wouldn't talk about it. I at least give the Conservatives credit for talking about the real numbers and how much they're going to hurt ordinary people in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** The member has two minutes to sum up.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for sharing the time, and I'm pleased to have comments from the members from Timmins–James Bay, Leeds–Grenville, Algoma–Manitoulin and Kenora–Rainy River.

I think the member from Kenora–Rainy River did sum up that this bill is really a pittance when you see the sorts of energy rate increases that we are seeing in the

province of Ontario. As the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke pointed out, that's a 74% increase since the McGuinty government was elected, and we haven't even seen the most recent increases that are coming: the 10% just approved by the Ontario Energy Board, the 8% HST, and on and on it goes.

Why was this bill not just a part of the budget bill, Bill 16, that's in committee right now? It has some 31 schedules, and this is fairly thin, dealing with one very specific issue; that is, these tax credits for northern residents. So I do ask the government why they didn't just make it part of the bill that's in committee, although they have time-allocated that bill in committee, so there's not really going to be much time for people to be looking at it.

The unfortunate thing is that all residents in the province of Ontario are going to see their energy bills go up and their hydro bills go up, but it's only residents of northern Ontario who will get this \$130 if you're an individual to a maximum of \$230 if you're a family—and then going down, as we pointed out. There will be many northern residents who will receive as little as \$10 four times a year through this bill that is proposed.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate, if for no other reason than to clear away some of the smoke and some of the fog that members of the McGuinty government have tried to create around this bill.

I noted earlier that I heard the two principal government spokespersons this afternoon speak for almost an hour, and they hardly spoke about the bill. The bill is called "northern energy credit," and I expected that I would hear some thoughtful, detailed discussion about the bill. I heard almost nothing. I heard somebody talk about highways. I heard somebody talk about the medical school. I heard somebody talk about the Ring of Fire. I heard somebody talk about a courthouse in Thunder Bay. I heard all kinds of stuff, but none of it related to this bill. If I were a reasonable person at home, I suppose I might wonder, "Well, why won't members of the government, Liberal members, talk about this bill?"

I want people to know why they won't talk about it, although I think most people, especially people in northern Ontario, are smart enough to do the math for themselves and to make their way through the smokescreen. The reason government members do not want to talk about this bill is because if they do talk about this bill and they don't talk about courthouses, they don't talk about highways, they don't talk about a medical school, they don't talk about the Ring of Fire, what they have to admit is that hydro bills in this province, especially in northern Ontario, have skyrocketed through the roof under the McGuinty Liberals, and what they have to admit is that for people who have electric heat—and sad to say, there are too many people who have electric heat—their heating bill has skyrocketed. We've all seen the price of oil. People who have to heat their homes with fuel oil,

and many in rural Ontario and northern Ontario do, their heating bills have skyrocketed, but the McGuinty Liberals don't want to admit that.

**1610**

They don't want to admit that there are literally hundreds of thousands of people in the province, I would venture to say probably a million, who have trouble every month paying those bills. They don't want to admit that pensioners—I can tell you, because I get the calls from pensioners in my constituency offices; pensioners who call and say, “My hydro bill is \$250 a month. I'm living on a pension that's a little over \$1,000 a month. I don't know how I'm going to pay this.” The same pensioner gets a heating bill in that range. So they go through this very difficult, painful process of trying to decide, do you pay the hydro bill, do you pay the heating bill and do you have a little bit left over for food?

It's not just pensioners. People who are forced to rely upon Ontario disability support benefits or Ontario Works benefits—many people are under the mistaken assumption that there's a place in the Ontario disability support benefit or the Ontario Works benefit that pays for the heating and electricity bill. Not so; not so. The McGuinty Liberals will pat themselves on the back and say, “Oh, boy, people who have to rely on Ontario Works or the Ontario disability support benefit got a 1% increase”—a 1% increase—“in their benefit this year.” Hydro bills, by independent analysts, are going to go up by in excess of 20%. The heating bill is going up and other bills are going up.

People who have to struggle on very low incomes have no idea how they're going to pay these bills. I can tell you that a lot of working people have no idea, but the government doesn't want to talk about that. They especially don't want to talk about the fact that on top of the increases in the bill, they're then going to load on the 8% HST, which will make it even more unaffordable for ordinary folks. So the government will talk about courthouses, they'll talk about highways, they'll talk about medical schools and they'll talk about the Ring of Fire. They'll talk about anything but this bill. Well, I am going to speak about this bill. I'm going to speak about it in detail.

I, from time to time, do surveys in my own constituency on people's hydro bills. The average hydro bill in my part of northern Ontario is now in excess of \$200 a month. Many people are paying hydro bills of \$300, \$400 and \$500 a month. Let's take the average: \$200 a month times 12 is \$2,400 a year for the hydro bill.

Now, an independent expert—his name is Bruce Sharp—at Aegent Energy Advisors says that just what the McGuinty government is doing this year is going to push up people's hydro bills by another \$377. It is \$2,400 a year now. When you add it all up, add on another \$377, almost \$400: so \$2,800.

Then the McGuinty government's going to put on the HST. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. I'll knock it down to \$2,700. What's 10% of \$2,700? \$270. What's 8%? Let's knock it down to say \$240. The HST is going

to add another \$240 onto people, and that's only part of it. People in my constituency who are forced to rely upon oil heat are paying heating bills of \$500 or \$600 a month. People who are forced to rely on electric heat are paying even more than that. People who have natural gas, they might get a break. They might be paying, oh, \$120 a month. Add it up: 10 months, \$1,200; another two months, \$1,440. Take 10%: \$144. Knock it down a little for 8%: \$120. Add the figures up. You don't have to be a mathematician to know that those folks are looking at paying well over \$300 in taxes on top of the other bill increases—taxes due to the HST.

This government says that this bill is going to make it better for people. Well, if the bill is going to go up by \$377 because of rate increases and so-called smart meters—although there seems to be nothing smart about them. They add \$2 billion in cost to the electricity system but don't deliver us any benefit. So there's a \$377 increase to the bill, and then you're going to tack on the HST. Man, all in—heating bill, hydro bill, HST—you're talking about taking an extra \$500 out of people's pockets when you add it all up. Now, do I see a credit here of \$500 to make a difference?

**Interjection:** No.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Do I see even a credit here of \$400?

**Interjection:** No.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Do I see even a credit here of \$300?

**Interjection:** No.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** You don't have to pass even grade 8 math to figure out that the McGuinty Liberals are going to take \$500 out of the pockets of some of the lowest-income people in Ontario. Yes, they'll give them \$200 back, and then they're going to try to say to them that it's a good deal. Any time somebody takes \$500 out of your right pocket, gives you \$200 back in the left pocket and says it's a good deal, it ain't a good deal. You've been ripped off to the tune of \$300 a year, and that's what's happening. It's happening to pensioners, it's happening to the lowest-income people in Ontario, it's happening to modest-income families, and it's happening to First Nations.

Let me tell you what's happening on the 55 First Nations that I know of in my part of northern Ontario. Most of them are in my constituency, but not all. Do you know, Speaker, that individual First Nation families are having such a difficult time paying their hydro bill—just leave the heating bill aside for a minute—that the community has to step in and use the limited community funds, funds that would otherwise go to education, health, recreation or housing? The community has to step in and pay people's hydro bill because they can't pay it themselves.

This government is going to drive up those bills even higher. Then it has the audacity to say to people that this bill is going to be a good deal for them. All it does is create some fog and smoke to try to cover up what's really happening. People are going to be struggling more

than ever. People are going to have a harder time than ever paying their bills.

This is not like the jewellery bill; this is not like the entertainment bill where I can forego it for a while. These are essentials. Heating the house between October and April in northern Ontario is not some optional thing. It's not like deciding whether or not to go to the jewellery store. Let me tell you, having electricity is not some optional thing. It's not like deciding whether or not you're going to go to the casino for the day. These are essential things. If the government doesn't think it's essential, I invite government members to shut off the electricity in your refrigerator for a couple of days and try eating the food and see what happens to you.

1620

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Looks like my fridge.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** These are essentials. These things matter for people's lives and people's health, yet this government is driving up what people are going to pay at an astronomical rate, and then has the audacity to come in and present this bill and say it's a good deal.

