



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 20 May 2010

Jeudi 20 mai 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS
FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010

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

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will be sharing my time this morning with the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

It is certainly a privilege for me to speak today to An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit, which is incredibly important to the folks of my riding and all of northern Ontario.

One of the things we've heard loudly and clearly from the people of northern Ontario is their concern around high energy costs in the north. Our climate is such that our winters are longer and our heating bills are higher. We don't have the same number of resources for heating as others do around the province, so people in northern Ontario have felt the pinch. We're certainly delighted to see the focus that was placed on northern Ontario, particularly the energy credit in this spring's budget.

Our government has brought forward a number of initiatives that are going to benefit northern Ontario in particular. In Open Ontario, our budget this spring and our throne speech we introduced a number of initiatives that we think are going to better the lives of northerners, not the least of which is the future development of the Ring of Fire, which is incredibly important to our region. I know that my colleague the member from Algoma-Manitoulin will no doubt speak to that a little bit, as it is closer to his riding than mine. But with all the mining industry congregated in North Bay, so many companies—I think we have over 80 companies in North Bay that are related to the mining sector: mining engineering, profes-

sional mining retailers, equipment manufacturers. We are well situated to benefit from the development of the Ring of Fire and the initiatives that our government is putting forward.

The northern Ontario energy credit will provide northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence an annual credit of up to \$130 for a single person aged 18 and older, and up to \$200 for a family, including single parents. Northern residents who live on reserve and who pay energy costs for their principal residence would also be eligible for the credit. To target the assistance for those who need it most, the credit will be income-tested. What happens in this case is that the credit will be reduced for a single person with adjusted net income over \$35,000 and eliminated when their income exceeds \$48,000, and for a family it will be eliminated when their income exceeds \$65,000.

We've noted that this benefit will impact about half of the population of northern Ontario, which is really incredible. I think it is really important to the people of northern Ontario that we are helping those who need it most, but we are also helping such a vast number of people across the north.

The credit will be available to eligible residents in the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timiskaming. I know that this is particularly important to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. He mentioned, when we were in Sundridge just a couple of weeks ago, how happy he was that this credit will be available to the people of Parry Sound.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Did he say that?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: He did, actually.

Mr. Jeff Leal: On the record?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On the record, in front of a group of municipal leaders. I was delighted to see it. I was particularly delighted to see it because the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, who is ostensibly their northern critic, is actually opposed to this initiative and spoke out against it here in this House, and when the vote was taken, he walked out. I think it sends a really mixed message as to where the Conservatives stand on this particular measure. I thought they were supportive of it; I thought they were supportive of the north. They say they are. They don't have any members from the north other than Mr. Miller, who does yeoman service as their finance critic.

Mr. Hillier is not from the north. He doesn't understand the people of the north. He has travelled up, I think,

once. Have you heard, member from Algoma–Manitoulin—more than once? But certainly his press releases would indicate that he is out of touch with the concerns of the people of the north and doesn't understand how much they appreciate and how delighted they are with this particular initiative and all of the initiatives that were set out in our budget.

Another important initiative for the north and for jobs in the north is the northern industrial electricity rate program. This will average about \$150 million annually and it will provide electricity price rebates of two cents per kilowatt hour to qualifying large industrial facilities that commit to an electricity efficiency and sustainability plan.

Interjection: Sounds like a good idea to me.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's an incredibly good idea and it's certainly one that we heard loudly and clearly from our chambers, from our municipalities. They wanted to see some assistance for our large industrial facilities across the north to ensure that we are protecting the jobs that exist in the north and creating more jobs.

As we speak about creating more jobs, all minds in the north turn to the Ring of Fire, an area with potentially large deposits of minerals such as chromite, nickel, copper and platinum. We are providing, through our spring budget, \$45 million over the next three years for new project-based skills training programs to help our aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians participate in and benefit from the emerging economic development opportunities. This is incredibly important as we partner with our First Nations communities and we look to new job opportunities for those northern residents who live in this region and who live throughout the north, as I said, and who are going to benefit because of this initiative. Through this investment we are also hiring a new Ring of Fire coordinator who will lead the collective effort in advancing the economic promise of the area while encouraging responsible and sustainable development.

0910

Another initiative in the spring budget that was incredibly important to the north, and I know to my area in particular, was the additional \$10 million to the northern Ontario heritage fund. I know that my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin will agree with me that the northern Ontario heritage fund provides support to some incredible projects across the north, including smaller projects for young entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs who are seeking to start new businesses, to expand great ideas that they've had. I've had a number of small businesses—including a naturopath doctor who received \$25,000. She actually set up her shop on Fraser Street in my old office and a former office of one of your colleagues, and she is doing a thriving business and has succeeded in really entrenching herself—

Mr. Jeff Leal: What former colleague was that?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: That would be the former Premier.

She has entrenched herself as a health care provider in our community, a young professional who has come home

to her hometown and, through the help of the northern Ontario heritage fund, has been able to set up shop and really do great business and provide a great service to our community. She is just one example of many.

We've also been able to help an entrepreneur in our community who is introducing solar panels to many of our businesses and to the residential component of our community. We're very excited about the work he is doing. He is a huge proponent of green energy and is doing a great job leading the charge—front-page articles in the *Nugget*, showing off what he is doing at his home and also promoting it for other homeowners and residents across the region. Through investments from the northern Ontario heritage fund, he has been able to benefit.

We've also invested, through the northern Ontario heritage fund, in the waterfront. Many people in this House are familiar with North Bay and what a beautiful waterfront we have. But over the last 10 years it's just grown leaps and bounds. We now have two lovely carousels, and a small train which opened two weeks ago on Mother's Day. The train is run by volunteers who are all retirees of the Ontario Northland—most of them are. They are a wonderful group of people who welcome the children every day throughout the summer and run that train until dusk every day. It's an exciting little adventure down on the waterfront. The two carousels are spectacular. They were built by local volunteers as well; artists hand-carved the horses and painted them. It is just a beautiful work of art—both of them are—down on our waterfront. Those were all created by volunteers and were supported by investments through the northern Ontario heritage fund, which has developed our waterfront, which has allowed for these beautiful works of art to be showcased.

