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Wednesday 12 May 2010

Mercredi 12 mai 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE
DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2010, on the motion for second reading of 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): Further debate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to speak to second reading of the government's proposed bill, the Excellent Care for All Act. I strongly believe that this piece of legislation is essential in moving the health system forward to deliver the kind of quality care that Ontarians need and deserve.

We talk a lot about "quality care," but what do those words really mean? They mean being able to count on getting the highest standard of care no matter where in the province you live or get care. They mean being assured that the care you receive is based on the best and most up-to-date evidence that is shown to improve outcomes for patients. And for taxpayers—and we're all taxpayers—they mean having confidence that every dollar spent on health care actually improves outcomes for patients.

We have to examine everything that is being done in health care through this lens of quality. That's my job as health minister. For example, why are the majority of bone mineral density tests, used to detect and diagnose osteoporosis, being performed on low-risk women between the ages of 45 and 64, while at the same time only a minority of Ontarians with osteoporosis who are at high risk have their bone mineral density tested? Does this represent quality? Does this represent value?

Another example: There are patients receiving pre-operative testing before some elective surgeries, tests where there is no evidence that shows a clinical benefit. But at the same time, many Ontarians with diabetes and

other chronic diseases are still not receiving all the care that is recommended by clinical guidelines. When chronic diseases are not managed, people often get sicker and may end up in a hospital emergency room.

Failing to provide the best quality and a consistent level of care across the board ends up being more costly to the patient and to the health care system. We have an obligation to the people of Ontario to ensure that we are building a quality and sustainable health care system that will continue to deliver that care for decades to come. I believe the Excellent Care for All Act, if passed, will do just that.

The proposed legislation, along with complementary initiatives, will help develop a culture of quality where everyone working in the health care system, from the CEO to the front lines, is focused on quality improvement: getting better at what they do, getting better at how they deliver care, getting better at improving patient outcomes and getting better at creating quality and value within the health system.

I want to make it clear that hospitals are just a starting point, although they're a very important starting point. Our government's vision is much broader. Ultimately, quality improvement has to be applied to all aspects of the health care system. Ontarians should be able to expect high quality and value whether they're receiving care in a hospital, in the community or within their own home. Quality must cut across the entire continuum of care. But as I said, hospitals are the important starting point.

Today, I'm asking my honourable colleagues to support this bill. This bill is based on the following four principles: that care must be organized around the patient to support his or her health; that continuous quality improvement is a critical goal; that payment, policy and planning must support both quality and the efficient use of resources; and finally, that quality care must be supported by the very best evidence and standards of care.

Health care organizations, beginning with hospitals, would all have interprofessional quality committees that would report directly to the board of directors on quality-related issues. These quality committees would create a focal point in hospitals around improvements that support better patient care.

Every organization would have quality improvement plans publicly posted. This will support hospitals in consciously pointing out ways that they're going to get better at what they do. It would also inform patients, families and the community about what hospitals are doing to improve the quality of care.

Executive compensation would be linked to the achievement of outcomes identified in those plans. This will bring about a top-down focus on quality that would permeate the organization and also drive better patient care. It's not just about developing a quality improvement plan; it's about holding hospital leadership accountable for delivering on the plan.

There would be a patient relations process to address complaints and concerns, and regular patient, client and caregiver surveys with publicly posted results. The results of these surveys would be used to inform the annual quality improvement plans. It would give patients and their families, as well as hospital employees, greater input into shaping quality improvements in hospitals. Patients will be very much a part of this quality improvement dialogue, because for our government it all begins and ends with the patient, and there are many, many committed health professionals in Ontario who feel the same way.

I want to share with you an example of health care organizations focusing on specific quality improvement initiatives to make things better for their patients. The Humber River Regional Hospital and North York General Hospital partnered with a number of long-term-care homes to create a nurse-led outreach team that provides support, education and primary care services to those participating long-term-care homes. This has prevented many unnecessary transfers to an emergency room. Fifty per cent of the people assessed by the team would typically have been sent to the hospital in the past.

0910

I could go on; the examples abound. But what has been lacking is across-the-board consistency, a health care culture where quality and value are absolutely integral parts of everyone's job. As a way to expand consistent quality throughout the system, the proposed bill also expands the mandate of the Ontario Health Quality Council. It would enable the council to provide recommendations on clinical practice guidelines for services delivered by health care providers. The council would also make recommendations on possible changes to the way health care is covered and paid for. This would help ensure that future investments in health care get results and improve patient health.

We must act, Speaker. The health care numbers tell a vivid story. I know you've heard them in the House before, but I think they bear repeating. They underscore the challenge that is at hand and the imperative of acting now. Just 20 years ago, 32 cents—about a third—of every government program dollar was spent on health care. Today it's 46 cents, or closing in on half. If we continue to do what we are doing and don't make the changes that are necessary, we could be at 70% of our overall government budget in just 12 years.

The health care system is very important to Ontarians and, I know, to every member of this House. It touches all of us and everyone who is most dear to us. But we cannot continue to increase funding at a rate that will crowd out other government priorities. We still need to pay for education for our kids. We still need to build a

strong social safety net. We need to protect our environment, and we need to build our infrastructure. We need to face this health care challenge head-on.

When some people hear the word "affordability," they think "restraint" and "cutbacks." But quality doesn't mean "more expensive." In fact, it is waste and inefficiency and poor quality that are expensive. Quality and sustainability go hand in hand. This legislation is about focusing on patients, focusing on quality, focusing on best practices, focusing on delivering value for every dollar we spend on health care.

I believe that the Excellent Care for All Act is a necessary first step in achieving all these imperatives. I urge my colleagues from all parties to support this legislation. The future quality and sustainability of health care in Ontario depend upon it.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Obviously health care is a very important issue for all members of this Legislature. But I'd like to point out that although we are in support of openness, transparency and accountability in the health care system, and have been from day one, we find it quite odd that a few instances have occurred where the government is actually not in line with our thinking on openness, transparency and accountability.

I think back to just last Thursday, when the government had the opportunity to vote for the truth-in-government bill that I put forward. The Truth in Government Act would have allowed freedom of information requests to go to hospitals, which the Ontario Hospital Association itself had supported.

I think back to the \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle. We have been calling, in fact as late as yesterday in committee, for a public inquiry into that lost-health-care dollar disaster presided over by this government.

Finally, we think of the health tax, where Ontarians are now paying as much as \$900 per year that goes into general revenue, the sewer fund, rather than directly into our hospitals. There needs to be some accountability there.

But that's not it. Right now we have a major issue in Ontario with drug pricing, drug wars and the combative attitude from the government with our local neighbourhood pharmacists. I must say that I'm very impressed with Kim Craiton, the Liberal MPP who has taken the side of the Progressive Conservative Party and called on the McGuinty Liberals to go back to the table with the pharmacists, as we have been saying. Don't demonize them. And he's done this today when they protested his office. This was in the Welland Tribune. Again, he has come out in support of the PC position, that they need to go back to the drawing board because they have been unaccountable to not only our local pharmacists but to our seniors, to our young families, to the people who require our pharmacists.

They have a lot to answer for. Why did they vote down truth in government? Why aren't they disclosing the health tax? Why aren't they doing any health—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm here with my colleague from the riding of Toronto–Danforth, and both of us listened carefully to the minister. We find it remarkable that the Minister of Health, in brief but eloquent comments, would not have addressed this morning the closure of the emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. We know what the member for Niagara Falls has to say about those, a member of the minister's backbench. We know that the member for Niagara Falls, Mr. Craitor, bemoans and indeed objects vigorously and rejects the cruel and deadly closure of emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

We find it remarkable that the minister, in her brief but eloquent address this morning, could have omitted the dissension in her own ranks around their ill-conceived and vicious attack on small-town pharmacists. Oh, the big-box pharmacies will do quite well, thank you, at the end of the day. Mr. Peterson's stock values will be restored. He knows that and so does the minister. Nobody has to shed any tears for the board of directors of Shoppers Drug Mart or Pharma Plus. But I'm worried about the Donnie Edwardses of Port Colborne, small-town pharmacists who are under pressure from the big-box stores and for whom this most recent attack by this government could be, and probably will be, the final blow.

You see, once again the member from Niagara Falls knows that his government is wrong. He said so in the press. I came to the Legislature this morning with copies of the Welland Tribune article. It was also published in the Niagara Falls Review. "Kim Craitor Gives His Support" to pharmacy students and condemns his government's attack on small-town pharmacies—strange, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am very happy to provide a couple of comments on the bill and on the input by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The minister has quite clearly stated that this bill is trying to give the taxpayer value for their investments in our health care system, and we're moving towards what we call best practices. In the bill itself, it will provide that future services will depend on clinical practice guidelines that are much improved.

Many of us will remember, prior to this government getting elected, that the previous government went on a cost-cutting measure to improve health care and reduce costs. It didn't work. Our government, since it has been elected, has invested significantly in the health care system. What we're doing now is, after we have provided all the resources and the investments in the system, we're looking for value, and this is what this bill is all about. Now that we've got the system to where it is, we can ask those that are involved in the system to ensure that all future investments are dependent on improved health care for the taxpayers of Ontario.

If you look at the bill carefully, you will see that on the patient relations side there are improvements, there are key indicators that the public will be aware of, there is a patient-value system that has to be made public and the performance of the hospital has to be made public. All of us will remember the wait-time strategies of this government. When it was made public and posted on websites, hospitals improved, and this bill will do exactly the same in terms of the improvements in clinical practices and patient care.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I commend the Minister of Health for doing the best she can with what she's got, and I suspect during Ontario—this is Nursing Week in Ontario. I know I'll be at two hospitals this week; I'll be at the mental health facility Ontario Shores as well as at Uxbridge hospital, which is, like many hospitals, being challenged in terms of not enough money. Of course, the government blames the LHINs and the LHINs say, "Well, we have a mandate to rationalize," which means cut, basically.

Here's the deal, though. I look across the room here and I see Lou Rinaldi from Northumberland Hills. You should speak up for your hospital. They're laying nurses off there. And Jeff Leal here, from Peterborough Regional Health Centre. There are two Liberal members sitting here, their hospitals—they're closing half of the Peterborough hospital, closing it. He should be standing in his place outraged. And the member Lou Rinaldi from Northumberland Hills, I can't believe it. You should work with your constituents, Lou. All politics is local. Get on the game.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You closed hospitals.

Mr. John O'Toole: Look, we opened that hospital when we were government, and Port Hope and Port Colborne. I am so shocked, disappointed and saddened by this process.

I often think of the presentation made to the finance committee by a young pharmacist who my wife taught in grade 1, and now he owns a pharmacy in Minden, Peter Meraw. He made an impassioned, non-partisan—politics has nothing to do with it. He's providing care to elderly, frail seniors. He's giving them advice that arguably could be life-saving. What are they doing? They're strangling them. They're putting them out of business. They're actually silencing them by cutting out any of the possibilities of small hospitals in rural Ontario. Under this government it's dark days.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The minister has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to respond. I have to say that it was odd for me to hear three members of the two parties opposite speak but not speak to this bill. I can only assume, because they have nothing to say about this bill, that they are in fact supportive of the initiatives that we are prepared to take to improve the quality of our health care system and improve the value for money that people get in the health care system.

I'm very proud of what our health care system has accomplished, the people who work every day in our health care system, but we need to do even better. This legislation will put in place the structure that will focus the attention of people across this province on getting better-quality care. What that means is that people will be able to access the same excellent quality no matter where they go in this province. It means that Ontario's health care system will continue to get better, year over year. We've made some remarkable improvements in our health care system. We've addressed safety issues. We have been able to significantly lower rates of infection and increase rates of compliance on hand hygiene. Our hospitals and our health care organizations are safer and better now, today, than they probably have ever been, but we know we can do better.

What this legislation does, and I can only assume it's being supported by all parties in this Legislature, is continue to focus our health care system on getting better and on getting stronger. That's what we need to do in order to have a health care system that will be there not just for us, but for generations to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Do any members wish to speak? If not, Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 46. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be taken after question period this morning.

Second reading vote deferred.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: No further business.

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

The House recessed from 0924 to 1030.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We'll stop the clock. Would you like to take that call right now? We'll gladly let you take the call. That must be a very important call, and we'll allow it to be used.

WEARING OF CARNATIONS

Mr. John O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent today for people to wear the boutonniere carnation in recognition of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, who are with us today.

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

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take a moment to advise all members that certain of their colleagues are today participating in the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario's Chair-Leaders event. To

increase awareness of the importance of accessibility, these members are challenged to spend their workday in wheelchairs.

I want to note, for the information of the House, that while we do have the capability to install ramps in the chamber which facilitate access to the front tier of member seating, they are intended for longer-term requirements of a disabled member, which we have done in the past. For today, the ramps have not been installed, and the participating members will take their seats as usual.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: In recognition of the MS Society I would like to introduce, in the visitors' gallery, Kim Steele and Natasha Mistry from the MS Society, seated in our gallery here this morning. Welcome.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to introduce to the House today guests from the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario, who are here for their Chair-Leaders initiative, as the Speaker mentioned. Chair-Leaders is an awareness-raising event that highlights the need for an accessible Ontario for all. With us today, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, are executive director Bill Adair, Pamela Quirk, Linda Staples, Gillian Lynne-Davies, Radka Poliakova and Andrea Ronan.

I also remind the members that there is a lunch reception today after question period in room 228.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to extend a special welcome to the Legislature today to Mr. Richard Rowe, Mrs. Linda Rowe and their children Raymond and Lindsay, who are here to observe question period, to have lunch with an MPP and to observe how effective this place really can be.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: It is my pleasure to introduce today some 60 students who are part of the minister's student advisory council. This is a new crop of students on the council who are here today for a session. They're observing the Legislative Assembly this morning as part of their agenda today. It's good to have them here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I apologize for a slightly longer introduction, and they're long medical terms.

I'd like to welcome my constituents Maureen MacQuarrie, Eleanor Johnston and Alison Rae who are here today with the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario and the Environmental Health Association of Ontario for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities.

I'd also like to welcome representatives from nine different groups who provide support for those living with these conditions. The groups here today are: the Waterloo-Wellington ME Association; the Scarborough ME, FM and MCS support group; the Toronto, north Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton fibromyalgia support groups; the ME/FM Association of Peterborough and District;

and the Vaughan and the York region Fibromyalgia/CFS Wellness Support Group. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to acknowledge three of my constituents: Judy Derrett, who is from my riding of Durham. She's here with the chronic fatigue syndrome group, as well as Chrissy from Whitby and Lynn from Pickering.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Over the past 40 years, Special Olympics has grown from a modest program serving local athletes to become the world's largest movement dedicated to promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities through sports. Special Olympics Ontario operates over 1,600 club programs in 17 official sports for children and adults. Today we welcome athletes and volunteers from Special Olympics Ontario to the Legislature. Welcome.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I would like to extend a warm welcome to two of my constituents: Karen and Fabio Rossetti, who are seated in the members' gallery. It's a very special day for them today as they watch their son, page Joshua Rossetti, fulfill his duties as page captain in the Legislature today. Welcome to you, and good luck to Joshua in his duties today.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Here today from my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, as part of the minister's student advisory council, is Madison Alexandra Dyck from the Ecole Gron Morgan Public School.

Mr. John O'Toole: Again, I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today the members of the Community Living Durham North group led by their treasurer, Jamie Ross; their president, Larry Leonard; and executive director, Glenn Taylor. Welcome to Queen's Park on Community Living Day that isn't being celebrated this year.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd like to welcome, in the members' east gallery, Councillor Drew Dilkens from ward 1 in the city of Windsor.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome the family of legislative page Nicole Pal from Ledbury school in my riding. She is also a page captain today. Her family is here: her mom, Liz Pal; her sister Danielle Pal, who's also the president of the student council at Ledbury school; and dad, Robert Pal. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'd like to welcome a member of the fibromyalgia association of Brampton visiting the Legislature today. Her name is Joanne Saraiva.

I'd also like to welcome high school students from Central Peel Secondary School who are on a tour today.

Mr. David Zimmer: I'd like to welcome Bill Greenhalgh, who is the chief executive officer, and other representatives from the Human Resources Professionals Association to Queen's Park today. It's the largest human resources professional organization in Canada, with 20,000 members. They're celebrating the 75th anniversary, and they're hosting a lovely reception today in room 228 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. All members are invited. I encourage you to attend. It's going to be a fabulous reception.

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to introduce in the House today two municipal councillors from my riding from the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Mayor Frank Kinsella and Councillor Tom Lawler.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce this morning two Special Olympic athletes whom I met this morning: Alison Lang and Chris Innes.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I rise in the House to introduce to you James Noronah from the Special Olympics, and guests from my church, St. George's Church On-The-Hill. Thank you.

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Mr. Dave Levac: I would like to introduce to the House anyone who hasn't been introduced.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure for me to introduce Lori Levere, who is a public health nurse with Peel Public Health; Edith Kernerman, from the Newman Breastfeeding Clinic and also an international board-certified lactation consultant; Olga Jovkovic, who is manager of Healthy Families at Toronto Public Health; and Janet and Stan Zablocki. We also have Courtney Fairbrother-Davies and her seven-month-old cute little baby Molly; Camila Valente and her 12-month-old, Pedro, and grandma Christina Leal; and Gertrudes Chavez.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and page Emma Allen to welcome her mother, Lana Duncan, her sister Georgia Allen and her friend Alia Riza to the public galleries today.