I say again: I do not know—even with this modest \$100, perhaps up to \$200—how a lot of people in northern Ontario are going to pay their hydro bill and their heating bill when all of these increases in the bill and the HST take effect.

This government has made a game of trying to hide the cost of the HST from people. The government knows the figures. The government knows, for example, how much electricity is consumed in northern Ontario. So if you attach the HST to that, you can very quickly figure out how much the HST is going to bring in. We had to do this by freedom of information. We had to write to the government over and over again and ask for the figures and go through the appeal process and everything else because the McGuinty government didn't want this information out there.

With the 8% HST tax on the hydro bill, this government will take in another \$425 million a year, and with the HST on the heating bill, the estimate is that we'll take in another \$356 million a year. This is why the government members didn't want to talk about this bill. They didn't want to talk about the fact that people who are already struggling, who are already having a hard time, who have to choose sometimes between putting food on the table and paying the heating bill or putting food on the table and paying the hydro bill—this government is going to take another \$800 million out of their pockets by taxing something that is absolutely essential for people to live, given the climate that we live in here. That's why the government didn't want to talk about it.

This is going to take a significant amount of money—almost \$800 million more—out of the pockets of folks across the province. The government, yes, brings forward this energy credit, but the energy credit is not going to be anywhere near the \$800 million that's going to be taken out of people's pockets.

I want people to understand that that's why the New Democrats think the HST is the wrong tax at the wrong

time, but to put it on people's hydro bills and put it on their heating bills is absolutely wrong—an absolutely wrong-headed policy and a wrong step to take. This bill, this northern energy credit, is not going to come anywhere near undoing the damage that this government is going to do, both through rate increases on the hydro bill and then finally by putting the HST on the hydro bill.

I want to dwell on First Nation communities for a minute, because here's where the situation is getting very tragic. A lot of homes in First Nation communities were built with electric heat. That was a decision that was made by the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. In some cases, that decision was made 15, 25, 30 years ago. Many of them were built with electric heat.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** There's no natural gas there.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Natural gas is not an option. Trucking in fuel is incredibly expensive, so they made the decision to go with electric heat.

Given the rate increases, given the increases in the hydro bill, what this means now for many First Nation communities is that it's not unusual for people to have hydro bills that are \$800, \$900 a month. That's not unusual. No wonder the chief and council have to use the community budget that is intended for education or health care or intended to build housing or for recreation—no wonder they have to step in and use those limited funds just to help people pay their hydro bills. People simply don't have that income, and First Nations are going to be hit by these staggering increases.

I have no idea how not only the individual families are going to be able to pay the hydro bill but how the First Nation council will be able to pay the hydro bill. I would have thought the government members would have gotten up today and maybe alluded to that hardship. Not for a second. They talked about highways, courthouses, the Ring of Fire and medical schools, but not one second of attention to the pain, the struggle, the difficulty that all kinds of people, especially First Nation families, are having now trying to pay the hydro bill because so many of the homes were built with electric heat, which brings me to the other part of this which is missing.

I was looking, just this past week, at Manitoba. Manitoba has electricity rates which are much lower than what you see here in Ontario. Both the residential rate and the industrial rate are much lower, so people are not facing hydro bills of \$200, \$300, \$400 or \$800 a month. People might be facing a hydro bill of maybe \$100 at most.

But Manitoba, even with those much lower electricity rates and much lower hydro bills, if you read, has a very thoughtful and attractive proposal for people. They're very interested, for a variety of reasons, some of them environmental; some of them to do with how they want to strategically locate the province in terms of its economy in the future; some of it in terms of how much money they can make selling electricity contracts to Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin—for a variety of reasons, the province of Manitoba has a very thoughtful, deliberate strategy to help people actually use

not only less electricity in their homes but less heating oil, less natural gas, less energy overall.

They have a strategy where they will provide you with a low-interest loan and a grant so that you can purchase energy-efficient appliances. If you've got an old freezer, an old fridge, an old stove—and by and large, older appliances use a lot more electricity than the most modern and energy-efficient ones. That province actually provides people with grants and loans so that people can purchase the energy-efficient freezer, fridge or stove. You use less electricity and you pay back the loan based upon how much you save each month on your hydro bill. If you save \$30 a month on your hydro bill because you're using a lot less electricity, that becomes the payment on the loan. So \$30 a month, 12 months, \$360 a year, five years—almost \$1,600. Chances are that you'll have paid for, or be close to paying for, that new energy-efficient fridge, and nothing has come out of your pocket. After it's paid off, people get to put the \$30 or \$35 a month that they're saving on their hydro bill in their pocket.

But it's not just with respect to electricity; it's also with respect to heating. If you want to put in a very high-efficiency natural gas furnace; if you want to replace the doors, the windows and upgrade the insulation in your house so that you use less heating energy, this Manitoba strategy does that as well.

#### 1630

Once again, you pay the loan back based on how much you save every month on your heating bill. So if you save \$25 or \$30 a month on your heating bill, times 12—\$360 a year—over four, five or six years, you pay back the loan. That is a real strategy to help people. It's good for the environment, good for people's pocketbooks and good for the long-term interests of the province.

Now, do we see any strategy like this from the McGuinty government? I had my assistant look at the Ministry of Energy website: nothing. I had my assistant look at the Ontario Power Authority website: nothing. I had my assistant look at the Ministry of the Environment website: nothing. I had my assistant look at the Ministry of Finance website: nothing.

It would seem that the McGuinty Liberals' definition of helping people on their hydro bills and their heating bills is to force the bills sky high and then say to people who are going to have the highest bills, "Here, we'll give you a \$200 credit." But the credit comes nowhere near the increase, whether the increase is through rate changes, whether it's through so-called smart meters that aren't very smart, whether it's through other fees and commissions that have been added to the bill or whether it's the HST.

I would much rather see a strategy like Manitoba's, where you actually provide people with the tools, the incentive and the financial help so that they use less electricity, so that they use less heating fuel. It will be good for the environment, it will be good for their pocketbooks, and do you know what? It will be good for the long-term interests of the province too. But we don't see anything like that with this bill.

Just for the people at home, because I know the members of the government didn't want to talk about the details very much, the maximum benefit a family could get out of this bill, if your income is \$45,000 a year or less, is \$200. Meanwhile, as I've already pointed out, the hydro bill and the heating bill are going up by \$400 or \$500 a year. If you're a single person and your income is \$35,000 a year or less, the maximum you're going to get is \$130. Meanwhile, your hydro bill and heating bill, when you tack on the HST and everything else, is going up by \$500 a year. Clearly, by anybody's arithmetic, this is not a good deal.

Now, because government members delved into this, I feel a responsibility to speak to it, because some government members wanted to use this bill to talk about the northern industrial hydro rate. Once again, government members want to pretend that the northern industrial hydro rate they have outlined in the budget is going to be the be-all and end-all. Well, I would say to folks across northern Ontario, particularly industrial users of electricity: Read the fine print carefully. The reason people should read the fine print carefully is because, in effect, the industrial hydro bill now consists of a few things. The industrial hydro bill consists of the hydro rate for electricity, then there's transmission, then there's debt retirement and then there's something called the global adjustment formula.

When I talk to the few paper mills and pulp mills that are still running in northern Ontario—and I say that with sadness because there are few running; the vast majority have been shut down under this government and they've been shut down because this government has followed a policy of driving the industrial hydro rate through the roof, which has an especially detrimental effect on paper mills—they will say to you: "Well the big thing that's really killing us now is this global adjustment." This global adjustment, in some cases, is adding close to a million a month.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's \$2 million.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** In Mr. Bisson's case, for the paper mill in his riding, it's adding \$2 million a month to the hydro bill.

Now, is this northern industrial power rate going to do anything about the global adjustment, which is the biggest headache that industrial processors and manufacturers in northern Ontario have now? Is it going to do anything about it? No, it isn't. The single biggest headache that paper mills, pulp mills, mining operations, smelting, refining operations are facing on their hydro bills now in northern Ontario, the global adjustment figure which is skyrocketing out of sight—what the McGuinty government is proposing in its northern Ontario hydro rate isn't going to do a thing about that; nothing about it. It's like having a mammoth headache, and the government comes up to you and says, "Here, take this bit of penicillin. It will fix it." Anybody who thinks about it knows that a penicillin pill won't do anything about a headache. Well, doing a little bit of adjustment to the industrial hydro rate is not going to do

anything when the big issue facing manufacturers and processors and paper mills in northern Ontario right now is not the hydro rate; it's the huge skyrocketing explosion of the global adjustment figure.