I just want to do a shout-out to Howe and to all the people down at the waterfront who are volunteering their time this summer. They are fantastic volunteers who really provide a welcoming atmosphere for our children and our visitors. I can tell you that my nieces and nephew, when they come to town, start talking immediately about when we're going to the train and the carousel. If we don't go pretty much every single day that they're in town, they're pretty disappointed. And I see lots of my friends who have left town and now have children and live in different parts of Canada and the world who come home and we often meet at the carousel; they bring their kids down, because that's where grandma and grandpa bring the kids. It's a wonderful family experience. It's through investments from the northern Ontario heritage fund that we've been able to really showcase our waterfront. Through this additional investment of \$10 million, bringing the northern Ontario heritage fund up to—\$90 million this year?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It's \$90 million; that's right.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, member from Algoma–Manitoulin—we are able to make those kinds of investments across the north that are benefiting communities across the north.

I am so delighted that our government is moving forward with this bill and with the implementation of this

credit for our residents. When I was travelling the riding over the last year, talking to people about various government initiatives, including our tax package, I hosted an information session at the library in Mattawa in February. It was kind of a cold night, lots of snow, but we had a good group out. We talked about the HST, we talked about the tax package, but we also talked about energy costs and energy prices, and they were certainly concerned about that. It was one of the top-of-mind issues for them, and it certainly has been for a number of my rural residents across my region. When we brought this forward in the budget this spring, I was so delighted to be able to inform people of this new initiative that will provide an annual credit of up to \$130 for single residents age 18 and older and \$200 for families and single parents. It's an incredible help for those families in the north.

I hope that my friends on the other side will settle on where they stand. I hope that they will stand up for northerners and support our northern residents, because this is an important initiative for them. I look forward to hearing from them on this bill as we go through third reading debate, and I look forward to hearing from my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of this bill this morning.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak this morning on Bill 44, the Lowering Energy Costs for Northern Ontarians Act. The government House leader, the member from Nipissing, just spoke, asking how the official opposition stands on the bill. I think we've already had one vote on it. We voted in support of the bill, so that's fairly clear as to how the opposition stands.

However, we do question—this is a relatively small part of the budget, obviously, and I do wonder why it wasn't part of the budget bill, Bill 16; why they needed a separate bill for this particularly minor part of it. Also, really, I wonder why—and the government House leader is here, so perhaps she—she won't get an opportunity, because it's time-allocated, to respond to any questions I might pose, unfortunately. But I do wonder why the government felt it necessary to time-allocate this bill and, in particular, why they used the most draconian time allocation motion I think I've ever seen.

I was at committee with this bill, a committee hearing that had no one, not one person from the north come to present to the committee in the public hearings—not one. I think there's probably, and I would assume the government House leader would agree with me, somebody in the north who's interested in this bill. There are people and industry; surely somebody would like to say how it might be improved, how it might be more efficient, because I will question the efficiency of the design model that the government has put forward. Surely there has to be somebody, some stakeholder, some individual in the north who would have liked to have had a say in this bill.

The way that it went through the process, with the government's time allocation motion—I sat on the sub-

committee meeting, I believe it was on the Tuesday, and we were setting the deadlines, as you do normally, for written submission and the time for public hearings etc. I thought we were talking about a week down the road, but actually, they were planning on the Tuesday afternoon for public hearings on Thursday with the deadline the very next day. Of course, that means there was no time for advertising other than a few hours on the service we have here, the website and the internal TV service here at Queen's Park, which lots of people in the north probably don't have access to because it's not carried now on satellite.

Surprise, surprise, we go to committee on the Thursday morning; we're scheduled to have public hearings starting at 8 a.m. for a couple of hours, and guess what? Nobody shows up for public hearings, not one single person from the north. We have the technology to have them show up by video conference or by telephone as well. There was not a single presentation, not a single written presentation to the bill either, and not a single amendment to the bill.

The whole committee hearing process was a bit of a joke, to be honest. The former leader of the third party was there, and I think he was a little blunter than I was in committee. He called it a farce.

Frankly, I don't understand, even from a political perspective, why the government is using the all-time most draconian time allocation motion on this bill. You'd think they'd want—the bill is about providing \$130 to an individual to help offset the higher energy costs caused by this government, or up to \$200 per family. It's income-tested, so you receive the \$130 per year in four cheques—those are not going to be very big cheques. If you make less than \$45,000—if you make \$40,000, you're going to be seeing a \$10 cheque four times a year. The same applies for a family: If the family makes more than \$65,000, you could receive as little as—if you make \$60,000, you'll get four \$10 cheques.

At the cost of doing government, it would be interesting to know how much it costs to send out that \$10 cheque. It's probably \$100 per cheque to send the \$10 cheque out. Surely there's a more efficient way of doing this, if it wasn't for the fact that the government wants to be seen to be doing something and wants people to see this cheque coming and be able to take claim for it.

This brings me back to the time allocation. If it's mainly about politics and being seen to be doing something about the absolute reality of higher energy costs, not just in the north but across the whole province, then why wouldn't the government want to have public hearings, bring in everybody from around and make very public what they're doing? Not only that, maybe they could actually improve it and make it more efficient so that it's not costing double the cost of the actual cheques to run the whole thing. I do question the whole way it's being done, the efficiency of the way the government has decided to run this program.

0920

The reality in the McGuinty government is that we are seeing a greatly higher energy cost. Unfortunately, that

affects all residents in the province, not just those residents in northern Ontario. I would agree that in northern Ontario it's a colder climate, so energy bills will be higher there. There's no question about that, although I must bring my own riding up. The McGuinty government took Muskoka out of the north for Ontario government purposes but left Parry Sound in. I would say that the weather conditions aren't that much different from Muskoka to Parry Sound, yet if you happen to live in Huntsville or just south of the line, then you don't participate in this program. If you live in Parry Sound, you would be able to participate in this program.

Unfortunately, if you're looking at it from an income base, there's really not a lot of logic that Haliburton or Renfrew wouldn't be part of it. Those are a couple of the ridings that have lower average incomes in the province, lower than just about every northern riding. If you're looking at the ability to pay, there should be some logic that some other ridings should be considered for this as well, because everyone is going to be facing higher energy costs in the province under the government's programs.