I'd also like to introduce some guests here today from the Special Olympics, two special athletes that I had the opportunity to meet with this morning: Vincenzia Stalk and Ryan Colpitts. They were accompanied by Peter Seto and Norm King.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. In a May 2009 report, KPMG Canada warned that the HST will add 8% to rents and leases, power bills, heat, temporary staff and medical supplies of doctors and other front-line health professionals. But doctors are insured with OHIP, so it will be Ontario patients who end up bearing the burden of your new tax on health care. So my question is, how will you do it? Through higher OHIP premiums, a hike in the so-called health care tax or more cuts to front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that KPMG in fact supports the package of tax reforms that we put forward, including the HST. My honourable colleague knows that

a report from the Conference Board of Canada was just released which specifically referenced our tax reforms and said that they were instrumental in ensuring that Ontario will be the fastest-growing economy in the country this coming year. There was also another report, put out on May 3 by TD Economics—it's called Innovate or Perish—that says, "The good news is that an extremely favourable environment for business investment and innovation is upon us once again.... This has been facilitated by lower corporate income tax rates, the elimination of capital taxes, and the harmonization of sales taxes in some provinces." Again, support from thoughtful groups is overwhelming when it comes to the tax reforms that we're putting forward to create more jobs for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The bad news is that this has clearly not been thought through with respect to health care professionals, because they're ineligible to claim input tax credits for their business purchases. And because the services they provide are exempt from HST, health professionals and care facilities cannot claim the 8% they pay for hydro, office expenses and medical supplies on their tax returns. That means either they or the taxpayers have to eat the cost of the HST. How many millions of dollars will doctors and hospitals pay for HST on overhead rather than the money going to front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm a little bit confused, but it appears to be this is an argument in favour of the HST. Apparently there is a group, according to my honourable colleague, that is not going to benefit from the HST. She's arguing they ought to be allowed to benefit from the HST. Perhaps it's not unusual because as members of the Conservative Party have said, they're confused by the position adopted by their leader, who says that he's adamantly opposed to the HST, but on the other hand, should he earn the privilege of serving Ontarians in government, he's firmly committed to keeping the HST in place. So again, on behalf of Ontarians, I say to my honourable colleague, and through her to her party, where do they stand on the HST? Are they for it? Are they against it? If they're against it, will they rescind it?

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: There's absolutely no confusion on this side of the House. It's clear that it hasn't been thought out over there with respect to health care professionals. In fact, I've spoken to physicians who've told me that they're going to have to close their doors as of July 1 because of your HST rules as far as health care is concerned.

But British Columbia has figured it out if Ontario hasn't. They discovered that hospitals would have to pay millions in HST just to hire temporary staff for computer support and consulting services before they enacted a fix. In Ontario, doctors and hospitals will pay HST not only for temporary staff, but for accounting, legal and cleaning services, power and medical supplies.

Will the next dollar you add to the health care budget be to cover the impact of the HST? Or are you expecting doctors and hospitals to stop buying bandages?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would encourage—I actually have had an opportunity to read the report that the member is referencing from KPMG in regard to how that impacts people who belong to the Ontario Medical Association, our doctors.

Our doctors understand that to have high-quality public services we need to have people working and paying taxes, which is what this reform is about. What KPMG says is that the net impact to doctors, who as we know are exempt, is going to be very, very small. What they're saying to the doctors is as business people they have to make sure that they negotiate the very best price in the new regime that we have where we just have one sales tax in this province instead of two sales taxes. That's why I was so delighted to read the conclusions of the KPMG report.

I know that when it comes to our hospitals we have one of the most generous rebates in the country in regard—

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

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is again to the Premier. The financial impact of the HST on health care in the hiring of temporary staff is only the tip of the iceberg. KPMG Canada says that "the greatest financial impact of the HST on physician practices will relate to practice expense components such as lease/rent costs and professional services...." Not every doctor has a margin big enough to afford the 8% increase.

Premier, how will you protect patients from the HST taking money away from front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I say to the member, one would have to read the entire report.

What does KPMG say to our medical community? There is going to be a change, a change that will ensure that there is a sufficient tax base to pay for our doctors, nurses and hospitals. But what it concludes is that the impact on our physicians is not 8%, as you say; that, all told, when you add in the reductions in income taxes for doctors, when you add in the reductions in corporate taxes for their corporations that provide those services, when you add in the fact that doctors will negotiate the very best price for their practice, the impact on this overall is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1.6%. If you're saying to me, "Can doctors actually manage that under the new system, knowing they have a government that is committed to having sufficient money to pay for our universal health care?" they will tell you that is the right thing to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, the warning signs have been clear for some time and KPMG Canada is not the only one who warned you that the HST will make Ontario patients pay more to get less from health care.

In a December 19, 2009, report, Deloitte looked at medical supplies and said that the HST “represents a significant increase to the price ... and it is recommended that the tax status of these items be reviewed in detail...”

You had six months to act on KPMG’s warning before Deloitte asked you to reconsider what you chose to exempt. Why did you do nothing to protect against Ontario patients paying more, again, to get less health care?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I find it passing strange that the member is talking about a report that is somewhat dated, but we have not heard from the Ontario Medical Association, which represents the doctors, who have not come to me to say that this is a problem.

What the doctors have told me is what we need to do is have sufficient economic growth, enough people in the province paying taxes because they have a job, enough corporations that are making a profit because they are finding economic success that they can contribute by the way of taxes so that we can have the very best health care system in the world. That is our common goal with our doctors and our nurses and those in health care. They understand that we can’t have high unemployment and have high-quality public services.

So I want to thank the OMA and the doctors for understanding that this change is necessary so that we can afford the very best universal health care of any jurisdiction in the world. Thank you to the doctors.

1050

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: In fact, the news keeps getting worse and worse for Ontario families who keep paying more and getting less, especially in health care. The Premier is taking resources that municipalities, universities, schools, daycares, camps and charities all use for operating, and making them pay the HST. Similar to doctors and hospitals, others in the so-called MUSH sector are ineligible for full input tax credits and cannot claim their HST costs on their tax returns.

The question is, what programs will the Premier cut or make families pay more for through user fees, new taxes or deficit spending? Which one is it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I find it interesting that the member is talking about maintaining the status quo, where that PST cost is imbedded in our health care; it’s embedded in the cost of our universities, in our schools and in our charities.

Now, for the first time, we have as a province the most generous rebates of any province in this country. I want to thank the federal Minister of Finance, a chap by the name of Jim Flaherty, who decided that it was important that we work together. It’s a leading Conservative like Jim Flaherty who—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. That’s not helpful, the member from Halton.

Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Again, we have leading Conservatives in this country at the federal level understanding that to have a strong Canada, we need to have a strong Ontario. I would say that we may have some division in this House, and I suppose there are other houses in Ontario where there’s a division on this issue.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Premier refuses to say how much Ontario families will pay when his unfair HST kicks in on July 1. If the Premier is like other Ontarians, he maybe has sat down with his wife and discussed the impact of the HST on his own family’s budget.

My question is this: Does the Premier know how much the HST is going to cost his family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think the best thing we can do in the circumstances is make reference to the multitude of independent, arm’s-length, third party, dispassionate, objective studies that have reviewed the impact of our progressive package of tax reforms on the economy, on businesses and on our families. Overwhelmingly, they come to a couple of really important conclusions.

Number one, we’re going to create 600,000 more jobs over the course of the next 10 years, which I think is really important not just to our families today but to our families tomorrow.

Secondly, they say that there will be a net gain to low-income families, it’s about a wash for middle-income families, and it costs a little bit more for upper-income families.

It’s an important step. It’s a necessary step. It will help strengthen our economy. It will help create more jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here’s the bottom line for the Premier and his family: They are going to pay more to keep their home warm in the winter. They’re going to pay more to put gas in the car, to visit the hair salon, and to take Mickey the dog to the vet.

Does the Premier really know how much he spends on any of these items and how much an 8% tax hike will cost his family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Mickey will be delighted to know that she has been referenced in this House. I want you to know I canvassed her a great deal on this particular initiative. She’s very supportive.

To try to be serious, my colleague, of course, is doing what she needs to do, but I think it’s really important that we look, again, to the objective reports that have been filed and prepared. As well, keep in mind what we have done as we’ve introduced the HST. It has not been introduced on its own; it has been accompanied by not only business tax reductions but by transition payments, new tax credits, property tax credits, those kinds of

things, which have been recognized by the Conference Board of Canada as having an overall positive impact on consumer spending in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Given the Premier's income, he can probably afford the HST, but the vast majority of Ontario families don't make more than \$200,000 a year. In seven weeks, these same families are going to pay 8% more on everything from utilities to gasoline and a whole lot more. It will be an extra \$800 a year for the average Ontario family, an added burden for families that already scramble to pay the bills every month. Every day, I hear from them through emails and through letters.

Does the Premier really understand their plight? Does he have any idea how much this unfair tax is going to hurt them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've been particularly diligent when it comes to ensuring that low-income Ontarians are not affected adversely. In fact, all the reports we've had show us that those folks are going to come out ahead.

I'd ask my honourable colleague to ask herself, why is it that poverty groups and food banks are in support of our tax reforms? I think that's important for them to take into account.

The sales tax credit, for example, is something that we have introduced. It's now a permanent feature. It is \$120 for every member of the family. It is permanent. This is what the representative from the Daily Bread Food Bank said about it: "The sales tax credit is a sensible, forward-looking way" to deal with the single sales tax, "and could become an important long-term piece of the economic security puzzle for poor people" in Ontario.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier as well. This morning, we're joined in the members' gallery by Erin Dykstra. Ms. Dykstra is a recent nursing graduate with specialty training in labour and delivery, and she has been working at the Toronto East General Hospital for the past two years. In March, she received a layoff notice from the hospital.

The Premier insists that Ontario is not losing nurses. Is he denying that Ms. Dykstra has lost her job?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's Nursing Week in Ontario, and I just want to take the opportunity on behalf of all Ontarians to thank our nurses for the work that they do for us every single day.

I'm proud of our policies, even though they've been opposed by the opposition parties, that have resulted in hiring over 10,000 new nurses in the province, and I'm proud that we have in place our nursing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's getting a little warm in here.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can assure the honourable member from Oxford it's coming from both sides of the House.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to welcome this particular nurse to the Legislature and let her and her colleagues throughout the province know that the work they do on behalf of all of us is very important to all of us.

We also have a nursing graduate guarantee program in place. I think we've hired some 8,300 new nurses through that.

There will be, from time to time, some movement of nurses within the sector. That is inevitable. What we will continue to do is to find ways to invest in health care and ensure that we can continue to hire our nurses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You don't thank nurses by giving them layoff notices. Ms. Dykstra is here, and she's like a lot of other nurses across this province. She completed a nursing degree and specialty training and was looking forward to a long career in this province. But because of this government's careless decision-making, Ms. Dykstra is leaving Ontario to work as a nurse in Nova Scotia. Despite this government's spin, the reality is that nurses are being laid off and patients are suffering.

When will the Premier finally admit that cuts are happening and commit to fixing the situation before more young, dedicated nurses like Erin Dykstra are forced to leave Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I'm always concerned about any nurses who feel that they might have to leave Ontario to find employment elsewhere. In fact, what we've demonstrated is that, more and more, we keep drawing in nurses from other parts of the country and other parts of the US, who are returning to Ontario. There are almost 11,000 new nursing positions in Ontario. There are 1,200 more nursing positions today than there were this time last year.

We are also increasing spots—200—for our new nurse practitioners: 200. We're creating the first nurse-practitioner-led clinics in all of North America here in Ontario. We have provided nurses with everything from extra support when it comes to bed lifts to additional training opportunities, creating more opportunities for students to become nurses in an accelerated period of time—

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

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Once again, the Premier is showing exactly how out of touch he is. He rhymes off statistics and numbers, but the reality is that patients are facing reductions in care. That's the reality, and those realities speak for themselves.

Nurses like Erin Dykstra are leaving the province to find work because there is no work for them here. Doctors are concerned about cuts to front-line care and are actually now being told to sign gag orders so they don't talk about those cuts. Patients are being flown out of the

country because doctors can't be found to perform surgeries for them.

How long will this Premier continue to deny the crisis that has been created by his government's poor health care decisions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague that she belongs to a party which reduced medical school spaces in the province of Ontario. I want to remind her as well that it was the Conservative government that shut down hospitals and laid off nurses in the province of Ontario.

In addition to the 11,000 new nursing positions that are in Ontario today, I want to remind my honourable colleague that this week there are 381 full-time nursing positions being advertised. There are 28 nursing positions available at the Hamilton Health Sciences centre, six available at the University Health Network, 25 at the Ottawa Hospital and seven at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre: jobs available right now in nursing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can understand an occasional interjection, but monotonous, relentless interjections cause our guests who are here today challenges in hearing, so I would encourage all members to try and tone it down a little bit, please.

New question.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Frank Klees: The killing off of some 350 animals at the York region SPCA continues as we speak. Yesterday, I called on the Minister of Community Safety to put a stay on that plan.

Interjection: To whom?

Mr. Frank Klees: The Minister of Community Safety. Yesterday, I called on the minister to put a stay on that plan, pending the community being able to put in place an alternative solution to this problem. The minister stated to me that he has no authority and that he trusts the experts who have made this call. I disagree with the minister. I don't trust the SPCA and its decisions. There is not one veterinarian throughout York region, and we have not found one in this province, who agrees that it is either necessary or the right thing to do.

Cam Woolley of CP24 just told me that the spokespeople at the site are deliberately vague and evasive and are refusing to provide any factual information.

I ask the minister this: Why, if in fact there are alternative options available, does he stand by and wash his hands and allow this euthanasia to take place?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, I want to thank the member for the letter he sent to me and the Minister of Agriculture. I want to thank him for the discussion that we had.

Truly, we have no authority to put a stay in place. He knows that and I know that. The Ontario SPCA is an independent body. They are governed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. This is a very important issue. The honourable member would like to hear the answer.

Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: They have a board of directors. If anyone has a concern, they should go to that board of directors. In fact, the member has already contacted the chair of the board of directors. We understand that. There is a differing of opinion between the Ontario SPCA and the member, but at the end of the day, this entity had to make a very, very difficult decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: This entity has made the wrong decision, and this minister and this government continue to wash their hands.

I don't trust the SPCA. I don't trust the board. It's the wrong decision. Veterinarians, animal rescue organizations and ordinary citizens across this province are saying, "Let us be part of an alternative solution that will save the lives of these animals."

Why will the minister, if he doesn't feel that he has the legal authority, not use his persuasive powers, pick up the phone, call them and say, "Look, it's wrong what you're doing. Stop it. Let's give at least 24 hours to put an alternative solution in place"? Why will he not do that?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the member's question in particular: I have contacted the executive director. I asked, "Were all options explored?" She said yes. I said, "How was the decision made?" She said that it was made by veterinarians in consultation with other veterinarians and other animal welfare experts.

We have to trust that, at the end of the day, this group has acted in the best interests that we have within the framework of the very serious situation that was, is and will be in place for the next little while.

LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. In today's Ontario, Vale Inco is allowed by Ontario's law to start up their full operation using replacement workers during a labour dispute. This has galvanized parties on both sides. All of Vale Inco's energy is spent restarting their operation and all the Steelworkers' efforts are spent trying to stop them. This is pushing both sides further apart. There's very little energy left for sitting down and settling the labour dispute.

Vale Inco can do this legally in Ontario. Under this government's law, they have the right to bring replacement workers: replacement workers who will tear my community apart, rip the social fabric of Sudbury and inflict wounds that will stay for generations to come. Is the Premier proud of these laws and the horrible consequences to my community?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to thank the member for her question, and I want to express to her that I fully appreciate the real concerns that people in Sudbury have regarding this protracted labour dispute.

Minister Bartolucci has kept me apprised of events there as they have unfolded. To be perfectly clear, we strongly urge and encourage the employer not to hire replacement workers. It is not the kind of thing that we, in our government, would do. In fact, we specifically adopted that as a policy on our part, just so my honourable colleague knows where we stand on this. The employer also knows—

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

M^{me} France G elinas: The Premier has the power to change this. The Premier has the power to change the situation that is tearing apart my community's social fabric. The Premier knows that tensions are very high in Sudbury as we await a court decision at noon today. Some of the wounds that will be inflicted on Sudbury's families today won't heal for generations to come. We will live with them for the rest of our lives.

You have it in your power, Mr. Premier, to change all this, to bring back the focus on negotiating a fair settlement, to bring the energy back to the negotiation table. You've talked about anti-scab legislation. I ask you today: Will you commit to bringing in anti-scab legislation for Ontario so nobody has to live through what I'm living through in my community today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We are, as I know my honourable colleague is, very much committed to a negotiated resolution of the differences. There is a hearing, as I understand it, before the Ontario Labour Relations Board this Friday. That will be an important opportunity for the sides to address specific issues and have that resolved by an objective party.

But beyond that, anything at all that our government can do to put in place the necessary mediation and conciliation services, we are more than prepared to do. In fact, we have done some of that in the past. Again, I call upon both sides to do everything they possibly can to resolve this at the earliest possible opportunity.

1110

GRADUATION RATES

Mr. Pat Hoy: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, Ontario's secondary school graduation rates have been steadily climbing since the McGuinty government took office, from 68% in 2002-03 to the announced 2008-09 rate of 79%. The past year alone has seen a graduation rate increase of 2%.

The figure speaks volumes to the work our teachers and support staff are doing to ensure that students are successful in their studies. However, the opposition members are of the opinion, recently voiced by the leader of the NDP, that our graduation rate numbers are fudged.

Minister, are these numbers accurate? Or do they misrepresent high school graduation rates in Ontario, as members of the opposition would contest?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I thank the honourable member for the question because I think that it is very important that members of this assembly, certainly, but

the public in general, are aware of the success of the students in our secondary schools.

As a result of working with our partners in education, particularly at the secondary level, we as a government have looked for ways and made investments in secondary schools that have enabled our students to be more successful. As a result, the graduation rate of students in Ontario has increased by 11% since we came to government.

That is good news, obviously, for the students and for their families, but it's also good news for those employers—

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: Last week, you announced expansion of the government's specialist high skills major program. Members of the opposition have said that this program is simply a watering-down of the Ontario secondary school curriculum designed to increase our graduation rates.