I would say—and I know the government has promoted this with all kinds of hype—to most manufacturers in northern Ontario, “Read the fine print.” But I already know they're reading the fine print. I already know that. I've had paper mill managers say to me, “If the government had done this five years ago it would have made a difference.” But what they've done is they've allowed the industrial hydro rates to skyrocket and they've done other things to allow the global adjustment part of the bill to skyrocket, so now this little bit, this two cents per kilowatt hour, is not going to much in terms of what companies are facing.

The companies can also see down the road. As Mr. Sharp at Aegent Energy Advisors has indicated, companies know that other things that are happening. Other things that are being done by this government are going to continue to drive the industrial hydro bill higher and higher over the next two years. What happens three years from now when this special northern industrial hydro rate comes off? Companies will be faced with a hydro bill that skyrockets. Again, companies aren't in the business of only looking one or two years down the road. They want to know, where are we going to be in three years? Where are we going to be in five years? Where are we going to be in seven years? They know that as a result of some of the things this government is doing, in fact even with this northern industrial hydro rate, when it comes off in three years companies will be facing an even more difficult time paying the hydro bills. Just look at some of the headlines in the local paper. The Toronto Star, April 10: “Electricity Price Rises a Concern to Industry.” The Globe and Mail on the same day: “Energy Plan Called Threat to Industry's Edge.” Companies see this, and they know that something that is a three-year temporary fix is just too little and, as I said, it's too late.

#### 1640

This has very real repercussions. There's a paper mill in Thunder Bay, Cascades paper mill, that has been shut down now for, I guess, three and a half years. When I talk to people, I say, “Look, what would it cost to start up that mill?” They say, “Based upon what I've seen, you'd probably need about \$50 million of working capital.” You'd have to get the machines all shipshape again, and you'd have to make sure that your steam and energy systems and electronic systems are going to run. Then, of course, you'd have to purchase some raw material. And then you'd have to have some money to recall your workers and pay them. So \$50 million is probably what it'll cost. I don't know too many people who are going to put \$50 million down on the table for something that's only going to be a temporary plan—because you're not going to make the \$50 million back in three years.

Similarly, the government wants to say that this is going to lead to all kinds of new investment. Well, let's just take the mining industry. We've had a new diamond

mine, the Victor mine, open in northeastern Ontario, in my colleague Mr. Bisson's riding. Many people think that this diamond mine, which just opened a few years ago, is something recent. What they need to understand is that De Beers, the company that developed the mine, was working on that for almost 15 years. That didn't happen in one year or two years or three years. It was a 15-year project to bring that mine into production. So if it takes 10 or 15 years of advanced exploration, financing, approvals, permits, construction to bring something like that into production, when a government puts down a three-year temporary industrial hydro fix, it has almost no effect whatsoever on that company. They're thinking in terms of a 15-year planning horizon, and somebody says, “Oh, I'll give you a deal—not a very good deal. I'll give you a deal that lasts three years,” it has no impact, no effect whatsoever—none.

I would say very clearly that while the government has put a lot of hype into this, while the government has spent a lot of time promoting the concept of the northern Ontario industrial hydro rate since the budget, the fact of the matter is that it is not going to reduce the existing hydro rate substantially, or even significantly. The fact of the matter is that for industrial manufacturers and processors in northern Ontario, the biggest addition to the hydro bill has been the skyrocketing global adjustment. This special industrial hydro rate for northern Ontario is not going to do anything about the global adjustment figures and how badly they've been exploding. It doesn't offer enough of an opportunity even to bring a paper mill that has been sidelined, a paper mill that's not operating, back into operation. And it's not going to have any effect on longer-term things like the mining industry, because those projects typically take 10 or 15 years of hard work to get into production. Something like a three-year special industrial hydro rate for northern Ontario is not going to have any effect on something that has a 10- or 15-year planning horizon.

That then brings up the question, what's this thing about? I'll tell you what it's about. The fact of the matter is, now that we have set election dates in Ontario, the election campaign is really five or six months long. The next election campaign is not going to begin in September 2011. This Legislature, in the spring of 2011, will probably recess in June, and then the election campaign will get under way. The election campaign will go all through June, July, August and September and into October. What it means is that one year from now—12 and a half months from now, essentially—Ontario is going to be in its next full-speed-ahead, damn-the-torpedoes, full-fledged election campaign. This announcement in this budget has more to do with that than anything else.

There are about two or three forest industry complexes that are really in big trouble right now. The Abitibi-Bowater mill in Thunder Bay used to be a beautiful operation. It had a softwood kraft mill, a hardwood kraft mill, three big, fast paper machines and some other things as well. The hardwood kraft mill is now shut down. Two of the paper machines are shut down. You've basically

got the softwood kraft mill and one paper machine, which are struggling to survive. This government is very worried that between now and the next election that may shut down, which would mean essentially the whole forest industry in the Thunder Bay area will be shut down.

I would suggest to you that this announcement of a special industrial hydro rate, that isn't really going to do much, has more to do with trying to just quiet things down for the next 12 months, between now and the next election, than it does anything else.

There's another forest industry complex in the riding of the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, in Terrace Bay, that is facing a similar problem: Terrace Bay Pulp and the two associated sawmills. They've been shut down now for a number of months. The company keeps announcing that it intends to start up maybe a month or two months hence, but it never happens.

I think what the government is worried about is an announcement from this company that it's unable to reopen; that it's unable to work towards, look towards, a prospective reopening date because of the huge hydro bills that they're paying now, and the fact that those hydro bills are going to go even higher in the next 12 months. I think the government is again trying to smooth the waters and hoping that it will keep the waters smooth until after the next election.

Similarly, in Sault Ste. Marie, St. Marys Paper is essentially shut down. I think government members are worried that it might not reopen. If there are further increases in the hydro bills, the worry is that there will be an announcement that the shutdown will be permanent. I think this government again wants to smooth the waters and hopes there's no such announcement between now and the next election, basically no such announcement over the next 12 to 13 months. That's what I really think is going on here. This is about trying to smooth the waters before the next election.

Again, whether it smoothes the waters before the next election and keeps things off the public radar screen—I don't know if it will or it won't, but I can say definitively this is not going to do a thing in terms of the longer-term operations and sustainability of those mills, because we already know the industrial hydro bill is going to go up significantly over the next two or three years because of some of the policy changes this government has announced.

That takes me back to the energy credit. Once again, when they announced the energy credit, the government said that it was permanent. I have to ask, only a year before the next election campaign, why the government would do it and why they would say that it was permanent. I think the reason, once again, is about trying to smooth the waters with people before the next election and trying to make it seem as if it's something more than it is. I don't think it's going to work because, as I said already, when you take \$500 from people's right-hand pocket and then say, "Oh, maybe I'll give you \$150 back

in your left-hand pocket," most people can figure out that that's not a good deal. So I don't think it's going to work.

**1650**

Once again, I think that's what the government's really up to. This is not an energy efficiency strategy that would provide people with good, long-term savings, which is what Manitoba has. It's not a good long-term energy conservation strategy, which is what Manitoba has. This is, "Here, let us just give you a little bit of money before the election and hope that you feel good, but hope that you don't notice that we're taking \$500 at the same time out of your other pocket."

There's another part of this energy issue that is also going to be very hard on people from northern Ontario. The fact of the matter is the northern Ontario economy, in many cases, is based upon having to travel great distances. What it means is, whether you use diesel in your vehicle or whether you use gasoline in your vehicle, you use, just because of the distances, more of that form of energy.

Well, guess what? This government is going to apply the HST to that, too. So, if somebody is paying \$1 a litre for gasoline or \$1 a litre for diesel fuel now, according to this government's desire and its drive, come July 1, people will be paying \$1.08. That is going to take a substantial amount of money out of people's pockets in northern Ontario, and that is going to make it very, very difficult not only for individuals who have to go to work every day, it's going to make it very, very difficult for a number of industrial manufacturing concerns as well because, once again, it's really going to add to their bottom-line costs.

In fact, we asked an economist we know to look at the sale of diesel fuel and sale of gasoline fuel and look at costs. The estimate that the economist we contacted came up with is that the HST will take another \$835 million out of people's pockets at the gas pumps.