Let me just illustrate some of the reasons why energy costs are going up. We've just seen the Ontario Energy Board approve a 10% increase in the cost of electricity. We also know there's this backdoor green tax program the government is running; I think it's to pay for energy audits. That is being challenged in court right now. That's a backdoor tax that's going to be \$57 million, I believe, in total. That's another additional new cost for people on their electricity bills.

Then, of course, we have the HST happening July 1, and I think the great majority of people in the province really aren't aware that it applies to electricity, it applies to home heating oil, and it applies to gas in your car. Obviously, for all the people of Ontario, that's going to be a very significant increase.

We also have the Green Energy Act. As the opposition, we had a company go out, because the minister at the time—I believe it was Mr. Smitherman—was saying that there was going to be a 1% increase to everyone's bill as a result of the Green Energy Act. We had a company go out and assess whether that was, in fact, true, and also whether the government's claim of—I believe—50,000 jobs was correct as well. London Economics did their study, and they came back and said that it could cost up to \$1,200 per household, just the Green Energy Act.

Also, there was no validation for this claim of 50,000 jobs. In fact, I think the reverse is absolutely the case, because as we have higher energy costs in the province of Ontario, it makes our industry less and less competitive. That's one of the basic building blocks of being able to compete and a reason why a company would want to locate in Ontario. We see it in the north right now; for example, in the Timmins area. I believe it's an Xstrata copper smelter that just shut down in the last few weeks, in mid-May. That's a lot of jobs in the Timmins area. That smelting operation, they're now concentrating the ore and transporting it to Quebec, where it will be smelted in a much dirtier smelter.

I met with some of the representatives from the union that came to Queen's Park. They brought the environmental information and pointed out how the one that is closing in Timmins has a much better environmental record than where it's now going to be processed in Quebec. There's a negative effect for the environment as well. But for Ontario, obviously it's the loss of 700 jobs, a major factor being the higher energy costs of the province of Ontario. That's the track we're on with the McGuinty government's energy policy, or lack of policy, I should say. In fact, a tomadamsenergy.com posting in May describes the energy policy for the province of Ontario: "The Ontario government is operating the province's vastly complex power system without a plan."

To illustrate that point of just doing things without really considering what's going on: I met with the insurance industry recently, and they pointed out how people are signing up for the solar programs for their homes without realizing—it's causing them insurance problems. What happens is, when they put those solar panels on their roof, they are classified for their insurance as being commercial, not residential, so they either have to buy much more expensive commercial insurance because they have the solar panel on the roof, or they find out when they've had a problem that their insurance actually doesn't cover the problem because they have these solar panels on the roof. That's just one example of a poorly thought out policy of the government.

We are definitely seeing much higher energy prices. This is but one small part of it that's going to help some of the folks in northern Ontario, but there are far greater problems in the energy sector.

I know the government has plans they've announced in the budget to bring in a reduction for industrial energy costs for northern Ontario. I haven't seen a bill to that effect yet, so I'm not sure when they're going to be doing that. But I also see problems with that bill in that, again, they're drawing a line as to who receives the reduced industrial energy price.

In the case of my riding alone, for example, we have businesses that are essentially northern—what you'd call typical northern Ontario businesses—like Panolam, which makes fibreboard; they're in the forestry sector. They're receiving their raw material, in many cases, from mills in the north. You have Kimberly-Clark making tissue; you have Tembec making hardwood flooring. And they're all just south—literally 10 kilometres south—of the border that has been drawn, this north-south border. So when that new program comes into effect, they won't benefit from it and they'll be competing against companies 10 kilometres north that will receive it. That just seems to be a very unfair way and not a level playing field for businesses in the province of Ontario. In the opposition here, we believe in providing a level playing field for businesses so they can compete, and the strong ones survive and do the best they can.

I know that my colleague from Simcoe North would like to comment to the bill as well. We will be supporting it. I have lots of questions about the design of it. It's too

bad they didn't take the time to hear from people so they actually could improve it, because there's plenty of room for improvement on this bill.

We have a very short time because of the time allocation—only 20 minutes—so I will leave the last six and a half minutes for my colleague. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's always a pleasure to be here in the morning—nothing like a morning in the Legislature, debating energy bills. I've got to say, it just warms your heart, as a northerner.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The smell of napalm in the morning.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That was out of that movie, and we're not going to go there.

Anyway, I just want to say up front that we, as New Democrats, will be supporting this bill. But I don't want the government thinking, because New Democrats are going to be voting in favour of this particular initiative, that somehow or other everything has been fixed in northern Ontario, that this 25% rebate that they've put forward, which I'll explain in a couple of minutes, is going to just get northern Ontario humming when it comes to productivity and it's going to get northern Ontario jobs going again and people will be working and they'll be running down the streets with banners saying, "Yahoo, Dalton!" Because I've got to say, that's not anywhere near what's going on with this particular situation.

Let's explain what we've got going on here. The government continues a policy that was started by the previous government around electricity. We have gone from a time when Ontario Hydro was a crown corporation that developed, produced and transmitted electricity at cost to consumers and the industrial sector. Why did we decide to do that some 100-plus years ago? Because we saw electricity as an economic development tool. We said that if Ontario is going to prosper as an economy in North America, then we have to be able to attract investment into Ontario. The investment that we're able to attract, because of all of the natural resources we have, is in mining, forestry and manufacturing, all of which are intensive users of electricity.

0930

You have investments such as we had in the city of Timmins, where, at the time, Kidd Creek mine built a smelter and refinery. Why? Because, yes, the government was interested in making that happen in the day and the company was prepared to make that investment, but it made economic sense because electricity prices were reasonable and it would make money by way of refining and smelting copper and zinc in that community.

We built paper mills all across northern Ontario and into southern Ontario. Why were there so many paper mills? Yes, because the fibre is here in Ontario because of the forests, but also, it is a very energy-intensive industry and we were able to buy electricity, as producers, in a way that made some sense to the bottom line.