I understand that SHSMs allows high school students to bundle courses in order to pursue a specific academic stream or career path. In the 2010-11 year, more students are expected to participate in these programs in more schools across the province. After announcing the sports and non-profit SHSMs last week, some members of the opposition felt that the programs are intended to make the curriculum easier and increase grad rate numbers.

Minister, are the specialist high skills majors simply an easy way out for students seeking their Ontario secondary school diploma?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's an important opportunity, particularly to clarify for the members of the opposition who fail to see the importance and the significance of this innovative program in our secondary schools, the specialist high skills major.

These courses provide students with a first-hand opportunity and experience in various regimens, whether it's in agriculture, aeronautics, sports or not-for-profit. They come to understand first-hand the experiences that they can have following high school if they get a graduation diploma. They understand the kinds of careers they can pursue if they get a graduation diploma. We believe that this has contributed significantly to having Ontario youth understand that.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. There are just 50 days left until your greedy HST starts grabbing 8% out of the pockets of Ontario families who fuel their cars to get—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister of the Environment. The member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —before the HST starts grabbing 8% out of the pockets of Ontario families who fuel their cars to get to work, take their kids to sports or music

lessons, or take a driving vacation in the province. You've known all along that families will pay more because of the HST, so you must know how much the HST on gas will cost them.

How much more will Dalton McGuinty take out of the pockets of the average Ontario family to pay the HST on gas this year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know, once again, that my honourable colleague will appreciate that without the support of his party—the continuing support of his party—we simply would not have been able to move ahead with this important initiative.

I want to refer him to remarks offered by his former leader, a man who I know he strongly supported. He said the following: “I think” that Mr. Hudak “has not acknowledged something that pretty well everybody else has.... A lot of people call and say it is going to help with productivity and job creation and investment and the cost of capital.” He went on to say, “I'm not trying to second-guess Mr. Hudak, but I would have taken a different position because I would have felt dishonest doing otherwise.”

I just want to welcome once again yet another member of the Conservative Party for their support of this important public policy initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think the Premier is failing to answer the question for Ontario families. The Premier knows the answer, but he isn't saying. The annual HST for fuelling a mid-sized car will be over \$300, and it will cost more for trucks and minivans.

Glen Bonham of Minden is worried about what the Premier knows but isn't telling about the HST on gas. I quote him as he says, “One of the biggest impacts here in Haliburton will be the rise in the price of gasoline.”

The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock isn't asking Glen Bonham's question, so I will. Why won't Premier McGuinty come clean with what he knows about how much the HST will cost families who have to drive their cars?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would encourage my honourable colleague to sit down with his counterpart member of Parliament for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I encourage him to sit down and speak with him at length about this matter.

Interjection: Her.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Her—sorry. Ms. Gallant—to speak with her at length about this matter. I'm sure that she would advise him as to all the reasons that have led to the support of Mr. Flaherty, Ms. Ecker, Mr. Baird, Mr. Clement, Mr. Tory, Mr. Harris, Senator Runciman, Prime Minister Harper and so many others.

I think it's time for the few remaining members of the Conservative Party who are opposed to this to get on board with the overwhelming consensus that has de-

veloped among Conservatives both in Ottawa and here at Queen's Park—and in Ontario itself—in support of our package of tax reforms, because it's all about more jobs for Ontario families.

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé.

Today will be the eighth time in this Legislature that I have raised the issue of breastfeeding. Each time, I have urged the minister to look at the statistics, to listen to mothers and health experts—many of them are in the gallery here today—and create a province-wide standard and program that will support breastfeeding. Well, I have great news: The minister has the opportunity to adopt a well-researched and collaborative strategy that will bring a long-awaited provincial breastfeeding strategy to Ontario.

My question is simple: Will the minister adopt this report?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to say, first of all, welcome to all the breastfeeding supporters who are in the House today. I want to make it clear, unequivocally, that I am a supporter of breastfeeding, as a mother who breastfed all my children and also as the Minister of Health Promotion.

I want to take this opportunity to tell the House about Ontario's 36 public health units and the government's work in providing funding for breastfeeding supports and services, including parent information support phone lines, breastfeeding resource materials and website postings, prenatal classes, breastfeeding clinics, and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. We understand the importance of breastfeeding to healthy children and healthy moms.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: If the minister wants me to say thank you for a patchwork of services that sometimes works and sometimes doesn't, I'm not going to. What we need is an Ontario-wide provincial strategy that makes sure that no moms and no babies are left behind.

The report is there. It costs next to nothing. It would bring a strategy that would help. In Ontario, 97% of moms initiate breastfeeding and 15% of them succeed to six months. There's a big gap there. Some of the patchwork is helping some of the women, but we have here a province-wide strategy. Why won't the minister agree to a province-wide breastfeeding strategy for all of Ontario?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to take this opportunity as well to thank the many organizations and individuals who have proposed recommendations for the provincial breastfeeding strategy. We will review the documentation that has been provided to us.

We understand the importance of developing further supportive environments for breastfeeding support. We understand that breastfeeding is very important to the health of infants, and I would urge all mothers who have

infants to breastfeed. It's a very important thing for their kids.

We, in this government, continue to look at other strategies to address this very important issue. It's a very important issue for our government, and we understand the importance of developing supportive environments for breastfeeding infants.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. Earlier this week, I was at the Oakville GO station for the launch of the second phase of the Presto smart card. Many of my constituents commute into downtown Toronto on the GO train, and they're looking forward to the convenience of using one card to travel along multiple transit systems.

When my constituents, and I think all Ontarians, travel abroad and they go to places like London, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Seattle and Holland, they experience first-hand how easy and convenient electronic fare systems are to travel across transit systems. It seems like here in Ontario we're using best experiences from other world-class cities and regions.

Can you please tell this House what the plans are for expanding Presto across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville for his support for this great initiative.

Presto's the first-ever regional fare card for public transit riders in Ontario, and it really is a key part of our regional approach to transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It's about connecting transit systems in the region to make it easier and more seamless for people to take transit.

We have to be honest here: We are lagging behind other jurisdictions when it comes to fare cards. The member from Oakville has noted that other jurisdictions have this technology and to great success. We're partnering with GO Transit and nine municipal transit systems on this initiative. The people at Presto are doing a great job integrating the business practices of these 10 authorities.

Presto's being rolled out to commuters in stages, starting with Oakville and Burlington transit systems, Oakville and Union GO stations and seven downtown TTC stations this month. Then we'll be moving on to Mississauga Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham region—

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks for the response, Minister. That's obviously great news for my constituents and I think for all constituents around the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

It sounds like we have made some good progress in getting GO Transit and local transit providers in places like Brampton, for example, and my own community of Oakville onboard with the Presto system. Hopefully, the Presto card is going to encourage more people to use transit and leave their cars at home.

Minister, I understand also that the Presto smart card is a very sophisticated piece of technology. Can you please tell the House a little bit more about how the Presto system works and how it actually benefits transit users?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member from Oakville is right. We're hoping that the Presto card will act as an incentive to get people out of their cars and to take public transit. We know that the Presto card offers a lot of benefits and conveniences to its users.

The card just needs to be loaded with a dollar value. People can do this in person or over the phone. They can do it online or register to have it loaded automatically, and it's ready to tap on to a fare card reader at the subway station, on a bus or on a train. People tapping on the bus or the train means they're not fumbling for change, tickets or tokens, and this will help reduce lineups. It'll mean fewer delays for getting on to buses or trains and help make our transit network more efficient.

The other great thing about Presto is that it offers transit agencies a powerful tool for managing their routes. They can gather data and make better decisions about route allocation.

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. You know that many families are privately paying for intensive behavioural intervention because the wait-list is ridiculously long for provincially funded therapy. As you know, IBI therapy can cost families up to \$60,000 per year. Now these same families are concerned that they will be forced to pay the HST on IBI therapy purchased after July 1.

Will the minister confirm today that all families paying for IBI therapies out of their own pocket will not have to pay the hated HST?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to speak about the expansion of services that we've been able to provide across the province for those families who are able to use our government service.

The HST will not apply to any IBI services that are government-funded. For many families in Ontario, the fact that we have quadrupled the funding for government-funded IBI service is critically important. I know that the families who are able to use that service are very pleased about that initiative. If a parent chooses to purchase private IBI services from a registered psychologist, those services will also continue to be exempt.

I give clarity to the member opposite that the services by a private IBI service, by a registered psychologist, will continue to be exempt.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: That is not a clear answer, Minister. Minister, I have heard from parents and the professionals who provide IBI therapy to the autistic children in my riding. One such professional, Stacey Sugar, tells me that families are already limiting the number of hours of

IBI therapy for their children by what they can currently afford to pay. Making them pay another 8% in HST will only force them to cut back those hours even further. In the words of one parent, "Taxing autistic children is immoral."

Minister, will you accept responsibility for the impact that HST on IBI therapy is going to have on autistic children in Ontario across the board?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Perhaps I didn't speak loudly enough, so I'll speak more loudly. We have quadrupled autism spending from \$44 million to \$165 million since 2003-04. More families are getting government-funded services, and those families will not pay any tax on the delivery of that service because we are providing that service.

For families who purchase private IBI services from a registered psychologist, those services will continue to be exempt in the same way that they are currently exempt from the GST. If they pay GST on the autism services that they provide, those services will be part of the new tax system. I wish the federal government did not apply the GST to these services, but that is up to them.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. On April 30, Hamilton's mayor wrote to the Premier with very specific requests regarding poverty reduction. Hamilton has been hit hard by job losses and has a growing number of residents who are forced to rely on social assistance. Given the situation in Hamilton and elsewhere in this province, this government's social assistance program review really does need to be expanded.

The question that the mayor asked and I'm repeating here is: Will the review consider an emergency increase to social assistance through a healthy food or housing allowance that could be made available quickly to people who are in need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very proud that this government moved forward with this poverty reduction strategy. Part of it is a review of social assistance.

We will be receiving recommendations pretty soon from the advisory committee that I put forward, and they will advise me on the scope of the review of social assistance. When we have this, then we will proceed to appoint people to do the review of social assistance. It's much needed, and we're very proud of what we have proposed so far.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Hamilton's mayor and council, along with all of those working to alleviate poverty in Hamilton, are united in our call for some real action. We see the McGuinty government clawing back the Ontario child benefit by reducing the basic needs allowance. We see social assistance rates that keep families stuck living below subsistence levels. We see people on Ontario

Works and ODSP scraping by on rates that aren't indexed and that fail to actually reach the real cost of living. Will the Premier finally address the inadequate social assistance rates in the province, or will people continue to live in desperate, desperate poverty?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the community of Hamilton for the exceptional work that they have done, bringing together a Hamilton round table to talk about the complicated and complex issues that face families who live in poverty, and working with our government. I can tell you that I work closely with leaders in the Hamilton community like Mark Chamberlain, and I've attended many meetings with him and with our MPP from Hamilton, Ms. Aggelonitis, to talk about these critical issues.

I know the people of Hamilton really respect and support the fact that our government has stepped in and provided \$63.5 million per year for child care, and that child care will help the very families whom the member opposite is talking about. Full-day early learning for four- and five-year-olds: That too will help those families who are struggling in poverty in Hamilton. These are critical—

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

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

Le commissaire aux services en français, François Boileau, fait un travail remarquable pour s'assurer que les droits linguistiques de la communauté francophone en Ontario sont bien respectés, conformément à la loi provinciale de 1986 sur les services en français.

Depuis la création du commissariat en 2007, le commissaire a déposé deux rapports annuels ainsi qu'un rapport sur la santé en français. De nombreux francophones de mon comté apprécient le travail du commissaire, et j'aimerais, Madame la Ministre, que vous nous informiez sur les recommandations que le commissaire a faites dans ses rapports.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais d'abord remercier le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour son intérêt dans les affaires francophones.

Oui, nous avons créé le Commissariat aux services en français, et cela prouve que notre gouvernement est prêt à rendre compte à la population que nous servons. Par exemple, le 15 janvier dernier, la ministre de la Santé, Deb Matthews, et moi-même avons annoncé la création d'entités de planification pour les services de santé en français. Le commissaire avait émis un communiqué de presse à cette occasion et je vous le cite : « Cette annonce constitue une réponse positive et concrète à l'une de mes recommandations issues de mon rapport spécial sur la santé en mai 2009. »

Ceci est un exemple, parmi d'autres, que notre gouvernement prend très au sérieux les services en français dans la province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Merci, Madame la Ministre. Je suis heureux de voir que le gouvernement écoute les recommandations du commissaire.

Dans son deuxième rapport annuel, le commissaire avait reconnu le leadership de votre ministère en ce qui concerne l'amélioration d'accès aux services en français dans le système de justice. Cependant, il avait dirigé deux recommandations : de créer une stratégie pour la traduction des règlements et d'établir un comité pour rechercher activement des moyens de parfaire les connaissances en droits linguistiques des membres de la magistrature en Ontario, et de proposer des pistes d'actions pour pallier le manque de juges bilingues en Ontario.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'll refer the question to the—

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Madame la Ministre, je sais que lors de la sortie de ce rapport, vous aviez dit à cette—

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'll refer the question to the Attorney General, please.

L'hon. Christopher Bentley: Merci pour la question.

Premièrement, on a créé un comité consultatif de la magistrature et du barreau sur les services en français, présidé par le juge Paul Rouleau et M^c Paul Le Vay de l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario. J'ai hâte de travailler avec les membres de ce comité et de recevoir leurs recommandations.

On a aussi commencé à travailler sur le projet de la traduction des règlements. La première réunion d'un groupe de travail interministériel est prévue au cours du mois de mai. Les membres du groupe de travail vont adopter une approche cohérente dans l'établissement de l'ordre de priorité des règlements à traduire avec les autres—

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

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Last week, the Liberal member for Timiskaming–Cochrane admitted something that we already knew, that there's at least 5,000 megawatts of untapped and unused hydroelectric capacity in northern Ontario. This energy, if realized, would boost our capacity, provide northern Ontario with cheap electricity for industry and residents, and provide valuable construction jobs to the people of the north. Your members in the north know that you're squandering these opportunities to generate the cheapest, greenest, and most reliable power that we all know. You're wasting these opportunities to create jobs here instead of Korea. How do you

justify wasting \$7 billion on foreign companies when you could spend it here in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: These guys just cannot stop making their policies based on division, based on conflict. We have to work with all countries around the world; we have to work with all people. That's part of being an open economy; that's part of being an open Ontario.

When it comes to opening up opportunities in the north, nobody, no government is investing in transmission like we're investing in it. We've got over \$2.3 billion of transmission being built across this province. Much of that will be opening up the north. When you look at our throne speech, when we look at the Ring of Fire and the work we're doing to open up opportunities and economic opportunities in the north, a lot of that will require transmission built, and we're looking carefully at doing that. We're committed to opening up the north. We're committed to tapping into those energy sources—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: My office has received a feasibility study done by the Independent Electricity System Operator which states that there's 2,500 megawatts of power available in the Moose and the Albany River basins. That's 2,500 megawatts in this one project alone. The study states that not only is it possible to generate this power, but it's also possible and feasible to transmit that power to southern Ontario.

Minister, do you not read these reports that come into your office, reports about projects that generate power here in Ontario by local companies that would build our northern economy? Or do you prefer only to take your advice directly from Samsung and those who enrich the Liberal Party?

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: After eight years of absolutely hardly any build happening under that government, we're aggressively working at creating new generation in the province, and when it comes to hydro, we're in the process right now in partnership with Moose Cree First Nation and moving forward with the largest hydro build in 40 years in Ontario. No government has been more committed to renewables than—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I just remind the honourable member from Lanark that he did ask the question. He should listen to the answer, and as he knows, within the standing orders, if he is not satisfied with the answer he can file a late show.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: No government has been more committed to building more renewables than this government. In fact, we're world and global leaders when it comes to this. I ask the member where he has been when we brought in our Green Energy Act? What articles has he been reading when it comes to the good news that's

happening across this province: the 50,000 jobs being created because of the investments we're making in development projects; the \$9 billion that recently has been announced that will be going into our economy of private sector investments? And yes, we welcome investments from abroad in Ontario, because this is a great place to invest. It's a great place to create jobs. It's a great place—

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

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government announced with great fanfare and repeated numerous times that you have a new relationship with First Nations. My question simply is this: You know that Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Treaty 5, those affected by the Far North planning act, are opposed to the continued process that your government has to enact that legislation. Why are you moving forward with this legislation when clearly they're telling you not to?

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

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member is absolutely right: We do have a very different and a better relationship with First Nations. It's a relationship based on discussion, based on negotiation, based on recognizing our shared futures, particularly in the north but throughout the province of Ontario.

My colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, my colleague the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, our ministry and others are working very closely, and will continue to, with NAN, with Treaty 5, with all affected areas in making sure that the planning process for the north for the future can accommodate all of our wishes and will be a better economic future for the province of Ontario and for First Nations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I'm afraid, from where the First Nations sit, the relationship is no different. It is more colonialism when it comes to the approach of how we deal with the issues that affect First Nations.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is being very clear in the resolution that they put forward this spring. They said that Bill 191 must be deferred until NAN First Nations and Ontario agree on a consultation, accommodation and consent process. So, clearly they don't want you to go forward. Why are you doing so when they're telling you not to?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The only thing that's stuck in the past is the question.