If I put this in context, the government's own figures show that the HST on the hydro bill will take \$425 million out of people's pockets, the HST on the heating bill will take another \$356 million, and the HST at the gas pumps will take another \$835 million. We're talking in the range of \$1.6 billion—\$1.6 billion that this government will take in just by applying the HST to people's energy usage. It's an astounding amount of money.

Once again, if you put this home energy tax credit, which would come out, max, at \$200 for a family with an income of \$45,000 a year or less or \$130 for an individual with an income of \$35,000 a year or less, I think people get the picture. Compared to how much more people are going to be paying, this credit is not going to do very much at all.

I spoke earlier about Manitoba. In fact, northern Ontario has a lot in common with Manitoba. Manitoba generates almost all of their electricity from falling water, hydro dams and hydro turbines, and that's one of the reasons why they have relatively low-cost electricity. The fact of the matter is that people in northern Ontario, where we have many fast-flowing rivers and many large

rivers, generate most of our electricity from falling water, hydro dams and hydro turbines. In fact, northern Ontario actually generates some of the cleanest, greenest and lowest-cost electricity on the planet. There are all kinds of hydro dams in my part of the province that generate electricity for one cent a kilowatt hour or less.

Actually, there's a surplus of electricity now. When Ontario Power Generation came before the legislative committee and we asked them to show their numbers, both in northwestern and northeastern Ontario. At various times during the year they actually open up the hydro dam and let the water run down the river because the dams generate electricity that can't be used. After this government's policy of driving industrial hydro rates through the roof has closed paper mill after paper mill, and then, following that, sawmill after sawmill, now there's not enough industrial manufacturing concerns to use the electricity. So we get to where we are today, and that is, they actually let electricity run down the river. The water that could be used to generate electricity actually runs down the river because there's no one to use the electricity.

What people across the north want to know is, "Gee, why can't that electricity, which is some of the lowest-cost on the planet to generate, the cleanest and greenest electricity, be made available at affordable rates so you can actually create jobs in northern Ontario—sustain some of the jobs that were there just a few years ago and have now been shut down?" Those are the real issues that people across the north would like to know. Those are the real questions that they would like to see answered.

One of the companies that has just announced that they're going to close is Xstrata in Timmins. It's really interesting to talk to Xstrata about their situation. If you go back over the last few years, Xstrata has actually come down to this Legislature, not once but about three times. They've come down three times to talk about how this explosion in the industrial hydro rate is costing them money. They point out that if you add up Timmins and Sudbury both, they've had over 3,000 employees. They will tell you that back in 2005, they were spending \$120 million purchasing electricity here in Ontario. That's how much electricity they were using. They were using two terawatt hours per year of electricity, so they were the largest industrial consumer of electricity. Well, they're now shutting down. They're going to move their whole metallurgical operation out of the province of Ontario and they're going to move to it Quebec. When you add it all up it's over 2,600 jobs, good jobs. Some of the best jobs will leave Timmins and move outside the province.

**1700**

They're very clear; they've been very clear since 2004. In 2004 they came, they made a presentation and they said—this is the presentation to the legislative committee on Bill 100—that this government's policy of driving industrial hydro rates through the province was causing them major headaches. They came down again and said it in 2005. They came down again in 2007. They came down again two years ago and said it very clearly.

Now, I think what people want to ask or ought to be asking is, will this government's announcement of a moderated industrial hydro rate for northern Ontario do anything about Xstrata? And the answer is no. Xstrata says it's too little; it's too late. So here's the picture. Here's what's going to happen. Xstrata is going to continue to mine that valuable ore in Ontario. They'll continue to mine that valuable ore in Ontario, but none of the processing, the refining, the smelting of that ore will happen in Ontario. That will all happen in Quebec. What it means is that some of the best jobs are leaving: the electrician jobs, the welders' jobs, the millwright jobs, the machinist jobs, the pipefitter jobs, the instrument mechanic jobs, the computer technician jobs. The best jobs will be leaving the province.

That's what's happened too with the paper and pulp mill side of things. If I start at the western edge of Ontario, in 2002 Kenora had three paper machines. The paper mill employed about 550 people in the mill and close to that number in the forestry and transportation operation: all together, 1,100 people. Gone. Dryden, the most modern efficient pulp and paper mill complex in all of Canada, had over \$5 billion of new investment in the last 15 years. In 2002, it had a sawmill, a softwood pulp mill and two paper machines. It employed over 1,100 people in the mill and probably close to that in the forestry and transportation side of things, likely over 2,000 jobs. What is there today? Sawmill: gone. Two paper machines: gone. The mill employs about 250 people in the pulp mill and maybe that many on the forest and transportation side.

Sioux Lookout: sawmill shut down. Ear Falls: sawmill shut down. Ignace: sawmill shut down. Atikokan: sawmill shut down. Thunder Bay had three paper machines at AbitibiBowater. It had one paper machine at Abitibi Mission, it had three paper machines at Cascades, it had a paper machine at the Smurfit-Stone containerboard plant, it had two paper machines at the Red Rock operation and it had four sawmills. What is there today? Three sawmills: gone. Only one is operating. The two paper machines in Red Rock: gone. The Smurfit-Stone paper machine: gone. The three Cascades paper machines: gone. The Abitibi Mission paper machine: gone. Two of the three paper machines at AbitibiBowater: gone, along with the hardwood kraft mill. And I could keep going: Marathon, Terrace Bay, Nakina, Longlac, Chapleau, Smooth Rock Falls. I could keep going.

But what's interesting, what's happening now is this: The pulp mills are running. The pulp mill in my hometown of Fort Frances is running full blast. While the paper machines and everything in Dryden are shut down, the pulp mill is running full blast. At AbitibiBowater paper in Thunder Bay the paper machines are limping along or shut down, but the softwood pulp mill is running full blast. Somebody might wonder, what are they doing? I'll tell you what they're doing. They can't operate the paper machines anymore. It costs too much money. The electricity costs too much money, and what the government has announced in the budget in terms of a special

industrial hydro rate for northern Ontario is not going to do anything to start up those paper machines. I've talked to every company; not one of them is going to restart a paper machine as a result of this. But what these companies are doing is, they're taking Ontario wood fibre—just like Xstrata's going to do in Timmins. Xstrata's going to take the valuable minerals out of the ground and ship them to Quebec to be processed, and 2,500 jobs will go in the process.

What the forest product companies are doing is, they take the wood fibre and they take it to the pulp mill in Fort Frances, the pulp mill in Dryden, the pulp mill in Thunder Bay; they do a quick and dirty semi-process to turn it into pulp, and the pulp gets shipped south to the United States. That's where the value-added paper is being made. I say to government members, if you want to check it out, Domtar—big company. Go to Domtar's website and they'll show you where they're getting the pulp and where they're making the paper.

The good jobs, the instrument mechanic jobs, the computer technology jobs, the machinist jobs, the electrician jobs, the pipefitter jobs, the welder, the millwright jobs—they're in the States now. All those value-added jobs are in the States.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Just because of energy?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Yes, energy—

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** The dollar has nothing to do with it?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The member from Sault Ste. Marie asks, "The dollar has nothing to do with it?" Companies have been dealing with a dollar that floats up and down for over 60 years. They're very experienced in using hedging and other devices to cover that, but what really hurts is an energy industrial hydro rate that keeps on going like this. What the McGuinty government announced in the budget in terms of a temporary three-year moderation of the industrial hydro rate for northern Ontario is not going to do a thing about that because it doesn't address the issue of the global adjustment formula, which is adding more and more.

But back to the point I was making. We see now Ontario's resources being harvested—the mineral resources, the forest resources—but as a result of this government's policy of driving the industrial hydro rate through the roof, less and less of those resources are being processed in Ontario. More and more, they're being shipped to Quebec, they're being shipped to the United States to be processed there, where all the value-added work is being done and where the good jobs are going. I think any reasonable person would look at this and say this is wrong. If you've got these valuable resources, especially in northern Ontario, where you can generate electricity at some of the lowest costs on the planet, why not come up with a plan where you allow companies to take advantage of the low-cost electricity that's generated and process those resources here so that good jobs are provided here? That would be a real plan.