All of that got turned on its ear with the previous government, which decided to deregulate and started to partially privatize the hydro system in the province of Ontario. At the time, I remember Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the Liberal Party—my God, was he opposed. He was with Howard Hampton and he was just saying, "Man, it's a terrible thing the Tories are doing around electricity."

What the Liberals have done with electricity makes the Tories almost look as if they did nothing, because they have accelerated the privatization—

Interjection: I take that as a compliment.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was a bit of a backhand, Norm.

But my point is this: Where the Conservative government ideologically wanted to do some changes when it came to hydro—and the Liberals were on the opposition side of the bench—the Liberals have out-Conservated and out-Toried the Tories when it comes to the mess they have now created in hydro. Electricity prices in this province are now among the highest in Canada. We went from being the lowest to the highest. We have a system now, at the end of the day, that is making companies such as Xstrata make decisions that they can't do business in Ontario any more and have to move to the province of Quebec where electricity prices are cheaper.

Is it only electricity in that decision? Obviously not. But it's a big part of the decision. So the government today, by way of this third reading time allocation motion, is going to get a piece of legislation that says, "We're going to provide to industrial users such as the Xstratas, the Tembecs and the Domtars of this world a 25% rebate on electricity."

Let's first of all make very clear that they're really not getting 25%, because there was already a program that was in place that provided them 18% when it came to a reduction of the electricity rate that is currently in place. This particular initiative is going to replace that particular program that gave 18%.

So is it better than 18%? Yes. The government is giving them 25% in reduction. Is that a good thing? Absolutely; it's not a bad thing. But it is not going to fix the problem for industrial users of electricity in this province, because even with the 25%, we find ourselves uncompetitive when it comes to other jurisdictions.

I propose this—and I look at the member from Algoma going no, no, no. Liberal backbenchers are for anything the government does, even though it decimates their ridings, because they're going to follow Dalton McGuinty. I've got to say it right up front.

But if this 25% were to fix the problem when it comes to electricity prices that are causing the closure of many of the jobs in northern Ontario, Xstrata wouldn't have closed down. We sat with the Premier in his office—Xstrata, the coalition members and the mayor of the city of Timmins were all there—and put that on the table and said, "Is the 25% that has been put on the table by the government, as far as the reduction, enough for you to stay?" They said, "No, it will not change our mind."

I want to make very clear up front that this 25% is not going to stop the exodus of jobs out of northern Ontario.

Will it help? Absolutely, but don't think this is a cure for the problem that you've caused in the hydro industry.

For the residential consumers, I was in my constituency office—well, I was at a funeral; my cousin Aline passed away and we buried her on Tuesday in Kapuskasing. While in Kap, I decided to do a couple of constituency appointments early in the morning. Who am I meeting with? I'm meeting with people who are getting their hydro bills and can't afford to pay them, and they're actually having their hydro shut down. You feel powerless to do anything, because here's this poor woman with two kids who comes into my constituency office and she has her bill for three months—\$1,800. She's on mother's allowance for \$1,100 a month.

Tell me how you're going to pay, on average, what works out to about \$600 a month for electricity when you're on mother's allowance for \$1,100 a month. Tell me how you are going to pay what works out to about, on average, \$600 a month for electricity when you're on mother's allowance for \$1,100? She was in tears. The government says that in this case she's going to get a 25% rebate. She will. She will get a 25% rebate because she qualifies under the program initiated under this bill. But does that fix the problem with hydro? Will she still be able to afford to keep the lights on for her and her children after this bill comes into place? Absolutely not.

I just want to say it's a step in the right direction, and that's the reason I'm going to vote for it. I think it's certainly not going backwards; you are going forwards. For that reason, I will vote for it, but I want the government to absolutely know this is not fixing the problem.

We still have a huge problem when it comes to electricity prices in the province, and I'll just get to one of them. That is the global adjustment. The way the government has set up the rates of hydro is quite complicated, and you just have to look at your hydro bill as a consumer to understand that.

Simply put, all of the new investments that we are now seeing—the development of the Beck, the refurbishing of nuclear reactors, the green energy that's all coming on line—all of that is being paid for by way of the global adjustment. The elevated contracts that people are signing to build windmills and solar panels and hydro dams or whatever it might be with the rollout of the FIT that we've just seen, all of that is being basically passed back into the global adjustment. There's so much of it at a time where there's actually less demand for electricity. We have an increase in production that's coming online once all these projects are coming, and we have a decrease in the amount of electricity being used because industry is shutting down and leaving Ontario. The price of all of that is now being put on the hydro bill, and it's done through what they call the global adjustment. In the case of Tembec in Kapuskasing, the global adjustment has added to their bill, on a monthly basis, \$1.8 million compared to just a year ago. An additional \$1.8 million is what they have to pay for electricity as a result of the global adjustment.

I'm telling the government now, if you don't get the global adjustment issue resolved and we don't find a way

to socialize some of the cost of this new generation—I'm not going to argue that we shouldn't be investing in green energy—I think that's a great thing—but the question is, how do we pay for it? If you're going to go out and sign contracts where people are getting huge sums of money to sell electricity to hydro from whatever type of generation, be it either the nuclear plants that they're refurbishing or a private company that's building some form of generation, you can't throw that entirely on the hydro bill at this point. What it's doing is throwing the global adjustment through the roof, and as a result we're going to end up losing more producers in Ontario who will not be able to afford to keep their doors open because the price of electricity will be too high.

I propose that the government has to re-look at this whole issue and say, "How do we pay for all of this green energy? Should it all be done on the back of the hydro bill, or should we socialize some of the costs through the general tax revenue in order to try to spread the cost of the green energy and the refurbishments of various reactors that needed to be fixed over a larger pool of people rather than just doing it on the hydro bills?" One could argue that green energy—and I would understand that argument—is a good thing; therefore, society as a whole benefits by having less pollution emitted into the environment. So is there another way of being able to recoup the cost if that's where society wants to go? But I'm telling you now, when you put that price on to the global adjustment as you are now, it is a huge problem for many, many, many of those who are having to figure out how they're going to be able to keep their doors open a year from now, because—I want to be very clear—this 25% rebate that you are providing by way of this motion, although a good thing, doesn't negate the increases in hydro that we're seeing on the other parts of the hydro bill, including the global adjustment.