When we approached the issue of the Mining Act and the reforms to the Mining Act, there was a completely different approach than that which was followed many years ago, including by his government. When we approached the issue of training, of post-secondary opportunities, there was a completely different approach—

evidenced through the budget with the \$45 million for training directed to the north around the Ring of Fire—than was evidenced in the past. When we approached the issue of Far North land use planning, there was a consultative approach from the beginning. When we approached the issue of the HST, we stood together with First Nations. We need the federal government to come onside. And when we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Minister, you can wrap up.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's the old approach. Those who laugh at a working, co-operative, consultative relationship—they're stuck in the past. We're for the future. We're working with First Nations, side by side.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to remind the Minister of Children and Youth Services that you're required, under standing order 99(d), to file answers to written questions within 24 sitting days. Your responses to five questions from the member from Dufferin-Caledon are now overdue, and I would ask that you give the House some indication as to when the responses will be forthcoming.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: They will be forthcoming very, very shortly.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today, in a response to the question from the member from Whitby-Oshawa, the Minister of Revenue cited a report from KPMG in which he said that the report states that the HST will have a very small net effect on doctors and their costs. There is absolutely nothing in the report that says that. He further said that the net effect would be a 1.6% increase. There is nothing in the report that says that. I have a copy of the report here and I'd be glad to share that with the table—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. It's not a point of order. I trust that all members, when they are quoting from reports, will be providing the best information to the House.

DEFERRED VOTES

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of 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): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations. All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Hampton, Howard	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bisson, Gilles	Johnson, Rick	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Shurman, Peter
Chan, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Monique
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Clark, Steve	Matthews, Deborah	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Tabuns, Peter
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Munro, Julia	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 77; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health Promotion concerning breastfeeding. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Premier concerning replacement workers. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. today.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like members to join me in welcoming a very distinguished member from my

riding, Mr. Mike Roche. I'll be making in my statement a more appropriate introduction, but he's involved with the MS Society of Durham, as well as the MS Society of Ontario. He's here today and has a very worthy message that I will make later on. Thank you for joining us today, Mike.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I just want to introduce some of the members from our ministry staff, as well as some people from not-for-profit organizations who are here to listen to the bill this afternoon. I would like to introduce Deputy Minister George Ross, Richard Frank, Lynn Butler, Eunha Kim, Kiran Persaud, Julie Grant, Yen Tung, Larissa Hretchka, Michelle Canale, Allen Doppelt, Jennifer Lee and Michael Coe, as well as Wayne Gray, Lynn Eakin, Clifford Goldfarb, Margaret Emin and Fred Enzel.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Please join me in welcoming Jeanne Samonas, president of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, and volunteers from a number of support groups from across Ontario who are here with her today. Welcome.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to invite all members of the House to welcome some extraordinary nurses here today. These are nurses with the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario, better known as POGO: Bruna DiMonte is the POGO nursing committee and database administrator; Karen Drybrough is the Interlink nurse team leader from Toronto; Dianne Dekkers is the Interlink nurse from Barrie-Muskoka; Marilyn Cassidy is the Interlink nurse from Ottawa; Margaret Warden is the Interlink nurse from London; Dr. Corin Greenberg, POGO executive director; Vanessa Yakobson, POGO director of fundraising; and Jacqui DeBique, POGO communications and knowledge transfer manager.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm anxiously awaiting additional citizens from my riding of Durham. From Community Living Durham North, they're: Jamie Ross, who is the treasurer; Larry Leonard, who's the president; and Glenn Taylor, who's the executive director of Community Living Durham North. They're here to make a statement about the status of their budget, and I will leave that for other members to talk about.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAMMY EPP

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Benjamin Franklin once said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Earlier this year, a kindergarten teacher at Manordale Public School, Mrs. Tammy Epp, was nominated by her peers, her superiors and parents for the Ontario teaching awards, which I consider remarkable.

But to know Tammy Epp is to know that she is remarkable and one who deserves the honour of having been nominated for this prestigious award. We all remember that one teacher in school who made the difference. That teacher could connect on a personal level,

could teach any subject and make it fun, and most of all inspired us to believe what we could achieve, not what we couldn't. Tammy Epp is that kind of teacher. She is that teacher Benjamin Franklin spoke of: "Involve me and I learn." This is because it's not only the students that she teaches she involves, it's also the parents.

Tammy Epp has a winning way, and it's because she takes the time to know her students and their parents and make learning fun by involving everyone. Cathy Babyak, who nominated Tammy Epp for the Ontario teacher awards, wrote to me, "Tammy Epp is a very special person who I feel very fortunate to know.... I am happy to have had Tammy help set the foundation for my parental involvement in my kids' education, as well as help my children, Alyssa and Nate, directly as their teacher in junior kindergarten."

That sentiment is not one that is alone. In fact, it is shared by many parents and students throughout Manordale Public School. Mrs. Epp's many admirers can often be heard at school functions, on the playground and at community association events, where you are regarded as a lucky parent to have had the opportunity that your child is given the gift of Tammy Epp's kindergarten experience.

To her students and their parents, Tammy Epp is teacher of the year, and on behalf of them I want to say, thank you, Tammy, for making a difference and thank you for involving us.

EVENTS IN

HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to talk about two important events that will take place in Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. Glendale Secondary School, which the Speaker has visited with me, a prominent school of over 1,000 students, is celebrating its 50th anniversary on the last weekend in May. Former teachers, students and staff will be visiting from far and near to relive fond memories and renew lost friendships. A portal of east Hamilton's community spirit, Glendale Secondary School is staging plays, concerts and sporting and social events to celebrate this anniversary. I congratulate the many staff and community volunteers who have taken so much of their own time to organize this event and I look forward to celebrating it with them.

Over the weekend of May 21 to 23, the Croatian National Home will be hosting the 36th annual Canadian-Croatian Folklore Festival in Hamilton East. For 80 years, the Croatian National Home has been promoting Croatian culture in Canada through traditional tambura music and dances. I encourage everyone who will be in Hamilton East over the Victoria Day weekend to join me and an anticipated audience of 2,000 people to enjoy over 500 performers. It's wonderful that we can celebrate Croatian heritage here in Ontario, and I look forward to joining in the festivities, although I may not be taking part in the dancing. I'm not an expert.

DISEASE AWARENESS

Mr. Joe Dickson: Prior to my statement, I would appreciate requesting unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Awareness Day for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. The ribbons being distributed to all members have three colours and represent awareness of each illness: blue for myalgic encephalomyelitis, purple for fibromyalgia and green for multiple chemical sensitivities. I would like to ask for unanimous consent that all members be allowed to wear the ribbons that represent these conditions.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: Today is May 12, the International Awareness Day for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. These illnesses have many overlapping symptoms, including neurological and cognitive problems, muscle and joint pain, and overwhelming fatigue. These illnesses are all debilitating, multi-system physical illnesses that affect individuals of all ages, youth and children included.

1510

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, over a million Canadians have been diagnosed with one or more of these conditions, and 440,000 of these people live in Ontario. These are real people with real illnesses, and they need our help and support. More research is needed into the causes and treatments. No treatment or research centre exists yet in Ontario.

The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario is hosting an awareness event outside Queen's Park today to put a real face on those people who live with these life-changing illnesses. It takes courage every day to live knowing that there is no cure and no ongoing funding for treatment, research and education of our Ontario health care practitioners. Let's look at educating Ontario and making all Ontarians aware.

Please join me in applauding the efforts of many dedicated volunteers who do their best to provide education, information and support. We in this province can make a difference.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. John O'Toole: Earlier today, I sought unanimous consent to wear the red carnation in support of the MS Society. My statement is that I thank the Speaker for the honour of supporting MS Awareness Month and the MS carnation campaign. I thank all members of the Legislature who have shown their dedication to the people affected by MS by wearing the carnation today.

It is known that women are diagnosed with MS three times as often as men. Many Canadians living with multiple sclerosis are mothers, and many more adults and children are affected by this disease. That's why every year the MS carnation campaign takes place around the time of Mother's Day weekend.

For over 60 years, the MS Society of Canada has provided hope and help for people with MS across Canada—hope through their extension of national research programs, and help through services which make life better for people suffering with MS and their families.

I'm pleased today to have been joined by four members and representatives of the MS Society: Natasha Mistry and Kim Steele, who I introduced earlier, from the Ontario division office—and Mike Roche from the Durham regional chapter and a constituent of mine.

Mike was diagnosed with MS in 2001 and joined the MS Society in 2002. In October 2003, he became the social action director of the Durham regional chapter of the MS Society, a position he holds to this day. I must commend Mike; he has been very helpful in informing and educating me in my awareness of MS. Mike is involved in efforts to increase research funding for MS as well as to improve income security and access to age-appropriate long-term care, supportive housing and MS treatments. As a testament to Mike's tireless advocacy, he recently received the Citation of Merit last year. This is one of the MS Society's most distinguished awards.

I'd like to thank the MS Society and volunteers like Mike for making every day better for people living with MS and for working toward the day when we will find the end to this devastating disease.

I would like to urge Premier McGuinty to implement Bill 23, which would support people with MS and disabilities, from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES

M. Phil McNeely: J'étais fier de l'adoption du projet de loi 24 en troisième lecture le 26 avril. Cette loi confirme officiellement que les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes peuvent se donner rendez-vous pour célébrer leur culture de façon particulière ce jour-là.

Le 25 septembre coïncide avec l'anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien, hissé pour la première fois il y a 35 ans. Cette fête doit être partagée par tous et toutes en Ontario. Ce fut un rassemblement d'anglophones et de francophones qui a donné la vie à notre province et à notre pays. La francophonie vibre depuis 400 ans et a grandement contribué au façonnement de notre province.

Le français est parlé dans des milliers de foyers partout en Ontario, y compris un grand nombre dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa–Orléans. On entend le français dans des boutiques, des restaurants, des centres communautaires, des bureaux, des églises, des écoles, partout où les gens se rassemblent.

Cette loi témoigne de l'appui et de l'encouragement que notre gouvernement accorde à nos vibrantes communautés. Cet appui va bien au-delà du rassemblement des anglophones et des francophones. Nous avons accueilli des millions de gens de partout dans le monde. Ce fut toutefois ce rassemblement qui a lancé un si beau et si grand projet. Voilà pourquoi je suis fier de voir une telle journée rendant hommage aux contributions des

Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. L'Ontario serait très différent et appauvri en l'absence du riche héritage franco-ontarien. J'ai hâte de célébrer, le 25 septembre, avec les anglophones et les francophones de ma circonscription.

ENERGY RATES

Mrs. Julia Munro: Families throughout my riding will be facing much higher hydro prices over the next year thanks to the Dalton McGuinty government. Energy experts are telling us that by the end of 2011, the average residential hydro bill is going to go up 26% per year. This works out to a minimum of \$304 per year for the average homeowner.

Eight per cent of the increase is due to the harmonized sales tax that the Liberal government will impose on everyone on July 1. This will cost \$98 per year for the average household. Generation cost increases will mean more than a \$150-per-year increase; smart meters, \$50 more per year—and these are just the estimated costs by the end of 2011.

My constituents cannot afford these increases, increases that come without a plan to ensure a secure supply of energy. The McGuinty Liberals have cancelled new nuclear power plants, they are planning to close coal plants, and they have no idea how they will make up the power we need. Everyone will need to pay more for hydro, and the supply will not even be secure.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. David Oraziotti: Sault Ste. Marie is moving forward with another exciting investment in the renewable energy sector. Last Friday, I had the privilege of being part of a groundbreaking for a new \$6-million solar manufacturing plant. This means that right here in Ontario and in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, with our government's investments in the green energy sector through our Green Energy Act, we will not only have one of the largest solar farms in Canada, but we will now be creating jobs and manufacturing those solar panels in my community.

The \$2.5 million in provincial funding for this manufacturing plant was provided through what has been a very instrumental program for northern Ontario's economy, and is something our government has embraced and continued to improve and increase since 2003. It's called the enterprise north job creation program of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. This program helps to build strong and prosperous northern communities that foster opportunity, job creation and economic prosperity. This is a great program, as it has helped to build and accelerate numerous projects in our community in partnership with our renewable energy strategy and our standard offer program, projects like the \$400-million Brookfield wind farm project, the largest in Ontario; the \$135-million cogeneration plant at Essar Steel; and the \$100-million Starwood solar energy farm, which is the first phase of the 60-megawatt project.

We are growing green energy jobs through our government's leading-edge renewable energy strategy, and this is good news for all Ontarians.

POLICE WEEK

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise in the House today to acknowledge the start of a very special week in London, Police Week, where each day police officers engage in community outreach.

To kick off Police Week, two students were selected to play chief of police for the day. Scott Mitchell and Valerie Nyhout are secondary students who are also Special Olympics athletes. They were exposed to the dynamic and challenging role of heading the London police force, and they learned quite a bit in the process. Not only did they tour police headquarters, but they visited the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and the CSI lab as well.

The week continues with the London police holding a free barbecue for senior citizens at the Kiwanis senior citizens' centre. There will also be a series of fun and educational activities throughout the week.

I commend the London police for their activities in order to engage the community. I also want to say thanks for the work of our law enforcement officials that makes London a thriving and diverse society and a wonderful place to live.

1520

EVENTS IN ESSEX

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'd like to just take a minute or two of your time to tell you about the great things that are happening in the riding of Essex. Of course, we're coming into the growing season, so just before we get out of here in June, I hope to have even better things to say.

Today I want to talk about health care, and I want to say what great things our government has done on my behalf and on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Essex in that we have a great family health team that has been up and running in Harrow, a hamlet in the town of Essex, where they are attracting doctors and taking care of patients who needed the kind of holistic health care that we well deserve.

As well, there's a family health team functioning in the town of Amherstburg. They, too, have been a great asset to their community. I frequently get letters and calls thanking us for putting a health team in the municipality of Amherstburg.

Then, more recently, we have had two nurse practitioner clinics approved for the riding of Essex, and I thank Minister of Health Deb Matthews for that. We have one that's only weeks away from opening in the town of Belle River, which is part of Lakeshore, and we have one that's well under way and, by fall, will be opening in the town of Essex.

The folks in my part of the country appreciate the health care they're being given.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Aggelonitis moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

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. Sophia Aggelonitis: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTRONIC SEXUAL MATERIAL), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'ÉDUCATION (DOCUMENTS ÉLECTRONIQUES À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL)

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 66, An Act to protect our children from pornography / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à protéger nos enfants contre la pornographie.

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. Gerry Martiniuk: I would like to thank my constituent Rob Nickel, a former retired police officer, who brought to my attention that there are hundreds of libraries and schools in Ontario that do not use filtering equipment to block pornography for our children.

If I may use the précis of the explanatory note, which is rather long and I'll shorten it, the bill amends the Education Act and the Libraries Act to require every school board and library to ensure that they have in place technological measures on all of the computers to which a person under the age of 18 has access to block any material, including written material, pictures and recordings, that is obscene or sexually explicit or that constitutes child pornography.

ARTHUR MEEN

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Arthur Meen.

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

The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't realized I was supposed to go first.

It is an honour for me to rise and talk about Arthur Meen, who in fact was one of my predecessors. He came from the riding of York East and he represented that riding very well. York East—of course, the majority of that riding in those days was in the municipality or borough of East York.

He has quite a colourful history in our place, but I think most of it can be summed up best in his incredible election successes. He ran, he won, he was successful. He won with big majorities.

I think the biggest surprise to East Yorkers overall was the time that he was challenged by the beloved reeve and mayor of East York, True Davidson. Anybody who knows anything about politics in the Toronto area will remember True. She was East York's first mayor and she was sort of an icon in the community. She was invincible. Every time she ran for politics, she won with bigger and bigger majorities. She decided to take on Arthur Meen, she running as a Liberal, he as a Conservative. On election night—it surprised many people—Arthur Meen whopped her. He beat her by a huge majority. People looked upon him on that day as the giant and the giant-killer, all rolled into one.

He was beloved by the people of East York, and he took his job very seriously. He was a parliamentarian who rose through the ranks in this House, starting first of all as a backbencher. He went on to become a parliamentary assistant and ended up as Minister of Revenue. I want to talk mostly about when he was Minister of Revenue, because I think that's when he made his finest contribution, not only to the people of York East but to literally all the people who lived in Ontario, particularly our seniors.

He was the one, as Minister of Revenue, who brought forward two really important laws. The first one was the Ontario homebuyers grant program. The second one, and I think probably the one that best survives him and all of this House, is the guaranteed annual income system for seniors, also known as Gains. He was the one who shepherded that bill through this House and made it law, and it's still there today.

I know many MPPs in this room hold tax clinics every year. We do that in the month of March for many of our seniors, and they come in. When the CGAs and other people who are expert at doing taxes get to the Gains portion, literally every single senior gets a rebate. Literally every single senior to this day gets helped with their income tax and has their taxes lowered. Literally almost every single one of them gets a rebate, and it's all thanks to the work of Arthur Meen all those years ago in shepherding Gains through.

He understood the need to ensure that Ontario's senior citizens were provided with an adequate level of financial support to provide for that life of dignity, and he made sure that it happened. His legacy is such that it continues to happen, and I hope will continue to happen for many years.

The government of the day acknowledged that Ontario's higher cost of living placed additional challenges on our seniors receiving old age security from the federal government. Meen observed, and I quote him: "Our senior citizens in Ontario were receiving inadequate support under the federal system, which is geared to the cost of living across Canada as a whole." He knew that Ontarians needed more, and he was the one to make sure it happened. This was a proactive step in the fight against poverty, and it provides an example to all of us of what this government and future governments can do when faced with the need for a solution to a national challenge.

Arthur Meen was also a man who loved his constituents and loved life around East York. He was a very proud member of the Todmorden branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. I don't know whether I followed in his footsteps, but I too am a very proud member of that branch. The members of the branch speak fondly of his association over the years with the branch and his love of the Royal Canadian Legion and the people who attend.

To the family: I thank you for the time that you allowed him to afford to come here and work in this Legislature. I thank you for his many contributions, and I thank you for the legacy he left for all Ontarians.

1530

Mr. Mario Sergio: It is with pleasure that I rise to bring a tribute to the House today to an extremely popular parliamentarian, the Honourable Arthur Kenneth Meen, QC.

Arthur was a resident of the riding of Willowdale. He was first elected to the Legislature in 1967 as MPP for York East and faithfully served for some 10 years.