I look at this—what has been introduced—and it's not going to do that. It won't restart the paper machines in

Thunder Bay. It won't restart the paper machines in Dryden. It's not going to reverse the decision made by Xstrata. At most, what it will do is it will quiet the waters for the 11 or 12 months in the run-up to the election campaign.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's what it's about.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** And that's really what it's about. It's not going to improve the prospects for people in northern Ontario; it's going to simply smooth the waters for government members as they head into the next election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to comment on the member from Kenora—Rainy River's remarks. I'm always amazed to hear the perspective around energy and the forestry sector from the member. I know the member comes from northern Ontario, as do I, and has some understanding of the issues, but I can tell you, with respect to the paper mill that's in my community, the dollar has far more to do with the challenges and the costs at St. Marys Paper than energy and fibre do.

For example, when the dollar was at 65 cents moving to plus 90 cents, St. Marys Paper lost \$40 million. The energy costs, in comparison, were about \$7 million; fibre supply about \$8 million. In that light, we have brought in a pulp and paper energy transition program to offset some of those costs.

**1710**

I know the member spent most of his time talking about Bill 44, which is the northern Ontario energy credit. I want to encourage all members of the Legislature to vote in favour of the energy credit, because I think it's something that is very important, certainly to residents in my community, and I think it's important to residents in the member's riding as well.

The member is here railing against the government because we have not acted to do enough, quickly enough, and we have not raised the credits enough. I find it very odd that when the member was in government and had the opportunity as a cabinet minister of the government, the hydro rates went up 40% under their government. They voted against a project that would have helped to save and conserve 5,200 megawatts, and also built no new electricity supply in the entire five years they were in government. We are moving forward to build new capacity—3,200 megs online—as well as additional credits in the energy field, and I would ask all members to support those credits.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I look forward to entering the debate sometime later, I think probably about quarter to 6 or so. My speech would have a very similar tenor to that of the member from Kenora—Rainy River. Our parties are separated, of course, by philosophy—by a great distance—but our stances on this particular bill are remarkably similar.

The cost of electricity has skyrocketed and it's continuing to skyrocket under this government. This is going to become a huge issue. If this government had put the emphasis of this bill on the industrial rates to be used in the north, I would be far more willing to think that this bill was coming from the right part of your mandate, but that's not where you're placing the emphasis. You are placing the emphasis on the individual. You're trying to influence his vote. I can tell you that the people of northern Ontario are far too sophisticated to fall for that. They are going to understand that you have whacked them with hundreds of dollars of increased rates and you're giving them back 50 bucks. They are going to understand that clearly, and in fact they are going to be insulted by it. I think you're going to be very, very disappointed in this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to thank the member for Kenora–Rainy River, because if there's one person in this House who understands the issue of energy, as far as electricity prices, it's Howard Hampton. He has spent most of his time dealing with this issue as the leader of our party and still is a strong advocate for an energy policy that would make some sense in this province. I just want to say to Howard that his comments are well made.

I think there are two parts to this. One is, what does it mean to the average citizen 18 years and older who rents or buys or owns an apartment or a house in northern Ontario? On the one hand, the government is going to give you a 25% decrease in electricity, but on the other hand, they're going to take it out of the other pocket by whacking you with the HST, by whacking you with the 10% increase and by whacking you with the global adjustment, so whatever you get as far as a savings of 25% on the one hand is going to be offset by the increases on the other hand. I think Mr. Hampton made that point quite clear.

On the industrial hydro rate, he's bang on. If this was such a good thing, my friend Mr. Oraziotti from Sault Ste. Marie would be standing in this Legislature saying how it turned the mind of Xstrata from shutting down the smelter refinery in Timmins to keeping those jobs here in Ontario. Not at all. We sat with the Premier. We were at the table with the Premier and Xstrata, and Xstrata said, "No, 25% doesn't cut it. Your electricity prices are driving us out of this province," including the 25%.

I say to the member from Sault Ste. Marie that he should pay a little bit more attention to what's going on in the economy of northern Ontario. He is railing against what was said by Mr. Hampton, but all I remember is that if we were lucky enough to have a government today that did the things that we did as a government in northern Ontario, we wouldn't have half the problems that we have now. This member should know that because of Algoma Steel and St. Mary's Paper and other things that were done in order to save Sault Ste. Marie and allow it to move forward from where it was then.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I appreciate just a moment or so to comment on the speech by the member from Kenora–Rainy River. He found, during his hour, a number of ways, a number of variations on a theme, to say that he doesn't like the legislation.

Let me say that part of our broad role is to look at where resources are needed in the province and to look at communities in the province which maybe, sometimes, need support differently than some other parts. That's the provision of this particular piece of legislation. It provides for some \$35 million for about half of northern Ontarians, with a grant of \$130 to \$200, singles or families, to help support them in their energy cost prices. That may not seem like a lot of money to some folks. On the industrial side of the picture, a three-year program of \$150 million annually—it's almost half a billion dollars over three years, half a billion dollars into the industrial sector—for the purposes of managing their electricity use with a decrease in electricity prices based on 2009 levels of almost 25%.

I don't see those as marginal amounts of money. I see it as important to individuals and families to help them manage their energy costs, particularly in areas where energy usage is higher for a variety of reasons, not the least of which would be climate, as well as access to things like natural gas. I'd say as well that supporting the industrial community to the tune of half a billion dollars over three years is substantive in trying to find mechanisms, among a large range of other things, to help support industry and make it viable for them to continue and/or expand operations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Kenora–Rainy River has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank the members for their comments and, in my brief time to respond, just make this point. After we used the freedom-of-information process to finally get out of the government how much more the HST would add to people's hydro bills and their heating bills—and when you add the two together, it's \$425 million on the hydro bill and \$356 million on the heating bill—close to \$800 million is going to be taken out of people's pockets. What the government proposes in terms of this northern Ontario energy credit I think anyone would say is very modest in comparison. It really will be a situation where the McGuinty Liberals take \$500 million out of the right-hand pocket of low- and modest-income people in northern Ontario, maybe put \$150 million back in the left-hand pocket and then try to convince people that it's a good deal. It won't be a good deal.

People are hurting already. People are having a very difficult time paying their hydro bill, and I'm sad to say that this energy credit for northern Ontario residents is not going to fix the situation. It's not going to make it better. People will have an even harder time next year.

To the member from Sault Ste Marie: I've talked to just about every company that has shut down paper mills

across northern Ontario, and they're all very consistent. The issue which drives them and has driven them out of the province is the increasing cost of electricity in this province. So they choose to make their paper now in Quebec or Manitoba or the United States, and about the most they do now in Ontario is maybe saw some two-by-fours and make some pulp, because those things use less electricity in comparison to paper. They do the paper manufacturing in United States, and that is now a fact of—

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

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to join the debate today on Bill 44 in the context of initiatives that were put forward by our government in the 2010 budget.

You know, there's some great news for northerners and for our community in this budget with respect to energy initiatives as well as infrastructure initiatives. I want to take a few minutes and outline that, and I want to talk a little bit about, obviously, the specifics around the energy credit and how it will benefit individuals both in my riding and throughout northern Ontario.

First of all, the \$1.2-billion investment that will be going into northern Ontario that will support highways, hospitals, schools and a variety of other infrastructure projects is certainly very important. We've seen a huge improvement in those areas in our community over the last seven years.

1720

As you also know, we are putting in place a \$150-million northern industrial electricity rebate that will help industry. I know that our local paper mill saw some tremendous benefit from the northern pulp and paper energy transition program. This program, under the northern component of the budget, will offer large industry similar benefits. I've talked to those industries, certainly in our community. Essar Steel Algoma is very excited about this. It helps to further reduce their energy costs and helps to make them more competitive.

As you know, there is an energy credit for individuals. I think this is something that demonstrates that our government recognizes the increasing cost of energy in the province of Ontario, and also recognizes that in northern Ontario we certainly have challenges that are perhaps a little different than other parts of the province when it comes to those energy costs. That program is proposed at \$35 million, and I'm going to speak a little bit more specifically about that in a couple of minutes.