I think my colleague Mr. Hampton is going to be coming in to speak to this. I don't want to take all the time, but I just want to end on this point: For the average consumer, I want to ring the warning bells. We're now starting to see it in our constituency offices. Since the last bills have come out for hydro, especially those people who are on equal billing where they pay their adjustment every three months, I've got more and more people coming in to my constituency office talking about how they cannot afford to pay their hydro bills. Electricity prices from last year to this year have gone up tremendously. Like I say, this poor woman who came in the office on Tuesday morning in Kapuskasing had \$1,800 for a hydro bill for three months. You can't afford to pay that when you're on a fixed income.

What's worse is now we've got the famous HST that's coming on July 1, so we're going to get an additional 8% tacked on to the hydro bill as a result of the HST, plus there's an application for a rate increase of 9%, so we're looking at a 17% to 18% increase in electricity prices this year alone, on top of what people had as an increase last year. So, yeah, you're going to get the 25% rebate—that woman I met with on Monday—but it's going to be

negated by the HST and by the increase, should it be approved. I'm just saying people can't afford to do that, and what we're going to start seeing is all kinds of disconnections.

0940

I look at the smile on the face of my colleague from northern Ontario who is looking there and saying, "Well, this is all made up; this isn't true. Everything is fine in northern Ontario. People are absolutely excited and happy with everything that's going on." I'm telling you, it couldn't be further from the truth. I have never seen, in my 20 years in politics, the type of reaction that you get from constituents as you walk around the riding. And you must be getting the same in your riding. People are spitting mad at this government, absolutely. It surprises me because, you know, generally people across this province are pretty easy to get along with. If you don't bug them too much, they don't bug you, and they have, generally, faith in their governments. But I have never seen people as upset as they are with this government.

I'm not saying everybody that I talk to are all saying the same thing, but I don't care; every time I'm back in the riding—if I'm in Kap or I'm in Hearst or I'm in Moosonee or Timmins—every day I get somebody who stops me on the street or in the store or wherever it might be that I bump against them, and they're saying, "When is the next election? When can we throw those guys out?" I haven't seen that. Why? Because this government, quite frankly, in response to the things they haven't done around the northern economy, is absolutely devastating to northern Ontario.

For us in the Timmins area it's a double-whammy, because now we see what's happened with Xstrata and people are upset, rightfully so, because they know that if the Premier and the government had the will and the ability, they would have been able to save the closure of that met site, absolutely. Because at the end of the day, we had Xstrata at the table and all the Premier had to say was, "Listen, we're asking you to stall on the closure of this place. You tell us what your cost issues are when it comes to electricity, you tell us what your cost issues are when it comes to the environment, and we will sit down and figure out what can be done to make sure that we can keep this site open." With a little bit of will, it could have happened. Unfortunately, this government doesn't see it that way. They're non-interventionists; they are further right-wing than the Conservatives when it comes to the economy: "Whatever the private sector does has to be good, and we're not going to get in the way of any decisions made by these guys." And as a result of that, we're into what we are now.

With that, I just want to say that, yes, we will be voting in favour, but I have to say it is not with pleasure that I see what happens across northern Ontario in regard to electricity rates in this province.

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I am pleased to continue and join the discussion on this bill. I guess, having just heard

my friend the member from Timmins–James Bay and my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka—who discussed this bill almost not at all—one would not really realize that they are both supporting this piece of legislation. It is a budget bill, and it's really useful to find an opposition that will go out of its way to support a budget bill.

While they've talked about everything else under the sun, they have not chosen to speak to the particular bill that's here in a way that is reasonable. I want to talk about what the bill actually does. It applies to northern constituents of mine, and the member from Timmins–James Bay's and a good portion of the member of Parry Sound–Muskoka's—and he's wishing that it applied to the whole province. Of course, the policy of the Conservative government is to have fewer seats in northern Ontario. We know that; we've seen that; we've done that over time. We know that the member for Timmins–James Bay, for example, and I both have hugely larger ridings because of the actions of the government that he supported.

But this is a bill that—I want to give credit to my colleagues the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, the member for Nipissing, the member for Sudbury, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan and our Minister of Northern Development, the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North, who along with myself worked very hard to find something that would provide northerners with relief from energy prices—and it's all about energy; it doesn't say "electricity." If you have natural gas, it helps you. If you have heating oil, it helps you. If you buy gasoline, it helps you. It helps you with all of those kinds of things. While we have these discussions about one particular kind of energy, the bill is purposely designed to help people with the kind of energy they need the most help with. That's what it does. I'll just go over that because I think maybe that has been lost in the discussion here this morning.

Northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence in northern Ontario would be eligible for an annual credit of up to \$130 for a single person aged 18 and older and up to \$200 for a family, including single parents. Northern residents who live on-reserve and who pay energy costs for their principal residence would also be eligible for the credit. To target the assistance to those who need it most, the credit would be income-tested. The credit would be reduced for a single person with an adjusted net income of over \$35,000 and eliminated when his or her income exceeds \$48,000. It would be reduced for families when adjusted family income is over \$45,000 and eliminated for the family when it exceeds \$65,000.

As noted in the recent budget, in order to provide northern residents with timely assistance—and this speaks to what the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka was saying—our government is proposing an interim method of payment this year so that this year, we can do it. I know we're getting a lot of calls in my constituency office about it because this is a popular program that people want to take advantage of. They would apply to the

Ministry of Revenue to receive the 2010 credit, which would be delivered in two instalments—the first in November and the second in February 2011. Applications for the 2010 credit would be available in August 2010. Some applications would be distributed directly by mail and they would also be available on the Internet and in designated northern locations. More information about how to apply for the 2010 credit will be available once the application forms are ready for distribution.