I have a bit of an anecdote. In 1967 I was part of an organization of some 40 to 45 agents, and in the morning we were told to be at this big meeting. Everybody had to be there that particular evening, and there would be lots of food, lots of drinks. So at 7 o'clock I show up on Dufferin, north of Rogers Road, and there was a little table there and a couple of ladies taking names, addresses and my signature, of course. Some four days later I got a letter in the mail and I opened it up and there was the PC membership for Ontario. I have to say that the candidate who was chosen that particular evening was running against another wonderful former parliamentarian, David Lewis, and of course he didn't win.

But getting back to Arthur, he was a lawyer and an engineer by trade and he started his political life in municipal politics in the old borough of North York, the former city of North York. He was a devoted husband to his wife, Shirley, and father to three daughters. Arthur was a keen outdoorsman who often voiced his enjoyment of waterskiing, boating, snowmobiling, camping and fishing. When it came to fishing, he always would say that the big one got away. He jokingly would admit that it was because of his lack of proficiency in sports.

Arthur served on many committees and was appointed parliamentary assistant to the Treasurer of Ontario in 1972, Minister of Revenue in 1974 and Minister of

Correctional Services as well. As the Minister of Revenue, he was responsible for initiating and instituting many important tax reforms; for example, the Gains program, the non-resident land transfer tax and the land speculation tax, to name but a few.

A man of principle who stood up for human rights, especially when it came to pro-life, he was not afraid to voice his beliefs.

A highly distinguished, respected politician, when Arthur declared he would no longer seek re-election, then-Premier Davis expressed deep regrets and encouraged Arthur to retain his cabinet responsibilities for as long as he could. In 1980, Attorney General Roy McMurtry appointed Arthur judge of the criminal division in the provincial court of York county.

Arthur passed away peacefully in 2008. On behalf of all of us in the House, I would express our sincere feelings to the family members. Let me say that as proud and privileged members of this House, we serve the people of Ontario and it is good to remember, to know and to appreciate those who came before us and the immense, positive, everlasting contribution they have made to the people of Ontario. I have to say that Arthur Meen was one of them.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I am honoured to stand on behalf of the PC caucus and participate in this tribute to Arthur Meen, who served in this Legislature between 1967 and 1977. He was re-elected in 1971 and 1975. My friend Michael Prue talked about his electability. He was elected by a large margin in 1967 and re-elected in 1971 and 1975 by large margins. Even in 1975, when the government of the day was reduced to a minority, Arthur Meen was one of those members who held his position and still had a very strong majority as well.

It's been said he was an engineer and a lawyer. It is interesting because I only know of one other member in this Legislature who has been an engineer and a lawyer, and that is a current member, my friend Norm Sterling from Carleton-Mississippi Mills. He holds that distinction along with Arthur Meen.

Arthur was married; his wife was Shirley, and she has also passed on. They had three daughters: Elizabeth, Jennifer and Marilyn.

Before he was elected to the Legislature, he had a distinguished career with Gulf Oil, and he also served on the municipal council of North York between 1961 and 1969. Of course, no one in the House today served with Arthur Meen, but he did serve at a time when my father served in this House. It was certainly a different time in this Legislature, as any of those who have had parents or relatives that have served in that time will know.

I did have the opportunity to speak to Premier William Davis to ask him some questions about Arthur Meen, because obviously he was a member of Premier Davis's government. As Premier Davis put it, he was a man of obvious competence—unassuming competence—a very humble and modest man, but visibly capable. He possessed a quiet sense of humour. As I said, he was very modest when it came to matters involving himself.

His positive qualities were readily identified and apparent to Premier Davis, who appointed him to cabinet as Minister of Revenue in 1974 and, in 1977, as Minister of Correctional Services. Working with the then treasurer, Darcy McKeough, he brought in the first home-buyers grant, designed to stimulate the housing market at a time when it was weak and to offer first-time home-buyers a bit of a leg-up when it came to purchasing their first home.

At the same time, he played a role in introducing the land transfer tax that sought to put a stop to the speculation that was going on in the market and thereby driving up prices unnecessarily. Arthur Meen was the Minister of Revenue when that happened.

As my friend from Beaches-East York said, he was instrumental in the Gains program. I noticed in an interview he gave after he retired that he talked about the Gains program. He remembered that the Honourable John White was the chairman of the select committee on taxation in 1968, when they first talked about it, and he said, "I remember turning to him and saying, 'What in the world is negative income tax?' And he said, 'Well, it's flow in the opposite direction, based on that person's lack of income.' Now you see, we've come a long way. It was interesting that by the time we got Gains got enacted, he was the Treasurer and I was the Minister of Revenue." He was proud of that particular program.

He was very well loved by his constituents, as Mr. Davis told me. Also, Jan Wescott, who was Arthur's EA for years, described him as the "most honest person" he ever knew—and not just from the point of view that he didn't steal or lie. He was so intellectually honest in everything that he did and in every way that he carried out his duties.

He embraced technology and believed in it. He was a lifetime ham radio operator, and while on council in North York, he pushed for hydro lines to be embedded in the ground as opposed to on poles. He led that charge, and North York was one of the first communities to enact that.

He cherished his time with his family on Georgian Bay, and considered those moments as moments of peace and serenity. When he retired, he went back to practising law, and as Mr. Sergio alluded to, he was then appointed a provincial court judge.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to pay tribute to Arthur Meen and to men like him who came before us and made a tremendous sacrifice of their personal life and their family life to serve in this Legislature, to serve their constituents and to serve all of us in the province of Ontario. So I say to all relatives of Arthur today, thank you for his contribution. We're proud of him and we are proud to offer this tribute today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank all members for participating in the tribute to Arthur Meen. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I will ensure that copies of the Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings are sent to the family.

1540

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to introduce significant new legislation that would modernize and strengthen Ontario's not-for-profit sector. Today, our government is introducing the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, which, if passed, would provide a modern legal framework for not-for-profit corporations.

Not-for-profit corporations make a remarkable contribution to building a stronger Ontario. The not-for-profit sector comprises approximately 16% of all employed Ontarians. The work of not-for-profit corporations and volunteers generates approximately \$50 billion in annual revenues. So the work of Ontario's not-for-profit sector is vital, innovative and critical to Ontario's present and future well-being.

The current Corporations Act governs the incorporation, governance and dissolution of not-for-profit corporations. It was first enacted in 1907 and has not been substantially updated since 1953. Our partners in the sector have told us that it is cumbersome, antiquated and does not adequately meet the needs of Ontario's not-for-profit sector. Reform is necessary to bring the legislation up to date and create a modern legal framework that supports today's vast, varied and rapidly growing not-for-profit sector.

There are approximately 46,000 not-for-profit corporations incorporated under the current act. Examples of not-for-profit corporations include: daycare centres, environmental groups, religious organizations, social service organizations, social clubs, sports clubs, business and professional associations, arts organizations and health organizations. That is why our government is moving to modernize and strengthen the not-for-profit sector as part of our Open Ontario plan to create new opportunities for jobs and growth.

The new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, if passed, would be easier to use and would strengthen corporate governance. Here are some of the reforms we are proposing:

First, our proposed new act would simplify the incorporation process. The process is currently complex and lengthy. It normally takes six to eight weeks to incorporate. The new act would provide a simpler, more streamlined process and would allow not-for-profit corporations to incorporate in approximately seven working days or less. It would also provide flexibility to phase in electronic registration options, including online incorporation.

Second, our new act would enhance corporate governance and accountability. Directors would have a statutory duty of care and a maximum term of office of three years without being re-elected.

Third, our proposed changes would enhance member democracy. It would expand member rights by providing greater transparency for financial statements and access to records and would require notice to be given to a member when disciplinary action is contemplated against that member.

Fourth, our proposed changes would provide directors and officers better protection from personal liability. This would help to attract qualified people to serve on not-for-profit boards.

Fifth, in specified circumstances, the act would provide a simpler financial review process in place of an audit.

Sixth, our new act would allow not-for-profit corporations to engage in commercial activities when the revenues are reinvested in the corporation in support of its not-for-profit purposes.

Seventh, our proposed changes would become consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions with modern legislation, such as the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and Saskatchewan's Non-profit Corporations Act, 1995.

Our new act would substantially modernize the not-for-profit sector and make doing business easier in today's marketplace. Our ministry consulted extensively with the not-for-profit sector, the legal sector and affected ministries. Three consultation papers were developed to gather opinions. We listened to feedback from over 200 partners on the proposed new act in Ottawa, London, Toronto and Thunder Bay. The ministry also formed a web advisory panel to engage in an online consultation with key partners on preliminary policy recommendations.

Our ministry received positive feedback from our partners for taking the initiative to modernize this act. Our move to modernize and strengthen the not-for-profit sector demonstrates that we are serious about ensuring that Ontario is a leading business law jurisdiction in North America.

Furthermore, the proposed new act would support the government's Open for Business initiative by streamlining operational and administrative requirements and processing applications more efficiently.

The proposed new act would also align with Ontario's poverty reduction strategy by facilitating the operations of those not-for-profit corporations which focus on improving housing, education, food and employment assistance.

In closing, I'd like to underscore that we are serious about supporting not-for-profit corporations by creating a new legal framework that responds to the reality of the 21st century. We are working together to modernize and strengthen Ontario's not-for-profit sector so that they can continue to provide invaluable support to the people of this province.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased and honoured to rise in the House today to recognize

International Nurses Day. Ontario is so very blessed to have dedicated, knowledgeable, innovative and highly skilled nurses. Indeed, Ontario's nurses are the best in the world.

Nurses are often the first faces patients see when they enter the health system through an emergency room or a clinic. They're the ones on the front line, supplying their knowledge and expertise when patients are feeling their most vulnerable. Nurses play a vital role in offering care everywhere in the health care system—in acute-care settings as well as throughout the community.

Let me share with you some of the highlights of how I'm spending Nursing Week. On Monday morning I had the pleasure of visiting the riding of Essex, where the member Bruce Crozier and I visited what will soon be a fully operational nurse-practitioner-led clinic. I had the pleasure of meeting two nurse practitioners while I was in Essex county: Lisa Ekblad, the lead for the Belle River nurse-practitioner-led clinic, and Allan McCallum, the lead for the Essex county nurse-practitioner-led clinic. We announced the call for proposals for the next wave of 14 new nurse practitioner clinics. Once the final round of clinics has been chosen, we will have 25 clinics like the one in Essex all over the province.

On Monday afternoon I participated in Take Your MPP to Work Day at the McCormick long-term-care home in London. Yesterday, I was at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre's Holland Orthopaedic and Arthritic Centre, where two registered nurse surgical first assists, Grace Groetzsch and Victoria Rennick, showed me how they prepare their patients for surgery and then follow them right throughout the entire process. Tonight, I'll be celebrating at the nursing secretariat's 10th anniversary gala with Vanessa Burkoski, our provincial chief nursing officer. The rest of the week will include even more opportunities to spend time with nurses.

I'd like to briefly highlight the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario's outreach program involving experienced cancer care nurses. Many of POGO's finest are with us today in the east gallery. First, let me thank Karen Drybrough, Interlink team leader, and her fellow pediatric Interlink nurses Dianne Dekkers, Marilyn Cassidy and Margaret Warden. The pediatric Interlink program provides nurses who support children with cancer and their families during hospital visits, home visits and telephone calls. These nurses help to ensure the holistic range of needs of the child and the family are met, both in the hospital and at home in the community. From reviewing a child's diagnosis and treatment plan with the family and caregivers to arranging the necessary supports and services, these nurses are there throughout the process. This is just one example of a nursing program that is providing extraordinary care, and there are countless others throughout our province. POGO's Bruna DiMonte is also here today. In addition to her work at POGO, Bruna practises at Sick Kids as an oncology nurse. Welcome, and thank you all for the difference you make.

As a government, we have worked hard to support and enhance the opportunities and skills of nurses to

maximize their contribution to the care of patients. It's part of our government's goal to ensure that nurses are using more of their skills to take on more diverse roles within our health care system. Yesterday, I shared news at Sunnybrook hospital that our government is providing nearly \$4 million to permanently fund 100% of the equivalent of 34 full-time registered nurse surgical first assist positions. Surgical first assist nurses will now be able to continue offering their skills in operating rooms to further improve patient access and outcomes.

1550

These are just a few of the many investments we've made in supporting and enhancing the role of nurses. In fact, the government has invested over \$900 million in nursing initiatives since 2003. I'm very pleased to share that more than 10,000 new nursing positions have been created in Ontario since the McGuinty government took office in 2003. Well over 900 of those positions were created in the fiscal year 2009-10, exceeding our goal for the year.

We're very, very fortunate in this province to have a workforce of nurses always ready to deliver their best. That's why we're committed to continue working hard to give our best to Ontario's nurses each and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to offer a few comments today on the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act being introduced.

One of the things that is most important for non-profits as well as for for-profits is the principle of transparency and accountability, and just as much for non-profits as for the rest of the corporate world.

In the few moments that I have had to hear the minister and the comments she's made, there are a couple of things that I would want to identify. One is that sometimes there has been a fuzzy line between not-for-profit and for-profit activities, and I notice that this is something that this bill purports to address.

Also, because we live in a world where there's more and more fundraising done and more and more creation of not-for-profit organizations, people want to know the distinction between the administration and the front-line service. They want to know that their dollars are being well used, and it's that kind of accountability and transparency that people will be looking for.

The minister made some reference to the variety of organizations. I would just like to comment on how important it is to recognize the variety of sectors. In the comments she made with regard to hearing from others, I would note and I would hope that this also includes some consultation within the rural communities of this province, because there's virtually nothing that happens of consequence—quite frankly, if you ask people in their communities what things add the most to their quality of life in their community, it's provided by volunteers. So I would hope that there has been some recognition of some

of the very special issues that rural communities face in this.

I'd also hope that in this piece of legislation, we're looking at the ability to do a better job on questions of duplication, overlap and financial stability. People are willing—and I think it's a most important point to make—to step forward and take on a voluntary role in their community. Frankly, it's one of the defining characteristics of Canadians. We do volunteer more than people in other countries, but at the same time, as government, we owe them the opportunity to be able to perform what it is they wish to do in the voluntary sector without those problems of duplication and overlap that so often cover this.

Finally, I would just comment that the minister has referred to this important step as part of Open for Business in Ontario, and I guess I'm left to conclude that that implies that Ontario has been closed.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus today to recognize today as International Nurses Day and this week as Nursing Week. This week offers the opportunity to showcase nurses' knowledge, skills and compassion, as well as the demands of their daily work.

I'd like to begin by offering my congratulations to all of Ontario's nurses for the hard work they do, and to express how appreciated and valued the dedication, caring, compassion and professionalism which they show to their patients each day truly are.

Nurses are an integral part of our health care system and I'm happy to have the time to celebrate today the profession of nursing and, for the remainder of the week, how we're going to be celebrating through community events. Today I had the opportunity to visit Kensington Place here in Toronto with RNAO president David McNeil. As I speak today, our leader, Tim Hudak, is touring the labour and delivery unit at Women's College Hospital with RNAO executive director Doris Grinspun and RN Adele Page.

Many of us are going to be visiting various community events and experiencing the role of nurses in our ridings during this week, and I encourage all of the members of this House to pay close attention when they do go on the rounds with the nurses to experience the hard work and dedication that all of our nurses show. I think that all of us in this Legislature have a lot to learn.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly today, Mr. Speaker.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to respond to the minister's statement on the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. I just received it, so I really haven't had a chance to even look at it. But for a long time, the not-for-profit sector has been an integral part in delivering services to Ontario

communities, services that government at times has been unable or unwilling to provide. However, in many cases, these initiatives are overwhelmingly understaffed and under-resourced, and depend largely on volunteer efforts to ensure that their communities get the services they need.

New Democrats are open to working with the government to ensure that our not-for-profit partners are better equipped to carry out the work they do, and hope that this piece of legislation is the beginning of a new partnership with these organizations. We look forward to the opportunity to review the bill and hope that the government is committed to working with opposition members on this side of the House to ensure that this bill effectively addresses the concerns of the sector.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to rise today to talk about International Nurses Day, la journée internationale des infirmiers. In the past, people would talk about healers, doctors, medicine men, nurses, but since the beginning of time, many of those communities basically said that those people were gifted—they had the gift of helping people heal.

I've had the opportunity in my career to have worked alongside thousands of nurses. They were all competent. Some were good, some were excellent, and some had the gift—the gift of nursing. They had a special talent. For them, nursing was almost a calling. It was something that they had always wanted to do, and this is what they wanted to be. I don't know how to describe it in words, but when I saw one of those nurses, I could identify them: They had the gift. I want to name a few of those nurses who have crossed paths with me.

The first one is Lysanne Dugré. I went to high school with Lysanne. Lysanne became a nurse and decided to go and work in developing countries. She has put thousands and thousands of kilometres on her motorbike, carrying a backpack full of Thermoses holding vaccines, and she has vaccinated and immunized thousands of children in Haiti and Africa.

I want to talk about Nancy Foreman. Nancy Foreman was my boss when I was on the intensive rehab unit, and she went on to become the director of care at Extendicare Falconbridge, then Extendicare York. Nancy had a love for the elderly. She had a way of making them feel special, and that made all the difference.

I want to talk about Michael Raymond. Michael is the most patient person I have ever met. Michael went and worked as a nurse in the Far North and spent most of his time working in First Nation Inuit communities. He is now a nurse practitioner. His wife, Lise Raymond, is also a very special nurse. She knows more about alternative medicine than most, and her work with menopausal women is inspiring.

I want to talk about Patricia Plourde. Every cell in her body was made to be a nurse. This person is a nurse in everything that she does. She went back to university and

became a nurse practitioner, and she continues to provide the good nursing care that, to me, she was put on this earth to do.