The northern Ontario heritage fund, I think, is a tremendous example of how we are also assisting northerners. When we came to government, the program was at \$60 million. It's a fund designed to support northerners, to support the economy in northern Ontario, to create new jobs and new opportunities for people in northern Ontario. At present, we've committed that the fund will be increased from \$60 million to \$100 million over the term of our government, and we've done that. Each year of this term, we have increased that fund by \$10 million. It presently stands at \$80 million. Following the passage

of the budget, if that's the will of the House, the program will be increased to \$90 million, and that's great news for our community. Hopefully next year, in the final year of this term, it will increase to \$100 million. There have been some exciting projects in Sault Ste. Marie that have come to life as a result of this program and this fund, and I know my northern colleagues are also reaping the benefits of a very, very important program. I know the member from Timmins–James Bay is here as well, and I'm sure the NOHFC program has made businesses, individuals and young entrepreneurs very happy in his riding as well.

There's another important initiative as part of the northern component: \$45 million over three years to support aboriginal peoples, so that they can play an even greater role in our economy, for skills training and for project development. I think it's really, really important that as the fastest-growing segment of the population in northern Ontario, our aboriginal population, the First Nations communities, are engaged in our economy and are engaged in the next generation of jobs in the north.

Another important initiative—and this is probably a bit more unique to my riding, and I know there are a few others that are affected by this. We have made a commitment of \$15 million for the Huron Central short-line rail infrastructure that will help support business and industry along the corridor between the Soo and Sudbury.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Where are the feds?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I can hear my colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin, who is very excited about this. I think the largest section of the railway is probably in his riding, and he's probably got the most to be excited about. It's something that's very positive.

I know that the northern members of our government were very, very supportive of these components that make up the budget and certainly had conversations with the finance minister, Dwight Duncan. We tremendously appreciate the support from our colleagues in the House and from the finance minister, who recognized that these are some very serious issues and challenges. Of course, we have many challenges across the province in many sectors of the economy that we are working toward improving, but I'm really excited about this particular package of initiatives that is contained in the budget because it's going to make a difference in Sault Ste. Marie and in ridings right across northern Ontario.

With respect to energy, which is a topic of popular concern these days, between 2004 and 2010 we will have brought on more new electricity than any other jurisdiction in North America. I think that's something we should all be proud of in this House. It's something that Ontarians should be proud of. We are working to ensure a stable, reliable electricity grid in the province of Ontario. Since 2003, we've had 3,200 megawatts of new supply added. This represents about 9% in terms of province-wide capacity. To be frank, in contrast to what has been done in the past, there was limited, if any, capacity brought online, and that's a disadvantage because the reality was, by the same token, the supply

and the demand grew by about 8.5%. In fact, productivity of electricity went down and that's not something that makes Ontarians feel comfortable. It's not something that ensures the reliability and sustainability of our electricity grid, and that's something that we have worked very hard on this side of the House to change.

Now, with that, there are areas in which we can make these changes. We can build more coal-fired capacity in the province of Ontario, if that's what people are interested in, but I think we know that Ontarians want to see more renewable energy, more responsible decisions related to environment when it comes to the production and development of energy capacity.

I know that in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie we have seen tremendous benefits from the renewable energy strategies, from the standard offer program, which are bringing to life new projects and certainly creating new jobs. I have to say that the Brookfield energy project, the renewable energy wind farm that is in the Algoma-Manitoulin riding adjacent to the community of Sault Ste. Marie, has created enough wind energy to power 40,000 homes; a 189-megawatt project. It's the largest wind farm in the province and it's a tremendous benefit to our economy, the environment and the ongoing jobs that are generated from that.

But we know that we need to reach further and farther when it comes to energy capacity because we also want the jobs that come with manufacturing the components—the wind towers, the blades, the hubs and the motors—that go into the production of wind farms; similarly with solar production. We want the ability to manufacture right here in the province of Ontario all of the components that play a part or make up the renewable energy projects, and we're working hard to do that.

The \$135-million project at Essar Steel Algoma is a cogeneration project. This is a fabulous project. Essar uses about 140 megawatts of power. They produce waste energy or energy that is generated from the operations of making steel. In fact, the energy that is harnessed from the steel mill itself will, in fact, provide half of the power that Essar uses. So the \$135 million cogen project through the standard offer program brought to life a 70-megawatt project, which has helped substantially to reduce the energy costs at Essar Algoma and, in doing that, it has also helped to make Essar more competitive because, in effect, it lowers the price of the product that they need to sell on the market and recoup because they have greater efficiencies and it also, through the OPA contract, provides them with some cash flow because of the exchange of energy on the grid, which is great news.

The \$100-million Pod Solar Starwood Energy project that is now being built in Sault Ste. Marie—it's the first phase of 20 megawatts of a 60-megawatt project—is bringing to life a solar project in our community that I know the community is very excited about.

So between the cogeneration, the wind farm, the solar project and a number of other projects—there's the project at the city landfill, the methane collection project, that has been launched in partnership with the municipality; over \$7 million to green Sault Ste. Marie schools

and energy retrofits. If you think about things like even the gas tax funding, where over \$6 million has come to our community to purchase new buses, the latest buses that are on the market that run on 5% bio, it's a great news story because it's increasing ridership and it's also helping the environment.

So with respect to energy initiatives that have moved forward since 2003, I know our community has been excited about them. We have not seen those types of projects come to life in the past, and it's because we are a jurisdiction in this country that is really on the leading edge when it comes to the development of these projects. We know that there are many ridings across the province of Ontario that are seeing tremendous success with new green energy projects coming to life.

**1730**

With respect to the Ontario energy credit, I hope that all members of this Legislature are interested in supporting the Lowering Energy Costs for Northern Ontarians Act, 2010, which would amend the Taxation Act, 2007, and provide a northern Ontario energy credit for individuals. This is a permanent energy credit, and I think that's great news.

This is not a temporary, one-time measure. I heard the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke earlier saying, "Why are we talking about this? Why isn't this just in the budget? Why did you want to carve this out and talk about it as a separate piece of legislation?" He said that we were just paying politics with it because it's a good-news story and we want to talk about it. I heard the member from Kenora-Rainy River saying, "Why are we talking about this? This doesn't go far enough. This is not a good bill. We shouldn't be talking about it." I can't quite figure out where the opposition is coming from on this issue. I understand it's their job to be critical and, hopefully, provide constructive criticism on initiatives that we are bringing forward, but I'm excited about this because it will make a difference in the lives of many people in northern Ontario who have high energy costs or energy costs that they're challenged with. It is means-tested, so it will be a credit that is going to those who most need the support.

To be eligible for the credit, you simply have to file your tax return, pay rent or property tax that qualifies as occupancy cost for the Ontario property credit or pay an energy bill if the principal resides in a residence or on a First Nations reserve. So you need to live in one of the areas or jurisdictions. I think this has been discussed; some members had raised this earlier. The districts are: Parry Sound; Nipissing; Manitoulin; Sudbury; Timiskaming; Algoma; Cochrane; Thunder Bay; Rainy River; and Kenora. Anybody living in those districts will be eligible for what will hopefully be a permanent credit that all members in the House will support.

The maximum that can be paid out is \$130 for individuals and \$200 for families, and that obviously includes single parents to help offset their costs. The maximum payment would be reduced by 1% of adjusted family net income over \$35,000 for single individuals

and \$45,000 for families. The benefit would be eliminated when the income reaches \$48,000 for individuals and \$65,000 for families. It's easily fair to say that there will be more than several hundred thousand individuals in northern Ontario receiving this credit. This is an important credit.

The application—we should probably be clear on how people will receive this credit. For this year, individuals will have to apply to the Ontario Ministry of Revenue. The Ministry of Revenue will be sending out applications to those people, based on their income from 2008-09. They will be sending out applications directly to those individuals so we have an idea in Ontario of who is eligible for this already. Other individuals, perhaps if they've moved to northern Ontario more recently, can pick those up at local ServiceOntario offices in northern Ontario or they can go online and simply print the application. They can file that application to receive the funding.

The first instalment after the determination date will take place on November 15, 2010, and the second instalment will be after the determination date of February 15, 2011. The deadline to apply will be June 30, 2011.

That's for this year. For subsequent years, the credit would be paid on a quarterly basis by Revenue Canada. To be entitled to it, the individual would simply need to fill out the credit on their income tax form and submit that, and if they qualify, they will receive it. The deadline to apply will be three years after the tax filing date, so there is a window for those who perhaps have missed it and have not filled that out or weren't informed about it. They've got an opportunity to do that because we want to make sure that individuals who truly need the energy credit and can benefit from the energy credit will, in fact, receive it.