That is important to the people I represent. It makes a difference. Neither of the two parties had any interest in proposing this credit. This comes because of the strong voice of the northern caucus and a Minister of Finance who understands and sat with us and talked about how this could happen. We had the Minister of Revenue; he came and supported our putting forward a proposal to help people with their energy costs in northern Ontario, because obviously, our weather is colder. In the winter, our days are even shorter than they are in southern Ontario, and it means, quite clearly, that you need to use more energy. Our distances are greater. From Manitowadge to Thunder Bay is a short drive of about 400 kilometres. From Hornepayne to Hearst, it takes you an hour and a half. There are huge differences in the price of some of our commodities. Gasoline, for example, is one we hear a lot about. This is not going to solve all these problems, but it is going to go a way that none of the other two parties even remotely suggested anywhere.

I'm really pleased as a northern member to be able to tell my constituents that not only did I vote for it, I helped propose it—a proposal that we did not hear from anybody on the other side, which would help consumers and residents of northern Ontario.

I really wondered why that wasn't proposed. I'm proud of our electricity programs which—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm really pleased that the members chose—the NDP chose to vote against a rebate for large industrial consumers in our large factories and mills. They did that. People should know that the very thing that the member from Timmins–James Bay talked about as not being sufficient—he voted against anything, which I think members of the public would find to be extraordinarily confusing, at the very least.

0950

We heard about the heritage fund. I think my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was talking about that. She talked about how this year alone in the budget, which both the Conservatives and the New Democrats voted against, there was an increase of \$10 million to the northern Ontario heritage fund, bringing it to \$90 million a year.

Mr. Jeff Leal: They didn't support that?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: They did not support that. I find that kind of difficult to understand, and most northerners would find that difficult to understand—except if they're talking about my friends the New Democrats, who had the opportunity to take \$60 million out of the northern Ontario trust fund and put it into general rev-

enues when they were the government, essentially picking the pockets of northerners at the end of their government.

I do not have the same kind of take out there on what my constituents are saying to me about life in northern Ontario. They are proud of northern Ontario. They are proud to live and work, and they are proud of the improvements that we've made in health care. My constituency, for example, is pleased that, over the past few years, we now have six new family health teams—I think it's six; maybe it's seven—since this government has come into power.

I had the privilege of talking to the good folks in Mindemoya, in central Manitoulin, where they have a brand new family health team. A new one is going into Chapleau and a new one in Manitowadge. Those folks are well on their way.

The government just announced another up to \$85,000 each for those new family health teams, and that is something that's going to make patient care in those areas very helpful.

I talked to Ornge the other day, the people who provide air ambulance services across northern Ontario, across the whole province for that matter, and I was interested to know that they provide 19,000 flights a year, often for people from Manitowadge or from Hornepayne—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Hearst.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: —or from Hearst—to the places where they need treatment. The service is much enhanced, and land ambulance service has actually increased in the amount of funding that we've provided to them.

I would urge every member—I know they will vote for this even though they are showing at least some concern about it.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond or to speak to this bill, although it is a bit of a strange bill. You know what? We, on this side of the House, will support a bill that will help people out in northern Ontario. We understand that. Although, as we said earlier, it doesn't help everyone out.

I did want to put something on the record right off the bat, though. I think we had air ambulances before Dalton McGuinty. Maybe I'm wrong; I could be wrong.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So it's just Dalton McGuinty who brought the air ambulance system in. Isn't that wonderful?

This government wonders why we vote against the budget. You know what? They're talking and bragging about how some of the people are going to get a \$200 rebate back on their hydro. I'm not even going to get into all the costs around the hydro with the HST and the increases and all this green energy tax and everything, but if I could just point something out: They're going into debt in the province of Ontario at \$20 billion this

year—\$20 billion. Do you know what that's going to cost every man, woman and child in northern Ontario and across this province? About \$1,530 apiece. For a family of four, there's \$6,000 in accumulated debt that this government is adding this year alone, and they sit there and brag about the \$200 they might give back to a family. Give me a break. That is pathetic.

The other thing: It's beyond belief when they spin these stories around and they try to actually make people think—they try to spin it so it makes everybody appear as if they don't care about the north. The House leader talked about the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington only going to the north once. The reality is that he's our northern critic, and he has been there about 10 times in the last year. He's visiting a number of ridings. I'm going to tell you, when we're talking politics, the House leader had better start worrying about her riding, because you know what? We're going after that riding, and we're going to win that riding in the next election. We've got good candidates coming forward. I wouldn't be picking holes in Mr. Hillier if I was the House leader.

One of the things I'll be really interested in seeing is how the government will roll out these cheques, the administrative cost of it. It will be interesting to see how those cheques are rolled out, how many TV ads are put on, how many radio ads are put on, how many newspaper ads, these full-page stories about giving northern Ontario's poor people \$130. I dare them to not put one penny into that. We all know that every program the government has, they always find tens of thousand of dollars more to advertise their government program and brag about it so they can try to get those extra votes. That's what it's all about.

I bet you anything when the rebate cheque goes out, the \$130 or whatever it is, there will be a fancy letter from Brad Duguid or the Premier saying what wonderful things they've done. Do you think they'll actually do that? I bet anything they will. That's what you're trying to do. You're playing politics with this legislation because you know how much trouble you're in in the north.

The mining—the forestry industry in the north has never been decimated as badly anywhere by any government in the history of this country like the mining industry has been in northern Ontario under Dalton McGuinty. Are they bragging about that? No, they just pretend. They say, “That's a world economic problem. There's nothing we can really do about that.” The list goes on and on and on.

Of course, then, as the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka mentioned, the harmonized sales tax is kicking in on July 1. For anybody who was going to save \$130, give me a break. They're going to pay it right back on the harmonized sales tax on their hydro bills, on their gas bills, on everything they go to buy. That is going to have the single most negative impact that any tax has had on the province of Ontario.

The Premier likes to have that spin story every day. In fact, everybody's getting a little bit sick of it. People are

wondering where the 600,000 jobs are going to come from. If you believe that 600,000 jobs are going to be created under Dalton McGuinty, you'd better believe that Mickey Mouse will be the next governor of Florida, because that's about the kind of spin he's putting on this story. There's absolutely no proof, no public plan, no public study, no business plan. He stands up each and every day and talks about 600,000 jobs with absolutely no proof how it will happen. We've watched 300,000 manufacturing jobs disappear in Ontario because manufacturers have left here in droves because of the economic policies of this government—but somehow 600,000 new jobs.