1600

I want to talk about Christine Mathieu. Christine is an RPN in Gogama. She has a sense of humour and a sense of optimism that is hard to beat. For her, it's not because something is serious that it has to be stressful. And if there is a hard injection to give, call Christine; she'll get it done.

I want to talk about Stephanie Semesin. Stephanie is a new nurse who works in dialysis at Sudbury Regional Hospital.

I wanted to talk—I see that I'm running out of time—about Lorraine Leblanc, who started the homeless clinic in Sudbury and saw a need for homeless people, when people laughed at her and said there were no homeless people in Sudbury.

I will leave you with some words from Melodie Chenevert, who is an author and a nurse. She says: "Being a nurse means you carry immense responsibility and very little authority. You step into people's lives and make a difference. Some bless you; others curse you. You see people at their worst and at their best. You see life begin and end. You see people's capacity for love, courage and endurance."

Nurses are the heart and soul of health care.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario provided to me by Preston Medical Pharmacy and Langs Pharmacy, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

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

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I agree with this petition and affix my name thereto.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I've got a petition here from students at Cairine Wilson high school.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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, An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I will sign this petition. Jesse Scott, Ben Gledhill and Jonathan Murrin have also signed it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: "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."

As I am in agreement, I've affixed my signature to give it to page Joshua.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it goes 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, would like to add "as soon as possible," and send it to the clerks' table with Emma.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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

“Whereas multiple sclerosis ... is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

“Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency ... and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

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

“That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner.”

Since I agree with this petition, I will sign it and send it to the table with page Yidu.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario collects a provincial sales tax (PST) and the federal government of Canada collects a goods and services tax (GST) and the current government of Ontario is proposing to merge the two taxes into a single harmonized sales tax (HST); and

“Whereas the proposed harmonized sales tax does provide some benefits to business in Ontario; and

“Whereas this new tax will result in provincial taxes being charged on a large number of items and services where it is not currently charged; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario have absorbed a number of new and increased taxes despite Dalton McGuinty’s promises that such tax increases would not be implemented, and have therefore seen their disposable income drop accordingly; and

“Whereas these additional taxes will result in increased taxes paid by Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind their existing plan and initiate a joint process with the federal government to reconsider the proposed harmonized sales tax, with special consideration for matching existing tax-exempt items and services, in order to ensure that any changes to tax policy do not further increase taxes paid and revenue collected.”

I agree with this petition and I’ll sign my name to it, and I’ll pass it to my page, Katina.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Algoma–Manitoulin:

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Stig.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: This is a petition referencing lowering drug prices.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I attach my signature to it and I shall pass it on to Dylan.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, courier fees, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, massage therapy, funerals, condo fees ... bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant and legal services, and real estate commissions and theatre admissions;

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

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

I will provide a copy of that to page Emma.

1610

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition from the good people in Oakville.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I'm pleased to sign it and pass it to my page, Katina.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that has been sent to me by many of the good people in western Mississauga. I would especially like to thank Louise Frenette of Tenth Line. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in" this year's "capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I completely agree with this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Mary to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I will sign this, as I am in agreement, and give it page Jacob.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is now cutting front-line public health care that will:

"—put independent pharmacies at risk;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

"Whereas, less than a year ago, Premier McGuinty supported expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists as a more cost-effective way to shorten wait times and enhance access to care; and

"Whereas the loss of a pharmacy in rural communities will mean an increased dependence on emergency rooms

and family doctors, resulting in longer wait times and reduced access to care;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and send it with Katina.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

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

“Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

“Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

“Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

“Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government’s program of cutting health care in Ontario;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto and will provide it to Jacob.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010

SUR LES PROFESSIONS COMPTABLES

Mr. Bentley moved third reading of the following bill:

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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Debate?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: At the outset, I can indicate that I’ll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Willowdale.

I’d like to recognize and welcome in the gallery representatives from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, Rod Barr and Chris May; from the Certified General Accountants of Ontario, Ted Wigdor; and from

the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario, Sharon Armstrong and Katharine Harvey.

This is a very important piece of legislation for public protection, for the protection of those who use accountancy services, to ensure that the members who are represented by each of the bodies I have read out and that are contained in the act have the appropriate regulation and support in performing very essential accountancy services, and to ensure that the financial foundation of the province of Ontario is as strong as it needs to be. Economies rest on strong foundations. Part of that foundation is in financial services, and a key part of financial services is in accountancy.

At the same time, it’s important to recognize what this bill is and what this bill is not. We have had in the province of Ontario statutes which govern three branches of the accountancy profession: chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants. They are the only three branches of the accounting profession—however described, wherever certified—that are governed by statute in the province of Ontario. It is time to update those statutes because those statutes contain very important public protections. In some cases, the protections were inserted some decades ago, so we have been approached by the three branches of the profession about updating the public protection and regulation of these three branches of the accounting profession.

I want to make very clear what this bill does not do. It does not prevent, would not prevent, anybody from practising any form of accounting if they, today, can practise that form of accounting in the province of Ontario. It does not take away their ability to practise accounting in Ontario if they have that right to do so today. Wherever they obtained their training in the world—wherever—if they have the right today to perform that type of accounting, they’ll be able to do it after the passage of Bill 158. It is as simple as that.

In many ways, accounting is one of the most open of the professions we have. We have been working very hard as a government to ensure the most openness for professions, no matter where people obtain their designations, training or degrees. It’s important to recognize that nothing in this bill will prevent somebody from practising accounting in Ontario if they now can.

1620

Let me just speak to the types of accounting that you can practise in the province of Ontario. Every member of this Legislature will remember that several years ago we came to a unanimous conclusion and put an end to the legislative debate over the practice of public accounting, often known as the accounting involving an audit function. We agreed that we should set up in the province of Ontario the Public Accountants Council, which would be able to determine who could practise public accounting. It was a very important step. The Legislature was unanimous, which doesn’t always happen. The three branches of the profession, regulated by statute in Ontario, came together and we now have the Public Accountants

Council, which helps to determine who can practise public accounting—the auditing function, essentially—in Ontario. Nothing in this bill touches that—nothing.

What this bill does in updating those three branches of the profession governed by statute is update public protections such as the following: the licensing requirements; the ability of each of the bodies to inspect the books and records of their members; the ability of each of the bodies to reach in to an otherwise private practice to make sure the public interest is being protected, to make sure that people aren't representing themselves as holders of one of their licences who do not have the requisite training, who have been suspended or who have been subject to some discipline; in fact, the ability to subject people who are members of their associations to disciplinary hearings, where appropriate, and of course with the appropriate safeguards.

All of these ensure that the public is protected. The public is protected because when a member of the public goes to an accounting firm, chances are pretty good the member of the public is not an expert in accounting. That's why they're seeking out the expert. So you're looking for the appropriate degree of public protection.

There has been some discussion about the use of certain words, initials and designations obtained elsewhere. What the three statutes regulate are the use of designations in the province of Ontario. They do so to ensure that the public knows, when certain designations or letters or combinations of words are used, that they are subject to the restrictions inherent in the statute. You have three statutes, three bodies, three sets of public protections, and those are the only branches of accounting that have those statutory protections for the public. This bill is about updating, enhancing, modernizing and supporting those very public protections.

As a government, we will continue to look for ways to address any issue that might be a barrier, but there are no barriers erected by this bill. It is about modernizing the type of public protection, it is about taking the steps you would expect that a government would take to ensure that very important financial foundation, which is essential to a strong economy, essential to much of our daily life, has the provisions that 21st-century Ontario demands, not that 20th-century Ontario permitted. It is very much a modernization approach that everybody would expect that we have.

I want to thank the members of the three branches of the profession that I have outlined for asking that the additional burdens and protections be inserted, because they are responsibilities that their members will have, and they are powers that the three governing bodies will have to go in and inspect practices, inspect books and records, discipline, suspend and take relevant action—again, to protect the public interest.

There are a number of different provisions in the statutes, but I just conclude where I started: that this is about three branches of the profession, not more. It is about the three branches that are governed by their own statute in the province of Ontario. No other part of the

accounting profession has a statute governing it, governing a public interest, in the province of Ontario. None other has a direct statute governing it.

It's about updating those protections and those statutes, and there is nothing in this legislation that will prevent anybody from practising a form of accounting if today they have the right to do so. There is nothing in this bill that will stop anybody who has acquired their accounting services anywhere in the world from coming and setting up an accounting practice in the province of Ontario, either alone, in conjunction with others, in a business or in a firm, large or small; in any part of the province, urban, rural, north, south, east or west. They can do it. If they can do it now, they'll be able to do it when the bill is passed. There's no change whatsoever. That is pretty open.

This is the right thing to do; it's the right step to take.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to take part in the third reading of Bill 158.

Members of the House will recall that the bill replaces the three existing statutes that govern Ontario's chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants. These are very large organizations. The three of them together include roughly 65,000 accountants and many thousands of student accountants. All three statutes are going to become public acts so that they're modern, transparent and suitable to the present and eventual role of these bodies in licensing public accountants.

In this respect, the Accounting Professions Act complements changes that we made a number of years ago, in 2004, with the Public Accounting Act. The Accounting Professions Act will balance the needs of the accounting profession and the public interest. It provides that all three bodies must govern their members in the public interest. The bill would ensure that all the designated accounting bodies in the province have the legal tools they need to oversee the members of their profession.

Two of the existing acts are very old. The CMA statute was originally passed in 1941. The Chartered Accountants Act dates from 1956, and it was based on a predecessor act going back to 1937. The CGAs have the most modern statute of the three, and even it is more than 25 years old. Administrative law has changed in that time, and administrative practices have changed. Bill 158 brings the accounting profession's governance into modern times, into modern administrative law practice protocols.

Some of the existing powers of the governing bodies would be expanded or clarified so that they can ensure a higher standard of professionalization in the way their members work for their clients. I'll give you some examples: the power to discipline former members for actions or omissions that occurred during the time of their membership; the power to verify the mental or physical capacity of a member to continue practising; the power to get custody over records of an incapable or

deceased member, of course with court permission, to protect the interests of a client that they had done work for. There's a duty to keep information acquired in the course of governance confidential, except as required to carry out statutory duties.

1630

In addition, all these three statutes in the bill ensure that a member of one of the accounting bodies or someone wishing to become a member or a client of a member can see in the statute itself the basic regulatory scheme. It provides in detail who is a member, how one can become a member, what are the powers of the governing body over that member and what kinds of subjects are covered in the bylaws. This is important information both for the members and for the public who are using accounting services.

We continue to be committed to working with our colleagues in the private sector to strengthen the governing of the accounting profession. The bill would also ensure public accountability by allowing public representatives to be added to the governing bodies of the certified general accountants and the certified management accountants. The chartered accountants already have public representatives on their council and have shown that this model really does encourage policies and administrative practices that benefit all Ontarians, as well as benefiting the accountants themselves.

The Accounting Professions Act, if passed, would create a clear structure for the governance of the key participants in our economy by setting out guidelines for standards and ensuring that there is public recourse when there are those rare but inevitable cases of professional misconduct. Just as an aside, in these very difficult economic times that we've experienced over the last few years, this is an essential element in ensuring public confidence in the accounting profession and its governance.

The proposed legislation would not impose new burdens on the accounting body, but it does confirm and make clear their powers and their obligations. It would also not impose any new additional requirements or burdens on clients, but again makes clear what the rules are for the accountants, for their governing body, and what the reasonable expectations of the public can be. In short, the bill helps ensure that accountants and their clients all know where they stand, and that the governing bodies can control the competence and the proper conduct of their members while at the same time treating those members fairly.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, the Certified General Accountants of Ontario and the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario have all, collectively and individually, asked for these changes. They recognize that they need stronger tools. They need a clearer statement of how their governing protocols will work. This is in their best interest. This is in the best interest of the public. Regulation of professions in the first and in the last analysis is really about protection of the public. It would make the three main bodies accountable to the public and, as I've said a couple of times now,

give them those tools to govern their members. That's one of the key aspects of this piece of legislation.

It would also ensure greater transparency for the accounting profession. It's going to better protect the clients and it's going to ensure that each organization is working with the most modern and up-to-date set of administrative law and administrative practice tools.

Even more clearly, this act will clearly set out what members of the public can expect in terms of, if you will, quality controls that the accounting profession will impose on their members and oversee so that the public, unlike in some jurisdictions elsewhere, away from Ontario—down in the US, there were some problems with the accounting profession there that led to some of the economic trials and tribulations. This is shoring up the profession, again, to give them the tools so that those unfortunate circumstances don't happen again.

I should also say that here—in Ontario, Ontario prides itself on the quality of the accounting profession in Ontario. Ontario is also, as we all know, supporting the idea of a single securities regulator, and we're passionate about having it located here in Toronto. If Toronto and Ontario are going to become the centerpiece for securities regulation, a large piece of that regulation is the quality of the accounting services that are brought to bear on those issues. This modernization of the accounting profession, the clarification of the roles of the members of the governing bodies and what members of the public can expect, be they small, individual entrepreneurs operating a barbershop or a corner store, or someone operating a national or multinational company headquartered here in Toronto—we want to provide and we want to set the context for quality accounting services here. This is what this legislation is designed to do.

I'm very happy to have worked on this with the Attorney General and with members of the accounting profession over the past number of years to ensure that we introduce the very best possible legislation.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Just briefly: I was a little surprised to hear the Attorney General talk in fairly succinct language about how things were not going to change in Ontario from the status quo. I listened very carefully, and I think what he said is accurate. However, he didn't say some other things: that there will be some variations in the degrees to which people can practise under the new regulations. I'll be speaking to the bill later, and I would perhaps spend some time talking about those degrees that are involved in the House in this particular bill. Even though in our party, we support the bill on second reading and will probably support the bill on third reading—that is a “probably”—we do have some serious concerns about the international aspects of this trade. I will speak to that more fully when it's my turn to speak.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I was going to decline the chance for a two-minute question and comment on the comments

by both the Attorney General and his parliamentary assistant because I will be speaking to this in short order.

Folks are indeed interested in Bill 158. Again, I'm sure Mr. Zimmer, the parliamentary assistant, will agree that we found it far more exciting and interesting than many anticipated at the outset. There was actually some stuff there, something to get our collective teeth into. I will be speaking to it. I'm probably going to praise him again in the second round.

I notice that the Attorney General has now thrown the ball clearly and thoroughly into his parliamentary assistant's court. Again, the PA does the heavy lifting. The Attorney General makes the glamorous announcement of third reading but leaves the more substantive stuff, the viscera, to his skilled parliamentary assistant. But the parliamentary assistant has big shoulders; he's got to. I understand how he grew them, because I've watched him here, coping like Atlas, bearing the world on his shoulders, as PA to the Attorney General.

We're not going to be necessarily in agreement. It's the 95.5% syndrome, and I'm grateful to at least one of the presenters for raising and expressing interest in the 95.5%. Ninety-five per cent of this bill is relatively benign from everybody's point of view. There's 5%, though, that remains problematic, and I know that in a very sort of roundabout way the parliamentary assistant has tried to address it. They're trying to pretend or give the impression that they're acknowledging that, but they won't meet it head-on, and I suppose that's the question I put to the PA, since he's left alone: Why not head-on, PA?

1640

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to echo my friend from Welland's confidence in the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General. There is no doubt that he's a great member and that he's able to explain the details of the bill and defend it all the way.

As one of the members of this House, I heard a lot about Bill 158, but I didn't get a chance to sit on a committee to listen to deputations from many different people. Certainly, I got a lot of emails from people concerned about the bill, and I went to the Attorney General and he explained it to me. It was comforting to hear from him that the passage of the bill is not going to change the procedure and the practice of accounting in Ontario.

Also, I had the chance to speak to Chris May two weeks ago, and he explained the bill to me—why it's being introduced and why it's being debated.

I still have some concerns, especially in terms of the fine. The Attorney General and the parliamentary assistant didn't speak about this issue, which was brought to my attention by many different accountants from across the province of Ontario. As elected officials, we have to voice our concerns and we have to voice the concerns of our constituents.

There is no doubt about it: I'm a great supporter of the Attorney General and of Bill 158, because it's about time we modernized the bill and the accounting profession in the province of Ontario, to protect the people of Ontario. Also, we have to make sure that this bill is not going to create any barriers for anyone, but the Attorney General in his speech was giving me his assurance that this bill is not going to prohibit anyone from practising. Whether or not this bill passes, it's not going to change any of those practices.

So I'm here today and I'm looking forward to hearing what the opposition has to say about this bill.

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

The member for Willowdale, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. David Zimmer: Again, I want to thank my colleague opposite and my colleague on this side of the House for their very kind remarks.

This accounting legislation with the three accounting bodies—the CAs, the CMAs and the CGAs—is something that I've had the privilege to work on now for a number of years since I've been at the Attorney General's office. I also did some work on the 2004 legislation that came before this House.

What I want to say, by way of compliment to the entire accounting profession, is that each of the accounting bodies here in Ontario worked with our government in a very professional way to ensure that we brought forward the very best piece of legislation. Those three accounting bodies are thoughtful and committed. They stand their ground and they all had ideas on what should be included in the legislation. Through a process of conversation and back-and-forth consideration of viewpoints, I think that we've come forward with the very best piece of legislation.

But I want to leave you with one thought: At all times in the discussions with those three accounting bodies, I can tell you that when an issue came up that revolved around the public interest here in Ontario and here in Canada, each of those accounting bodies put that public interest before any interest of their particular accounting bodies. That is commendable.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is an interesting debate. The Attorney General talked about how nothing is going to change, how no barriers are going to be erected. However, this bill attracted the attention of the British consul general. He had a meeting with the Attorney General over this particular bill and wrote the Attorney General a letter on March 19 of this year. I won't read the entire letter, but he said:

“We understand your desire to protect Ontario consumers of chartered accountancy services from confusion, although we have seen no evidence that such confusion really exists. Our experience suggests that consumers of chartered accountancy services are sophisticated rather than naive. They are not generally confused by the

variety of chartered accountancy designations, and certainly not by those of international leaders, such as ACCA, CIMA—both British designations—“and ICAEW”—EW standing for England and Wales. “We are not aware of any other WTO member or sub-federal jurisdiction outside Canada taking the same view as Ontario.” I believe the World Trade Organization represents about 172 countries in the world. “I would suggest that the argument for the need to protect Ontario consumers is a distraction,” says the British consul general in Toronto.