There are a number of other initiatives that relate to this, and I think they're important as well. They build on some of the progress that, under our government, we have initiated for northerners. Some of the topics have been raised over the last several hours of debate on the bill, but I think it's worth mentioning that in 2007-08, \$82 million for northern regional and municipal infrastructure flowed to municipalities, \$39 million through the rural infrastructure investment initiative and an additional \$36 million through the municipal roads and bridges program.

We've talked a little bit about the benefits to the NOHFC and the northern Ontario heritage program and how that's being expanded.

We're also, for northern Ontario, relieving the business education tax. Cumulatively for the region, it equates to about \$70 million over three years, which is a substantial cost to businesses in the north, and will obviously help to support them.

Forty million dollars over three years is being dedicated for initiatives to support the Mining Act modernization.

More than \$30 million will go toward the building of broadband in rural and northern areas. That will be in

partnership with the federal government's connecting rural Canadians program.

There are a couple of other initiatives that I think are important. The bioeconomy, which is very attractive to the northern Ontario economy. In Sault Ste. Marie, the invasive species initiative that we put \$15 million into, and the project in Thunder Bay for the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bioeconomy, which was a \$25-million investment, demonstrate our commitment to support northerners beyond simply the energy credit. It's a way to support northerners when it comes to important initiatives around economic development, allowing our young people to have the opportunity to remain in northern Ontario, and finding very real ways to tap into the economic opportunities that exist in northern Ontario.

This is in addition to the investments that we're making in education and health care. We've made some important education investments in northern Ontario: over \$300 million in new funding. That's a 54% increase on a per pupil basis in seven years. It has meant more teachers, more resource staff, new schools and great news for students across the province.

In addition, in the budget, \$2.6 billion will be going into health care to help further increase our supports for health care. Over the term of our government, it has meant a 57% increase when it comes to investments in that particular sector.

There is much in this budget for all Ontarians, and there is much in the budget that demonstrates, I think, a very real commitment to northerners, especially when you cumulatively take the credits that are being put in place.

The other thing that we should remember is that for every \$100 in credit that is put in place, the individual needs to spend \$1,250 on non-previously-HST-taxed items before they're at a loss. I think that's really important.

I will have an opportunity to talk a little bit about those credits: the property grant that has been doubled to \$500; the \$260 HST credit; the \$92 child credit; the energy credit on top of the existing energy credit that is being put in place—it's \$1,025; as well as the income tax reduction that took place—great news for people in the province of Ontario.

Again, there is great news for northerners in this budget. I want to thank the finance minister for delivering a budget that respects and supports those initiatives, and also thank my colleagues for being supportive of this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member talks about the effect that this bill might have on the people of the north, and you can't disagree that it will have an effect, minor as that might be.

Had this program been focused on industry—most of the power-generating plants in the north were built to support the pulp and paper industry in the north. The cost of generating power out of those plants—those plants,

interestingly enough, are not connected to the general Ontario grid—means that to have one price of electricity across the province really doesn't make that much sense, particularly when the north is so dependent on those pulp mills for employment. If this bill had been aimed at reducing those electricity costs to a point where those mills could begin to operate again and be competitive with other jurisdictions that have much cheaper electricity rates—in Quebec and Manitoba, for instance—this bill would have had a much greater effect on the economy in Ontario and on the lifestyles of the people in the north.

**1740**

In the north, the two things that drive the economy up there are mining and forestry products: pulp, paper and lumber. When those two industries suffer, so suffers the north. It's too bad that the government doesn't recognize the fact that an industrial rate for electricity in the north is something that is needed in order for that part of Ontario to take its rightful place as a leader in those basic industries. I'm sorry that the government has missed the boat on that opportunity in this bill.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just say to my friend from Sault Ste. Marie that the bottom line here is that you ask yourself, as a company that's operating in northern Ontario, be it in mining or forestry, "Am I any better off now? Or would I be better off in Quebec or Manitoba?" The answer is that they're better off in Quebec and Manitoba, and unfortunately that's the case.

It used to be that Ontario was a leader when it came to making sure that we were competitive as far as electricity prices in this province, not just for individuals but for the industrial hydro rate that we offered. We had a crown corporation called Ontario Hydro whose mission it was to provide electricity at cost to those industrial users so that they could invest in Ontario, operate their mills and plants here in the province and compete against other jurisdictions like Quebec and Manitoba. What we have now is this hybrid, partly privatized, partly deregulated system that the Tories put in place and the Liberals have accelerated into being, which basically falls between both and doesn't serve either well. What you now have is, if you're the Xstratas or the Tembecs of this world, if you're operating in Quebec or Manitoba you can operate for cheaper because of electricity prices. That's the bottom line.

The member says, "Well, you know, we've put \$150 million into this initiative," and I'm not going to say the 25% rebate is a bad thing. What I'm going to say is, don't make it out to be what it's not, because there was already an 18% rebate in place. It was called the pulp and paper energy rebate program that offered the pulp and paper industry an 18% rebate on electricity prices up until the end of this year. I think it was going to end in the fall of 2010. All this government has done is moved it from 18% to 25% for those who are using it now and made it available to other industrial users under certain criteria. But the bottom line is that electricity prices for

the industrial user are still higher in this province compared to elsewhere.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to engage in the discussion about Bill 44 so that, if anyone was listening, I can make it clear that the comments that we're hearing are not talking about the bill, as the member has been doing.

The member from Sault Ste. Marie has been talking about the permanent northern Ontario energy credit for individuals who live in the north. That's what he was talking about. He spent his entire time describing the program to ensure that everyone understands his advocacy, which is an extremely strong advocacy for his riding and for the people in the north, because he's tenacious in caucus when it comes to talking about issues for the north and how we can help the people who live in the north, and he continues to do so. In his speech today, he talked specifically about Bill 44, which is to do just that: speaking on behalf of the citizens that he represents in terms of bringing their energy costs down.

If we pay attention to what the bill says, it also includes something I think deserves repeating, and that is that First Nations people living in the northern territories will incur residential energy costs but will also be eligible for the credit if they apply properly for it.

I'm looking at what this bill is doing. I'm looking at what this bill says, and, quite frankly, the member from Sault Ste. Marie is absolutely correct in staying focused on what this particular bill is doing. I know that he knows that he can make some comments about some of the exaggerated concerns that are being expressed for the citizens who are talking about their energy costs. If we could have them talk about that part, we did hear both of them saying, "Yeah, okay, it's an okay thing. Now let us talk about these other things." They're trying to say the opposite. They're trying to make sure that people are not listening to what the member has been talking about, which is making sure that the credit is given to this member's work for the citizens of—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I just want to compliment my friend from Sault Ste. Marie on an excellent presentation talking about the energy rebate system that will be put in place for people in the northern districts. It is very important to the people that I serve to know that the northern members of the government caucus have stood up for them, have gone to the meeting with Mr. Duncan, have talked to him and have received a favourable response. We believe that that is something we would have expected from Mr. Duncan because he's always been sensitive to the views of northern caucus and the northern people.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Supportive of the north.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** He's always been supportive, as you say, Mr. Whip, of the issues that resonate across northern Ontario.

It is true that this does not fix every energy problem that ever was. It is true that the northern economy has and has had some great difficulty since the collapse of the housing market in the US and the collapse of markets, generally, in the US. We do know that, and we are moving forward on that. But we do know, and my constituents know, that when they count on people to do things for them, people like the member from Sault Ste. Marie, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane and the member from North Bay, who have stood up for them time after time and not just made a lot of noise, they've actually delivered results to people of northern Ontario.

I am particularly pleased, and the member mentioned this, that the Huron Central railroad is moving forward with the assistance of the government of Ontario for \$15 million to keep that vital freight line in order so that we can move the pulp and paper from Espanola, and we can move the steel from Essar Steel.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Sault Ste. Marie has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I appreciate the members from Halton, Timmins–James Bay, Brant and Algoma–Manitoulin commenting on this.

We can have a debate about the energy records of each government. I have no problem having that discussion. The reality is that energy rates went up 40% under the NDP government. They built no new capacity and paid \$150 million to cancel a project from Manitoba. The member talks about energy in Manitoba; they paid \$150 million to cancel a project from there. The Conservative government built no new energy capacity. Demand went up by 8.5%, and generation fell by 6%. So I have no problem having the discussion around energy as a whole and energy policy because I'm pleased to put our record around energy production development up against any of the other parties that are here.