We've been trying to keep track, on this side of the House, of how many jobs they've actually created. As far as I know, unemployment is down somewhat. Most of the jobs created are in the public sector.

Applause.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The seals over there are clapping away, whatever they want to do.

I was told last night—it would be interesting to see the clarification. How many homeless people are actually in the city of Toronto? It would be interesting if somebody could respond to that with exactly the number of people, and then find out the amount of money the government has flowed to the city of Toronto and the fights it had with the city of Toronto. I understand that in that field alone there are more people on the affordable housing file than there are homeless. That is beyond belief, the kind of money that's being wasted in some of the public service areas. That's where your jobs have been created: in the public service.

You haven't created any manufacturing jobs. You haven't created anything in the small business sector; they're all going out of business. They are fearing for their jobs.

When you look at what's happened to First Nations, the First Nations jobs are coming from selling cigarettes. That's where they are coming from, and they're doing that at the expense of the small convenience store owners, who are basically in a very negative position as far as their business opportunities.

The government can brag about this bill and pretend they're actually doing something, but it will be interesting to see how they roll out that money in the end. It will also be interesting to see how much government advertising is behind the rollout of this particular bill.

We can support this piddly rebate, but you know what? I'd much rather the people of northern Ontario not be facing a \$1,500 accumulated debt this year for each and every man, woman and child.

1000

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's never a pleasure to speak to time allocation motions. Nevertheless, it's here, and that's what we are debating.

I have to say to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, we've got to put this rebate in context, and the context is what my friend from Timmins–James Bay was trying to

do. He spoke directly to this energy rebate portion by talking about the context, and the context is that we've had a lot of job losses in the north. We have high unemployment. I think forestry is operating at a third of the capacity that it used to a long time ago, which means thousands of jobs have disappeared. We've lost pulp and paper mills—jobs have disappeared. We've lost sawmills—jobs have disappeared, which means people do not have the capacity to pay for things that they might have been able to pay for but a short four or five years ago.

What we have contextually is that the harmonized sales tax is going to add 8%, which I think adds up to about \$220 in energy bills. Energy bills will jump up another \$220, \$250, so that's close to \$500 for things I am aware of. It could be less; it could be more. I suspect it's going to be more. So when you look at the context of how they're going to be hit, having been whacked badly over the last four years, this is going to be very hurtful.

Now, the rebate is going to help a little bit. If it was you, member from Algoma–Manitoulin, who moved this motion and helped to craft this bill, God bless you. You're going to help a few people; you're right. So we have to thank you, I suppose. But we can't thank the government for whacking the whole of the province, and especially whacking northerners, with a huge bill.

What you're saying is, which you didn't admit to, "It's going to be a big bill. We are going to help a little bit. Yes, we're whacking you. We don't mean to, but we are. We recognize we're going to whack you badly, and so we're going to minimize the whack a little bit. We hope that northerners will appreciate the fact that some of us recognize the tremendous losses, tremendous hurt, tremendous pain of unemployment, and we're going to help you a little bit."

So thanks, Mike, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, for helping to the extent that you were able to.

Our problem is that the devastation is huge, and it's getting harder and harder to deal with.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: So what's your plan?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What's my plan? My plan is to attack your lack of a plan. My plan is to attack you when you stand up with a nice smile, with you and the other members saying, "We're cutting income taxes, and 93% of you are getting an income tax cut," and you all smile from corner to corner. You whack them and then you say, "But we're going to reduce income taxes." Then you say, "We have a huge \$20-billion deficit, but we're going to"—with a smile—"cut income taxes; isn't that great?"

I remember when you guys were in opposition with the Tories, You used to say to the former Premier, who was a New Democrat, now turned Liberal, "You don't have a revenue problem. You've got a spending problem." You guys used to say that, along with the Tories. All of a sudden, you're in government and you say, "We have a globalized recession. We can't help ourselves." But when Bob Rae faced the free trade agreements that whacked Ontario badly, you used to say, "No, Bob. This

is your problem, Bob. You caused this." Now the Liberals are saying, "Oh no, we didn't cause this. It's the world that caused this." I love to see those contradictions.

People in the north are hurting. People all over Ontario are hurting, and they're hurting bad. The harmonized sales tax is going to whack them, and whack them bad. This is not going to be helpful. Your desire to cut progressive income taxes is a bad thing, not a positive thing. You are hurting this province in ways that you don't understand, and then you stand up and say, "Well, what's your plan?" Give me your cabinet seat, and we'll discuss it. Move yourself away, step aside and we'll discuss what we're going to do. In the meantime, your lack of a plan is hurting and whacking Ontarians, and whacking them badly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The debate time for this bill has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, I'm now required to put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): There being no further business for this morning, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I beg your indulgence: This is more like a message for Lars Moffatt, who is the page from Algoma–Manitoulin who turned 14 yesterday. His classmates and teachers at Arthur Henderson Public School would like to send him birthday greetings from the Hawk's Nest, which is the nickname of their classroom, and wish him all the best.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I would like to welcome a delegation coming from China who represent the company Singyes Solar. They're coming to Ontario to study our energy system here in this province and, also, a possible investment in the London area and possibly somewhere else in Ontario. Welcome.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would like to introduce in the west members' gallery Kevin Gaudet from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Most people here have heard of the Red Hat Society ladies. We have a group here today from Simcoe North: Marlene Heltcher, Margaret McBain, Della Durnan, Angie Pittman, Helja Adelson and Kathy Rainford. They're known as the Decadent Dames

of Lagoon City. They are over here in the members' gallery. And just because they have red hats on doesn't mean they're Liberals.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would like to introduce to the Legislature Amanda Singh, who has joined our office at the ministry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to introduce Jaafar Oleichie, who is the cousin of our page Jacob Alaichi. He's here today, I understand, so we would like to welcome him.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Ottawa-Vanier and page Caroline Robertson, to welcome her father, Hugh Robertson, to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the leader of the official opposition and member for Niagara West-Glanbrook, I'd like to welcome the grade 9 class from Heritage Christian School who are visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On Monday, May 17, the third party House leader, the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, raised a point of privilege concerning reports in the press about the recruitment process for the position of Ombudsman of Ontario. The member alleges that the leaks to the press of information about this confidential process constitute a contempt of the Legislature, and furthermore that published statements allegedly made about the current Ombudsman of Ontario are libellous and slanderous. The House leader for the official opposition, Mr. Yakubuski, and the government House leader, Ms. Smith, also spoke to the point of privilege.