As one would expect from a British consul, he goes on to say, “I would therefore urge you to ensure that Bill 158, however it is ultimately drafted, gives you as Attorney General the power to designate certain organizations and their associated chartered accountancy designations as acceptable under Ontario law. Under such a provision you would then be in a position to designate organizations such as the ACCA, CIMA and other organizations (with permitted designations....),” and permit those organizations by indicating them as a CIMA (UK). That is his solution. He goes on to say a few other things but not relating to the solution of the problem.

We also have a letter from Deloitte and Touche, who point out, “However, we would like to express our concern about an overly restrictive clause within the bill, which will place internationally qualified professional accountants at a disadvantage when they immigrate to Ontario. Deloitte operates in an increasingly global environment and is actively engaged in employing internationally trained professionals who make a significant contribution to our global projects. Deloitte believes that this clause will act as an employment barrier, as it proposes a ban on the use of foreign professional designations on documents, including resumés, business cards and email signatures.” However, when a company is tendering for business, they do allow for the use of the foreign designation.

It seems to me that Deloitte—and, I understand, KPMG as well—are concerned about the clause that limits foreign-trained professionals from entering into business in Ontario.

That, in conjunction with two other items, I would say—the first is that Canada and the European Union are looking at a comprehensive economic trade agreement, and those negotiations are ongoing as we speak. They have been progressing since May 2009 and are currently entering into negotiations on how a trade agreement between the European Union and Canada could take place. Certainly in a world that is becoming a smaller and smaller place all the time, these kinds of restrictions that are placed on foreign-designated professionals—and after all, that’s what they are; they are foreign-designated professionals—would create some difficulty in those negotiations.

Canada, as a matter of interest, is the third-largest customer of the EU and the EU is the second-biggest customer of Canada. It’s a very large trading bloc that we have access to, and there is some concern about that

particular designation and how it’s going to affect those members.

1650

The other concern that I would express is that Ontario is the only jurisdiction within the World Trade Organization that is taking this kind of stance with foreign-trained professionals. What about the Ontario-trained professionals who are operating all over the world? I would suggest, given the quality of Ontario accountants in all three designations—very high standards, very highly respected throughout the world—that a tremendous number of them are operating all over the world. Certainly, Ontario-trained chartered accountants are working for international companies. They get transferred all over the world. The same can be said for CGAs or CMAs. If other world trade organizations look to Ontario, look to Canada, and see this kind of restriction being placed on foreign-trained professionals, what’s to stop them from putting that same kind of restriction on Ontario-trained professionals when they enter a foreign country? If that were to happen, of course, the consequences of that would rest squarely on the shoulders of this government. If I were this government, I would be somewhat concerned about that happening, particularly in any one of five major countries.

I also received a letter from the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada. They have a designation called CAFM. This bill, if not amended—it will probably not be amended at this point—will not allow aboriginal financial officers to use their designation of CAFM. I’ll be interested to see how the associations handle the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada when they begin using that designation in the future in advertising or in other areas, which this bill expressly prohibits. It will be interesting to see how that rolls out.

The other area that I have concern about is this government’s inconsistency. In the speech from the throne just two months ago, in March, the words “Open Ontario” were used 17 times. This bill brings in a very restrictive clause. Four times in the speech from the throne, the government said “the world needs Ontario,” but if we shut out the world, I would suggest that we are likely to reap that which we have sown. Our world does need Ontario to succeed, and we will, just as we always have. “It begins with a new, five-year plan for a more open Ontario,” is another quote from the throne speech.

I suppose “Open Ontario” in the throne speech is something that the government talked about then. That was then; this is now. It was just like the Premier saying that he wasn’t going to raise our taxes. He even took an oath and signed a pledge to that effect, and he changed his mind. He said in the speech from the throne that opening Ontario was a major thrust of this government; it seems to have waned with the passage of Bill 158. Certainly Ontario is less open now than it was in March.

The designation that will show some restriction to how foreign-trained accountants can practise in Ontario I think makes the province a little bit weaker, and that’s a shame. We have some of the best-trained accountants in

their fields. We have nothing to take a back seat to anywhere in the world as long as those designations are clearly marked out and no one is coming up with invented names, which is something that I think the government should focus on, as opposed to foreign-trained professionals, who are known throughout the world for their accountancy and their professionalism in that area.

I'm concerned about that. I'm concerned about whether there won't be any consequences to the passing of this bill, now or in the future. The British consul general—in my term here, over the last 15 years, I don't ever remember a foreign consul general getting involved in a piece of legislation going through the House. Even the Americans, who are far more intrusive in that nature in Canada, I can never remember getting involved in a piece of legislation going through the House. I think the government should have given that a little more thought than they did. So I make the government aware that we are very concerned about that. Hopefully, the consequences in the future will not weaken Ontario because of it.

That said, I look forward to the words of our esteemed member from Welland. I'm sure he will enlighten us on some more of the consequences of this bill. Other than that, I look forward to supporting this bill, personally, when it comes to a vote. We'll see what happens to it when it hits royal assent.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and add a few comments in the time allotted to me on the Accounting Professions Act. I actually have the notes I had written for myself the last time I had this opportunity.

We're trying to modernize an act that would govern three different bodies. I think the minister this afternoon said it: The governance of one of those bodies is some 25 years old, so clearly it's time to look at some of those points and refresh and renew them. So we're just updating here.

The minister also said that there was no change. I think that was possibly in regard to what the former speaker was talking about. He assured us that there were items that we should not be worried about in this particular act.

There was consultation with the chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants, and they were very supportive throughout the flow of this bill to this state, where we're at third reading. I made note here some time ago that I suspected that this bill would go to committee, like all our bills seem to do. Of course, that did happen, and people could once again make points that they thought were salient to the bill.

At the time I spoke last, we were talking about these items, and I mentioned that we were coming close to when people had to file tax. Not too long after that date, we're here at third reading, so I think this bill has moved reasonably swiftly in terms of the legislative agenda. I think it will bring transparency and clarity to the public, and certainly to the three bodies that it governs.

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

The member for Halton, you have up to two minutes to respond, if you so choose.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I see that Christina Blizzard in the Toronto Sun on May 11 wrote an article on this and talked about the British consul general, Mr. Jonathan Dart, and used his comments liberally in her article. I would recommend it to you. She suggests that "this legislation is parochial at best and protectionist at worst." That word "protectionist" is a very serious word when dealing with international trade agreements, as we in Canada know. We have to remember that "this province isn't an island unto itself. The world is a global marketplace," and we have to move in that direction.

I don't see the intent of this bill as being protectionist. I see the intent of this bill as trying to protect the consumer from confusion. I understand that. The problem is, I think, that in accomplishing that, we are moving into an area that might be seen to be protectionist, and that scares me when you're dealing with the international community and what the international community can do back to you. Canada, as we recognize, is a trading nation; fully 30% of our gross domestic product is exported goods and services. In comparison, in the United States, about 2% of their gross domestic product is exported. They're a consuming nation. We depend on the world for our standard of living, and that's a very delicate balance that we have to maintain. I'm concerned that, regardless of the intent of this bill, it can be seen as protectionist.

1700

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I can tell folks that it's my expectation that this bill is going to go to a vote this afternoon, and while far be it from me to predict how individual members using their conscience, their sense of responsibility to their riding and to the province will vote, I have a strong suspicion that the bill is going to pass. I found this a most interesting exercise, and once again I want to thank the parliamentary assistant, who was a gentleman throughout the process—and who became somewhat adversarial at certain points in the process. But as usual, I wouldn't expect anything less from him. He was a gentleman, and he was generous to all of us on the committee.

Now, you already heard some reference to the Christina Blizzard column. I happened to bring that along, too. But I also noticed in the Toronto Star—because I'm going to open with this. I'm going to come back to it; we're going to get there. You've got to know what your destination is before you head out on your journey or else you don't know where you're going, which quite frankly was part of the problem, in my view, with this bill because as it progressed, as we saw draft 1 of various amendments, draft 2, draft 3 being emailed to Lord knows who, we saw a legislative drafting style that was more akin to spewing than it was to craftsmanship or craftspersonship. So the Blizzard column was interesting, as Ms. Blizzard's column tends to be.

But the Toronto Star's May 12 editorial, quoting Michaëlle Jean, our Governor General—who, as a result of Michael Ignatieff's inappropriate intervention, will probably never again be considered, even for a moment, for reappointment as Governor General. He effectively ousted her as a Liberal. It's a shame that he would damage her career in such a way, but that's something for Michael Ignatieff to live with, not for us to live with. I'm something of a fan of—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Chudleigh is bang on. I'm a fan of Michaëlle Jean. The title of this editorial is "Why Diversity Matters." Michaëlle Jean is quoted as saying, "Saying yes to diversity is saying yes to modernity, to opportunity, and to the very future of our country.... But saying no carries a huge price. For each time social exclusion closes a door, another door is opened to desolation, frustration, and despair."

It's interesting that those comments would be reported as we debate third reading. I already made reference, in my brief two-minute response to the parliamentary assistant, that the bill was severed by some of the submitters to the committee as a 95%-5% issue. Look, they're right; 95% of the bill is inoffensive, it's benign; as a matter of fact it's, for my taste, a little too benign. But let's make one thing perfectly, perfectly clear: This bill does not regulate accountants nor does it protect the public. Any charlatan, any gangster, Conrad Black—if he were to be allowed back into the country, and as a non-citizen and now a felon one hopes that he would never be allowed back into Canada—any of these crooks and gangsters can open up shop and call themselves accountants. Not wanting to confuse the public—give me a break. The fact that this government had the opportunity in this exercise to truly protect the public and to avoid confusion yet didn't even venture one millimetre on to the turf of regulating the profession surely was more than just a tragic oversight. Any charlatan can call themselves an accountant. This bill is designed to protect the public? I don't think so. This bill is designed to avoid confusion? I don't think so, either.

All of us have received letters; I suppose those on the committee, a few more than others. I got a letter from Nancy Miotto at R. K. Shaver Chartered Accountant, 1 Church Street, St. Catharines. She, of course, writes very respectfully to me; I suspect this is identical to the letters that other chartered accountants have written to other MPPs in other parts of the province, but those things happen; I understand. Sometimes, because of the culture of a particular profession, people just happen to think the same way, even to the point of sharing some of the same terminology, some of the same lexicon. But it's a perfectly legitimate letter.

She exhorts me to support the passage of Bill 158, and I understand; she's a chartered accountant, and the chartered accountants, along with the CGAs and the CMAs are getting statutory teeth—their bodies are gaining statutory teeth so that they can investigate, so that they can prosecute, so that they can control people

within their respective body—not accountants across the board, just within their respective body.

So there's Ms. Miotto, and I appreciate receiving the correspondence from her. However, as in all these things, she writes, "In my view this is a reasonable restriction"—of course, she's referring to restriction on non-Ontario/Canadian accountants who have initials after their name—"to ensure that consumers and the public can tell the difference between an Ontario-based designation that is subject to Ontario laws, whose members understand Ontario tax and business law and who are regulated by professional bodies in Ontario...."

First of all, none of these accountants in either of these three groups are subject, per se, to Ontario laws. There's nothing in this legislation that creates standards for accountants. In fact, all of the three appendices give the respective accounting body the power to set the standards. So it's not quite on target. I'm not criticizing Ms. Miotto, because she's an accountant, not a lawyer, and I just suggest that it was not correct. My fear is that the government may have wanted to create this impression. My fear is that the government might have reinforced this inaccurate perception of the legislation. It's just a fear. I'm not about to point the finger at anybody today. It's just a fear.

So I've received these letters, and I understand the interest, especially when it comes to 95% of the legislation which is about giving these three bodies the statutory authority to investigate, fine etc. But you see, I've also gotten letters like you have and you have and you have from other folks too. Like the letter I got from S. Asokan in Mississauga, who tells us that the initials after his name are ACMA, obtained in the United Kingdom, in Britain, and that the legislation—he doesn't use this language, but it became current during the course of the hearings that the big three were referred to as "the oligopoly." I like that because it sounds sort of heinous and quasi-Stalinist. So the oligopolists, the members of the oligopoly, attended at the committee, and I had occasion to say, "Aha, Mr. Zimmer, there's the oligopoly." So you see, you've got these two communities: You have a community of members of the big three—the CAs, CGAs and CMAs—and then you have any number of people who are Canadian-trained as well as foreign-trained.

1710

One of the most interesting exchanges—and I know the parliamentary assistant remembers it—was the contribution made by the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario. They prepared a well-documented brief. As a matter of fact, as a result of their brief, I asked the research librarian, Susanne Hynes, to prepare a paper on the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario, and she confirmed everything that they had to say in their submission, which includes letters to the parliamentary assistant and from the parliamentary assistant.

Now, I don't know—I read the letter from the parliamentary assistant at the time, and I watched the parliamentary assistant's body language while it was being referred to by the party making the submission, and I'm pretty sure that parliamentary assistants don't warrant a

signature machine like the Premier has and like ministers have—because they don't really sign their own correspondence. Lesser ones may sign it, but greater ones don't sign their own correspondence. The Premier's scroll that has David Peterson or Dalton McGuinty written on it isn't signed by Dalton McGuinty. It's a signature machine. Mr. McGuinty doesn't sit there late into the night with his magic marker signing these things. So I'm sure that the parliamentary assistant signed it.

I'm also pretty sure that he didn't sit down at his word processor, at his computer, at his—I'm not sure if he's a Mac guy or a PC guy. In his heart, he's probably a Mac guy, because he's a relatively creative and bright person, but Queen's Park is pretty PC and IBMish. So the parliamentary assistant didn't sit down at his computer and draft this letter, I'm pretty sure of that—one, because the letter probably would have been more supportive of the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario; and two, because it probably wouldn't have been over two pages long single-spaced. If he had drafted his own letter, it wouldn't have been as—dare I say it—weaselly as the letter in fact is, because bureaucrats write these letters, staff write these letters. It was a politically correct letter, and it was basically telling these people to buzz off—which wouldn't have been politically correct, but which would have been far more candid and honest.

What we learned in committee is that it's not just foreign-trained accountants who are being excluded from—we're going to get to that. The argument—people could hear me rolling my eyes in committee, because it turned into a pretty—the observation, if you were a fly on the wall watching, one would have regarded it as pretty silly, because it was about the alphabet and alphabet envy. Then, as one of the presenters concurred with me in their report—we hadn't talked before—we referred to it as alphabet soup. But what we learned is that there are homegrown, Ontario-based bodies, like the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario, who have been pleading for the right to establish their own regime similar to CAs, CGAs and CMAs, who have been politically denied that prerogative.

I remember—oh, I remember it so well—we were sitting just about here, because not much has changed for this caucus since the Tory days. Howard Hampton was the leader; he was to my left. There aren't very many people to my left, but he was to my left at the time. Howard Hampton was to my left, and the government had its public accounting bill, which would give CGAs access to the world of public accounting.

CGAs have been denied that access for a long, long time. Chris Stockwell—you'll recall him. The junket to Europe did him in, the Paris trip with his family paid for by somebody other than him. He was over there in that corner near you, Speaker—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: His riding association paid for it.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Chudleigh says that his riding association paid for it. That's a nice cover. But there he was, and Hampton said, "I'm going to stand up," because the accountants were here that day and the government was mostly gone.

What was really happening is that the government had every intention of milking the CGAs for one more election at least, in terms of political donations, because successive governments had teased the CGAs about entering into the—

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, that's assigning motive.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, I am. You bet your boots I am.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Under section 23, members are not supposed to assign motives to government or other members.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'll remind the member of that on your behalf.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You bet your boots I was.

So here we have a political party that had every intention of drawing this out for at least one more election campaign, maybe two. And quite frankly, the opposition Liberals weren't indifferent to the potential of this being drawn out. But Hampton stood up and called for second and third reading simultaneously. The government didn't know whether to spit or go blind, and sure enough, they agreed; and sure enough, everybody's jaws dropped when they realized what they had done. The CGAs were as happy as could be, and the CAs got over their discomfort and everything has worked out fine. They had a professor sort of setting up a program whereby there was some agreement or some efforts at some agreement, and so on. So the CGAs are in now. They're not on the outside; they're inside.

But as I say, we learned that there are others who are still very much on the outside and who are Ontario-grown, and that's why, again, the reference by one accountant who wrote one letter—there were others—to "an Ontario-based designation that is subject to Ontario laws, whose members understand Ontario tax and business law...." You see, it's not quite the whole story, because we have bodies like the SPAO that are Ontarian, homegrown and Canadian-based that aren't admitted into this world of self-regulation either. I'm thankful to Susanne Hynes for her help in that.

Then the other reference was made to the fact that those particular provisions in the area of section 26 and the various appendices—"this is in fact a carry-over provision from the current CA Act, which has been the law in this province since the days of Louis St. Laurent." Again, this is the provision that offended a whole lot of folks. The problem is that in the days of Louis St. Laurent, we didn't have a whole lot of people coming here from Sri Lanka or Ceylon, as it was then; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from India; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from the Middle East; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from Shanghai or Singapore or Hong Kong. The people who were coming here in the days of Louis St. Laurent tended to be European immigrants. That's the reality of it; I remember.

The world has changed dramatically. As a matter of fact, the majority of new Canadians come from places other than Europe. They come from places that, in the

days of Louis St. Laurent, were considered very exotic and very foreign. Those were also the days when folks didn't travel the way folks travel now, in the days before Anthony Bourdain and the travel-eating shows on cable television.