But today we're talking about a northern Ontario energy credit for people, for individuals, that my colleagues are supportive of, that the northern caucus supported, that the finance minister brought in in the budget. We are very appreciative of that, and I hope that all members of this House, regardless of their party stripe, will say that this is a good initiative, that this is something that can be supported.

I think the member from Algoma–Manitoulin is correct. Does it address every energy issue or challenge that we have in the province? Of course not, but this is a great step forward. This is important for people in northern Ontario.

I want to know if the NDP is going to support the northern Ontario energy credit. I want to know if the Conservative caucus is going to support the northern Ontario energy credit because I know that people in my community are counting on the northern Ontario energy credit to make a difference in their life. This is \$200 for families; it's \$130 for individuals. It's in addition to

countless other positive initiatives in the budget, and I want to encourage all members to support this.

**1750**

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It is my great pleasure to participate in this debate and to talk a little bit about what this is and is not for the people of northern Ontario, and I want to thank my friend from the Conservative caucus for giving me an opportunity to do so.

This bill does two things. It provides a 25% rebate for industrial users in northern Ontario and also for individual consumers.

I want to start with industrial users. The government is making this up: "Hallelujah, praise the Lord. It's going to fix every problem we have with energy in the province of Ontario." But finally, I heard at the end of this debate from two northern members, saying, "Oh my God, this doesn't fix the entire problem." So I want to say to the Liberal caucus: Finally, you understand that we have a problem in northern Ontario. As they say, once you admit that you have a problem, then you're close to at least trying to figure out a solution to the problems we have in northern Ontario.

Let's be clear about what's going on. There is a huge problem in the north when it comes to electricity prices, and that's why our industrial users are amongst the highest-paying electrical customers in the province. It takes an extreme amount of power to run a pulp and paper mill. It takes even more power to run a refinery or smelter. It happens to be that the industries that we're involved with in northern Ontario, which are the transformation of natural resources from the mineral state or the forestry sector, are huge customers of Ontario Hydro. For them, when the price of electricity goes up by 5% or 10% or whatever it might be in a period of time, it's a huge bill.

I'll give you an example. As my good friend Mr. Chudleigh would know, if you run a paper mill in Ontario, about 25% to 30% of your cost is what? Electricity. So if you get a 10% increase all of a sudden, as we're about to get—there's going to be a 10% increase, as voted on by the electrical power authority, plus there's going to be the HST. They're going to get an 18% increase on their electricity bills come July 1. So if you're Tembec in Kapuskasing, if you're in Thunder Bay, if you're in Espanola running a pulp and paper mill, you're going to get an 18% increase on your hydro bill come this July 1. Well, happy Canada Day to all of us, because for them it means a huge increase. If, let's say, 25% of your operating cost is electricity and you're going to get an 18% increase on your electricity rate this July 1, it is a big deal when it comes to the bottom line.

The government finally agrees that there's a problem. They're coming forward with this particular initiative of a 25% rebate on industrial rates for about half of the general population of northern Ontario. Is that a bad thing? Hear it from me, as a New Democrat: absolutely not. I think it's a step in the right direction. But does it resolve the problem that we're going to have and will

continue to have in northern Ontario? Absolutely not, because what you're going to end up with come July 1 is—let's back up.

Before I even go there, prior to this 25% announcement that was given in the budget, for those electricity users who were in the pulp and paper industry, they already had an 18% rebate. It was called the pulp and paper energy rebate program. They already had an 18% rebate that had been put in place by who? Give credit. It was put in place by the Liberal government about three years ago, because they recognized that the electricity rate for pulp and paper users was really difficult and they had to do something. So they put in place an 18% rebate about three years ago.

This particular rebate was coming to an end this fall. Emco and others who are involved in the electricity battles with the provincial government, said, "Listen, we need to have at least the 18%. If we don't have the 18%, it means we're going to shut down our mills." So the government said, "Okay, what can we do?" So they came forward in the budget with this 25% rebate. I'm not saying it's a bad thing—but let's not make it out for what it is. We moved from an 18% rebate, if you're in pulp and paper, to 25%. So, yes, it's a savings for the pulp and paper industry of at least 7% more than they would have had under the old program. For certain users who are in certain criteria, they will get the full 25%. But my point is this: You're going to lose 18% come July 1 because of what's happening on the HST and what's happening with the electricity prices that are going to go up in this province—or actually, they're being applied to go up by another 10%. So we're going to get an 18% increase come July 1—that's only on the one hand. Plus, how much are you going to lose on the global adjustment? The global adjustment rate that's on everybody's bill in the province of Ontario, but is really problematic for the large industrial electricity users, is way over 18%, so we've got a huge problem.

I look at Tembec in Kapuskasing. When you looked at their hydro bill about a year ago, the global adjustment meant basically revenue-neutral. The global adjustment didn't add a heck of a lot of cost to the hydro bill for Tembec in Kapuskasing and any other pulp and paper mill in northern or southern Ontario.

But this global adjustment has pushed, as of February of this year, a \$1.8-million per month additional hydro rate that you didn't have to pay last year. And you know what? It's not going to get better. It's going to get worse, because the government has decided, rather than to socialize the costs of green energy, which I think is a good thing—I think green energy is a great idea. They put the entire green energy and all other investments for nuclear, all investments for Niagara and others, on to the rate of hydro, and as a result of that, we're going to be raising the price of electricity on the global adjustment.

You're going to save, yes, with a 25% decrease, supposedly, if you're one of the new players who can apply for this program, but you're going to pay way more than 25%, I would argue, by December 2011. You know you're

going to be paying 18% more come July, and you're going to be paying far more than that come December.

So what has the government done? It's a little bit like the little Dutch boy who stood at the bottom of the dam and said, "Oh, my God, the dam is leaking," and stuck his finger in the dam. Meanwhile, the water is running out somewhere else. You may be able to slow it down for a bit, but eventually it's going to catch up with you and you're going to get drowned in the price of electricity, as in the story of the little Dutch boy with the dam.

I just say to the government across the way: Don't make this out to be the saviour of the industrial infrastructure in northern Ontario, because it is not. The proof is in the pudding. If Xstrata was so enamoured with your 25% decrease in electricity—and I'll admit it here: For Xstrata, it was a real 25% as of the implementation of this particular bill. They would lose 18% come July 1, and they would have a 7% saving overall by July 1. It wasn't enough to stop them from making their decision to shut down the copper-zinc refinery and smelter in the city of Timmins and move it off to Quebec. Obviously, it didn't respond to the problem.

I say to the government, in all honesty, it's a step in the right direction; I'm not going to say it's not. At least you're trying to move forward. But it's a real small step in solving the problem of the industrial users in northern Ontario.

For the average citizen of the north who is going to get a benefit from this 25% reduction, two things: One, yes, you're going to get a 25% rebate if you apply for it, but you're going to get an 18% increase come July 1. So you're up 7%, but it is only for certain individuals who are under a certain income level in northern Ontario. For most families in the north, it's going to be an issue where they're not going to get any rebate. The government will argue, "Well, we have to income-test this to some degree." I would argue that your income testing may not be adequate when it comes to the realities of what people have to face.

In the few seconds I've got left, I just want to say this: For First Nations, it's a disaster. Howard Hampton, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, made the point, I thought, extremely well, and people should be attuned to this. The majority of the housing on a reserve is electrically heated. It's not like that because they decided they'd like to have electricity as a heating system. It's because there are no natural gas lines that go to reserves. There's no such thing as natural gas up there, and when it comes to putting oil in the furnace, it's a very expensive option because often you have to fly the fuel in by cargo plane, so that throws the price of oil up.

The government decided years ago, when they built these houses, and even today as we build new houses, that they be electrically heated. As a result, the average hydro bill on-reserve in the winter is about \$1,000 a month. If you give me an 18% increase, that's almost \$200 more a month that I'm going to have to pay in electricity rates. Yes, I can get the rebate should I apply for it, but I would venture to guess that there's a whole bunch of people who will not apply because they will not be conscious of the program in the first place.

I see that we're almost at 6 of the clock, and I look forward to continuing this debate at a future time.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. I would like to call members' attention to a guest we have today in the members' area. Jonathan Allan, a

recent graduate of the international studies program at Glendon College of York University, has been here to witness this afternoon's debate.

It is now 6 of the clock, and this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**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**

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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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