1720

The reality is that a whole lot has changed, and that's why Michaëlle Jean wisely said that saying yes to diversity is saying yes to modernity, because what we learned is that members of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants—I suspect that that's the largest single group; I don't know for a certainty because we didn't have all that information—was established in 1919; a royal chartered body—this is a royal chartered body—a membership of 172,000 members and students in 165 countries. These are people who would dearly love to put their designation, awarded them from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, after their names—to wit, ACMA or FCMA. They believe, and I suspect the CAs, CGAs and CMAs believe too, that this legislation will prevent them from doing that. Whether or not it will is a totally different story. I've described this legislation in committee as being very much a dog's breakfast, the way it was put together, cobbled together at the end, having all sorts of stuff in it that many a lawyer and, indeed, a judge will probably have a great deal of fun with down the road.

We also had a pretty remarkable attendance. I've never seen a member from the foreign diplomatic corps expressing an interest in legislation we were passing. We had the British consul general come, and I think the parliamentary assistant was as interested as I was in the fact that was a relatively novel scenario: a foreign government sending their ambassadorial representative, the consul general, to a legislative committee here at Queen's Park to speak to legislation that Queen's Park was contemplating. It was unusual, wasn't it, parliamentary assistant? Of course it was. You can nod more enthusiastically than that; it's okay.

The British consul general, using diplomatic language, made note of the fact that in the UK there are no—I'm quoting from him now, because he accompanied his attendance with a letter dated March 19, 2010, to the minister:

"In the UK there are no restrictions on the freedom of chartered accountants from Ontario (or any other part of Canada) to advertise their qualifications and we have no intention of introducing any at the present time." That, I suppose, is diplomatic-speak: "at the present time." If he didn't mean "at the present time and maybe down the road," he wouldn't have said that. Then he goes on:

"One of the most important chapters of the current negotiations on the Canada-EU economic and trade agreement (CETA) concerns the liberalisation of trade and services, a chapter which may include substantive provisions on the mutual recognition of qualifications. Ontario is playing an important role in these negotiations and we are hopeful of progress towards a substantial liberalisation of EU-Canada trade. I am concerned that Bill 158, as drafted, could limit the extent to which

Ontario is able to agree to liberalisation in the chartered accountancy area. I would therefore urge you to ensure that Bill 158, however it is ultimately drafted, gives you as Attorney General the power to designate certain organisations and their associated chartered accountancy designations as acceptable under Ontario law. Under such a provision, you would then be in a position to designate organisations such as the ACCA, CIMA and other organizations (with permitted designations, for example, of 'ACCA [UK],' 'CIMA [UK],' 'ICAEW [England and Wales],' 'ICAS [Scotland]' and 'ICAI [Ireland]'.")

Pretty impressive that the British consul general—one notes that in England an accountant is an accountant, and if you have qualifications that aren't obtained, I presume, fraudulently, or you aren't misrepresenting yourself, you're entitled to put those qualifications after your name. In fact, research officer James Charlton, at my request, prepared a research paper, because I asked him to give us the data on England. He reported back, "Furthermore, there do not appear to be any legislative restrictions on accountants using their foreign designations when practising accountancy in the United Kingdom."

So what's the story here? What's going on? Indeed, that minority group, the anti-oligopolists, as they would describe themselves, that minority group of foreign-trained accountants, said, "Look. Let us put 'FCMA (UK)' after our name. That way it will be clear to one and all that that's a post-nomial," I believe we were told, although I haven't been able to find "post-nomial" in the dictionary, so "post-nomial," Mr. Zimmer, could have been a neologism that was thrust upon us—so that "post-nomial" is identified as an Ontario one. That seems like an eminently reasonable proposal, and I suppose it was too reasonable for the government to have adopted.

Himanshu Shah—this is not just CIMA—writes, as a qualified chartered accountant from India, that he is concerned and regrets that he won't be able to identify himself with the letter designations ACA or FCA, as a fellow, even if he puts in brackets "India" after them.

References were made to other professions. Let's talk about lawyers for a minute—why not? Lawyers, first of all, are regulated; granted, it's not by the government, but nobody is allowed to practise law here in the province of Ontario and hold himself out to be a lawyer who isn't licensed by the law society. That's clear.

I took a look at the Law Society Act—of course I did, Mr. Zimmer. And in the prohibitions and various offences, why, it seems to me that it would be perfectly legal for anybody in the province of Ontario to put after his name, on his or her business card, "member of the bar of Alberta," or the Law Society of Alberta—I don't know whether Alberta has a law society or not; they probably do—or "member of the Law Society of Great Britain," or UK; "member of the Law Society of"—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Mr. Berardinetti; I hadn't thought of that—"member of the

Law Society of India,” Sri Lanka, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia.

And indeed, Mr. Berardinetti points out the very post-nominal QC, which isn't awarded anymore in Canada or Ontario but is awarded in all Commonwealth countries, as I understand it. I don't know how many still do it, but nobody is prohibited from putting QC after their name, even if their QC—because QCs are really, in most cases, not all but most cases, about political patronage. You give them to your political friends. They don't really designate—there have been some very good QCs and there have been some QCs who were mediocre but who had deep pockets. Mr. Sterling is a capable QC; he earned his. But there are more than a few QCs who simply have fat wallets and who have been generous to their political party, the party that happens to be in power, that used to award, I think in January, New Year's Day, Queen's counsels awards. But there's no prohibition against a QC from India putting “QC” after his or her name here in Ontario. You can't call yourself a lawyer. That's the significant factor. You can't call yourself a lawyer, you can't say you're in the practice of law, you can't offer legal services—but anybody can call themselves an accountant. Anybody can practise accountancy and anybody can advertise themselves as providing accountant services.

Confusion? What could be more confusing than that? I suppose I challenge the committee to illustrate—just go out there in the street now and ask any number of people. I don't care how big a polling group you want. Ask the same number—the pharmacists did polls in those 20 ridings and identified seats that, according to the polling as of last week, would fall to the Liberals, or seats that would fall to the Tories—there were more seats that would fall to the Tories—and seats that would fall to the NDP because of the decline of Tory poll support.

Ask any one of these people what the difference is between a CA and a CMA and a CGA. “I don't know” would be the response, one after the other. Heck, you've got real estate brokers and salespeople and insurance brokers who have the whole alphabet after their name—any number of designations awarded by their professions. I don't begrudge them that, but nobody is prohibiting them from doing that.

I think the law could be very clear and simple. If somebody practising accountancy misrepresents himself or herself, I agree that should be an offence. If somebody puts CGA after their name when they're not a member of CGA and authorized to practise by CGA and supervised by CGA, that should be an offence, or if somebody puts CMA or CA after their name; similarly, if somebody puts FCA (India) after their name who isn't an FCA from India, that should be an offence if they're practising accountancy.

1730

You and I both, Speaker, we get those single-spaced letters with no borders, the ones that are typewritten on both sides, and they're usually four or five pages long, and they're marked “confidential” and “for MPPs' eyes only.” We get through around a page and a half of one on

a good day. But sometimes the authors of those letters tend to put a whole lot of alphabet after their name. I have no idea what it means. I'm not sure the authors of those peculiar and particular letters know what it means.

The whacky amendment was the one that said, “Nothing in this section”—we're talking about section 26—“affects ... the right of a person to use any term, title, initials, designation or description”—we're talking about FCAs, for instance, or members of CIMA—“identifying himself or herself as an accountant, if the person does not reside, have an office or offer or provide accounting services in Ontario.” Well, no kidding. For Pete's sake, of course not; they don't reside in Ontario, they don't have an office in Ontario. In case their car has one of those magnetic sticky things on the side and they're driving through, they're going to Niagara Falls on their way to do some cross-border shopping in Buffalo; they won't be affected. I don't know. They don't reside in, they don't practise in the province of Ontario. What a stupid—that was silly; I'll leave it at silly—amendment.

So we're terribly concerned. We are terribly concerned about the exclusionary nature of this bill as it stands but don't begrudge the CAs, the CMAs, the CGAs anything in terms of the capacity to regulate themselves. Furthermore, I suspect the whole thing is pretty academic, because I suspect that, as was commented on by more than a few presenters, some of this stuff, these restrictions about identifying designations that you've acquired honestly, will fall by the wayside once the courts get hold of them. As I say, there will be plenty for courts and lawyers to present to the courts in that regard.

But here we are; Christina Blizzard: “Dalton McGuinty's government has been repeating, ad nauseam”—I'm Catholic, so I know a little bit of Latin; I know what “ad nauseam” means, and so does everybody else; it means you want to vomit—“its mantra about ‘Open Ontario’....

“The province will tell you that we welcome overseas business and encourage immigration. We especially encourage newcomers with professional qualifications ... why is the government slamming the door on foreign-trained accountants?”

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Read the legislation, not the columnist.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The new member for somewhere said—who has made no contribution to this debate on third reading; who will at the very best enable himself to do a meagre two minutes; who risks putting the legislation over 6 o'clock so that it carries on for yet another day, should he do that two minutes; and who wants to, from the mere sidelines say it's not, and then suggests that I haven't read the legislation. Please, Speaker. What poppycock. What silliness. What garbage. What rubbish. Did I say “nonsense” yet? What a feeble—oh, yeah, that got me right in the solar plexus. I'm gasping for air. I can barely stand up anymore. What a body blow that was. Please, Speaker.

We had, until that interjection, a reasonably reasonable and, might I say, intelligent debate about this. The Attorney General, Mr. Zimmer, the Conservative critic

and then the member for—we had an intelligent and reasonable debate until the member for Toronto Centre interjected, whose interjection I, of course, put on the record by responding to it because I am confident that people will read it. Look, I say to him, “You’re the heckler; you’re supposed to be making me look stupid.”

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Well, you did that all on your own.

Mr. Peter Kormos: So there you go. You’ve got this sort of paucity of meaningful contribution when we’ve got a community of thousands out there who are very worried about what this is going to mean for them and their ability to identify themselves with legitimately won professional designations. I know that the CGAs, CMAs and CAs feel very proprietary, so proprietary that they say to these new Canadians, these foreign-trained professionals, “Well, you can come join us.” I don’t know; that seems to me to be very elitist and ethnocentric, as I said in committee, perhaps even xenophobic. That’s some of the talk you hear. You see it in some of the blogs that follow some of the right-wing columnists: “Well, if these foreigners come to Canada, they should do things the way we do them, and they shouldn’t try to impose their culture on Canada.” Well, their culture is Canada.

I’m so very impressed with the United Kingdom that accepts accountants internationally. It is a world financial centre. As a matter of fact, the Premier seems to think that Ontario should be the Canadian financial centre and makes a bid, not inappropriately, for the location of the national regulator here in the city of Toronto. Toronto especially is so diverse. What would be wrong at all with a member of a community who perhaps identified more with and understood the Indian accounting designation, with that person wanting to know that that accountant he or she was choosing had that designation? It seems to be perfectly reasonable and not at all contrary to the interests of CAs, CGAs or CMAs.

The impression was left that Jane Public or Joe Public walk down the street and say to themselves, “Hmm, I need an accountant.” They’re just regular, plain folks, like the folks who live in my neighbourhood, good folks, hard-working folks, factory-working folks, school teachers, police officers. These people tend to hire H&R Block, which probably has very few CAs or CGAs doing personal income tax for folks like where I come from. These people might have a small business where they’re as likely to hire a bookkeeping service which has nothing to do with the levels of accountancy that the CGA, the CA and the CMA represent—or CIMA, for that matter, or FCAs from India.

The big firms that tend to employ CAs, CGAs and CMAs, and even the not-so-big firms that have clients who require a CA, a CGA or a CMA, are going to be pretty sophisticated clientele. They’re going to know the difference between a CMA and a CA, and they’re going to seek one as compared to the other.

I don’t know amongst whom the confusion is going to be created. I do know that there will be a huge community that will be denied the opportunity to identify a well-trained professional who happens to have been

trained and acquired their designation in a former British colony, which is where CIMA had—you know, these 162 countries; the British colonies weren’t 162 countries, but those are the basis of them.

So, we remain troubled with the 5%. We think the government’s making a regrettable mistake by telling foreign-trained professionals—or rather, as I identified in committee, it’s far more preferable to say non-Canadian-trained professionals—by denying them the ability to identify who they’ve been accredited by.

I suggested that, heck, nobody’s going to uphold this legislation when it comes to the biggest sign in the world saying, literally, “My name is so-and-so, and I have this certification from an Indian accounting body called the ACA.” There were some people vigorously shaking their heads in the audience and, quite frankly, it wasn’t the ACA people or the CIMA people. It was the CA-CGA people. I can’t for the life of me understand what the threat is of that.

As I say, David Zimmer—and he could be a member of the British Columbia law society or a member of the British Columbia bar. David Zimmer, who’s a lawyer, and I’m told a pretty good one, would be perfectly entitled—even if he weren’t a lawyer in Ontario, and that’s what we’re talking about—to identify himself as a member of the bar of British Columbia or of Saskatchewan or of Manitoba.

1740

The accountants will pass. The CAs, CGAs and CMAs will carry on. The public will be unprotected from charlatans who practise accounting, because anybody under the sun can call themselves an accountant. Heck, I only got as far as grade 11 in high school, but you could have grade 11 math and call yourself an accountant. I can’t even recall what grade 11 math was about, but the fact is that somebody could have grade 11 math or grade 8 math, or no math skills whatsoever. Math isn’t the only element to accounting, but it’s the one that people identify with most; fine-tipped pens and ledgers—it’s far more than that, because it’s all about interpreting that stuff as well. But you can practise accounting. You can call yourself an accountant and you can have a huge billboard that says Joe Schmo, accountant. It can be flashing in neon. There can be radio and television commercials saying, “Visit Joe Schmo the accountant, the best accounting firm in town: skilled, qualified, professional, lowest rates, best performance, acknowledged internationally.” That person can do that and do it legitimately, and there seems to be no interest on the part of the government in protecting the public from that person.

Maybe this bill would have been better presented by the minister of consumer protection. Maybe she would have been more focused on consumer protection than this bill is, because she’s an astute and conscientious member of the government, and she is unique. So maybe this bill should have come from the ministry of consumer protection. Maybe had it come from the ministry of consumer protection, there would truly be more consumer protection in that people wouldn’t be allowed

to call themselves accountants unless they had passed a certain threshold, a minimum threshold of scale and competence.

But alas, her plate is full, and it's not her bill, so the public doesn't get consumer protection, nor do those non-Canadian-trained professionals. You don't have to be foreign-born to be a non-Canadian-trained professional. You can be born in Canada. You can be Canadian by birth and still get your certification by going to school in the UK or India or Sri Lanka or Singapore—any number of places. Nor will those people be protected. They're going to be denied something that they have every right to do, and that is to identify themselves as having received a legitimate qualification, a legitimate honour.

This turned into this contest about the alphabet, because really, at the end of the day, it seems to me that that's what it's about. It's not about the full identification; it's about the alphabet, the postnominal, if indeed that's an accurate word. I rely upon the presenter at committee.

New Democrats remain pleased about 95% but are very concerned and very upset about the other 5%. That takes us, I suspect, to the end of this debate.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I wanted to, in my two minutes, correct the record, because I think it's an important error that needs correcting. The member for Halton, Mr. Chudleigh, read into the record a letter from Deloitte and Touche, the accounting firm. The letter that he read in part was to support the idea, and he left it quite clear, that Deloitte, in that letter—I believe it was dated sometime in March—did not endorse this new legislation.

I have here a letter that was addressed on April 30, 2010, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, attention Susan Sourial, the clerk.

“Dear member:

“We are writing as a follow-up to our letter dated April 26, 2010”—I'm sorry, the letter the member for Halton referred to is from April 26.

Anyway, this new letter goes on to say: “We have now received the final draft legislation and have reviewed the exceptions whereby other internationally qualified accountants can use their designation.

“The proposed amendments alleviate most of our concerns regarding the rights of immigrants to Ontario to use their designation as we outlined in our letter of April 26. This important legislation also safeguards the consumer's interest, which is an important element of the new act.

“Accordingly, we now support the amended legislation.

“Sincerely,

“Calvin H. Buss, CA,

“Canadian managing partner

“Client excellence.” Deloitte Touche chartered accountants.

I thought that it was important to correct the record on such a sensitive matter.

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

The member for Welland, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I appreciate the parliamentary assistant referencing yet another letter. I was aware of that because I got an email from Deloitte some time ago. But you see, it's not about who supports the legislation. I understand the CGAs support the legislation; they'd be nuts not to. I understand the CMAs support it; of course they do. I understand the CAs support it; they, too, would be nuts if they didn't. The question is about who doesn't support it and why. Nobody who is a dissenter suggested that these bodies—CA, CGA, CMA—shouldn't have the legislative provisions contained in the bill. We agree.

Does the bill protect the public from incompetent people, unscrupulous people and dishonest people who would call themselves accountants? No. It's a separate issue. The bill clearly isn't designed as a consumer protection bill, end of story.

But it's the foreign-trained, the non-Canadian-trained professionals, most of them new Canadians—not all of them—who, in the context of being told that Ontario has opened its doors, are being told that it's opened its doors, but you can't bring all of what you earned and acquired before you came into Canada with you; to wit, the designations you acquired in prestigious Indian-based, UK-based professional bodies.

There is just a regrettable tone to the denial of that privilege to these folks, a regrettable tone that seems to be counterproductive. Indeed, it may even handcuff the government in the course of its negotiations with the EU on so-called open trade, especially when it comes to professionals practising in both jurisdictions.

I'm glad Mr. Zimmer had the chance. I wish those foreign-trained professionals had the chance, too.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? Does the Attorney General wish to respond?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: No, sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bentley has moved third reading of Bill 158. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr. Peter Kormos: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Carried on division.

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Thursday morning, May 13.

The House adjourned at 1749.

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