An important fact in this matter is that the parent acts of the various officers of the Legislature are silent with respect to the method of recruiting officers. The officers are all appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on address of the assembly, but what is not spelled out is the process for the assembly itself to originate such an address. Therefore, in strictly procedural terms, the address is proposed with notice as a substantive government motion and, upon passage by the assembly, the Lieutenant Governor, on advice of cabinet, is in a position to effect the appointment of the parliamentary officer in a manner consistent with the stated wishes of the Legislative Assembly.

Over time, ways have been found to involve members of this House in the recruitment of various parliamentary officers, and within the last 10 years or so it has been the case that the Speaker has been called upon, through what one might call "the usual channels," to compose a panel of three members, one from each recognized party, and chaired by the Speaker, to perform this task. This informal approach was again put to use on several very recent occasions to deal with pending vacancies in the positions of the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner and the Environmental Commissioner.

I consider it important to recount the general circumstances surrounding these recruitment panels because it confirms that, although a process of some long standing, it is an informal process that comes into being through the negotiations and the co-operation of the parties in this House. Its purpose is to involve the House in the selection of its own officers, to the extent possible, with the intent that the selection panel is able to recommend a candidate for appointment.

The member for Welland in his submissions likened this panel to a legislative committee, and asserted that the breach of confidentiality that he alleges has occurred is subject to the same potential remedies that would be in play in the case of, say, a prematurely released report of a committee of this House. The question for the Speaker, then, is, does this hiring panel have the same status of a committee of this Legislature?

No motion or other formal action of this assembly gave life to the panel. It had no independent authority, as a House-appointed legislative committee would have had, such as those conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act or the standing orders. It was an ad hoc panel of the members of the Legislative Assembly, but it was not a committee of the Legislative Assembly. The difference is substantive. A parliamentary committee is a creature of this House, subservient to the instructions of this House, and able to report only to this House. An unauthorized or premature release of a committee report or in camera proceedings has indeed been found on certain occasions in this Legislature and in others to be a prima facie breach of the privileges of this Legislature.

The status of this panel was informal. While it engaged itself in an important advisory role to the guiding minds and leadership of the House, it was not answerable or accountable to the House per se. Indeed, it might be likened to the parliamentary caucuses or the House leaders' group, each of which consists of members of the House and meets regularly to discuss matters of parliamentary business. These are not direct creations of the House, though, and are not subject to the conventions of parliamentary privilege, as a parliamentary committee indisputably is. Unlike a committee of the House, whose existence and scope of activity is conferred only by the House, no such restrictions attach to the informal bodies I have just mentioned.

That is not to say, however, that the hiring panel's deliberations should have been subject to any less rigorous an observance of confidentiality than should a fully fledged legislative committee. As chair of the panel, I can assure everyone that the existence of press coverage about the panel's activities, regardless of its level of accuracy, is extremely distressing and disappointing.

The panel as a whole had a valid expectation that the confidentiality of its proceedings, discussions and decisions were to be held in confidence. Each member of the panel was justifiably entitled to a similar expectation and had a coexistent and mutual obligation to ensure it. This is not so because of the status of the panel, whether it be

a parliamentary body or not, but because of the nature of the panel's work: a human resources assignment.

1040

From a normative point of view, in this case, privilege is beside the point. Nevertheless, what is before us is a matter of privilege. For the reasons already cited, though, I cannot find that a prima facie case has been made out.

Finally, the member for Welland essentially framed his point of privilege within the larger question of contempt and whether a matter of libel or slander is at play in this issue. As I'm sure the member can appreciate, allegations of libel are only that, and it is certainly not to the Speaker to adjudicate them.

It is, however, possible to imagine that an attack or obstruction of a parliamentary officer could give rise to a finding of contempt, in the proper scenario. The member for Welland has furnished the Speaker with numerous press reports to support his point. However, press reports are just that: reported—and sometimes paraphrased—commentary. They do not rise to the level of proved libel, and in the absence of a report or plea made to this House from one of its officers that such an occurrence has interfered with the performance of his or her duties, I cannot find that a prima facie case of contempt has been made.

I want to read a paragraph again, though, because I think it is important for all members: "That is not to say, however, that the hiring panel's deliberations should have been subject to any less rigorous an observance of confidentiality than should a fully fledged legislative committee. As chair of the panel, I can assure everyone that the existence of press coverage about the panel's activities, regardless of its level of accuracy, is extremely distressing and disappointing."

I want to thank the member for Welland, the official opposition House leader and the government House leader for their submissions on the matter.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Acting Premier: Can the Acting Premier tell us how much revenue on gasoline and diesel the McGuinty Liberals will collect from the Premier's new HST tax?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have detailed, in great detail, the fact that, overall, Ontarians will pay less tax. They will pay less tax because—the member opposite does not want to acknowledge the substantial cuts in personal taxes, the substantial cuts in business taxes, the substantial cuts through the sales tax credit and the substantial increase in the Ontario child benefit.

The member will also see outlined, both in last year's budget and this year's budget, details with respect to our

projection on revenues received from the HST as compared to the PST.

Those are thorough, they're full and they explain to Ontario the importance of creating 600,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Since the Minister of Finance doesn't seem to have the answer, Mr. Kevin Gaudet of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation does, and he's here with us today. Just minutes ago, the CTF released its 12th annual gas tax honesty report. Assessing HST on gasoline prices that hover at about a dollar per litre, the report concludes: "For the government it works out to a minimum of \$1.6 billion in extra revenue...."

Based on that information, can the finance minister tell us what the impact of the HST burden will be on the average family in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I reject the work as being partisan and don't accept either the underpinnings of it or its conclusions. Instead of Mr. Gaudet, I prefer to rely on the TD Bank econometrics, I prefer to rely on the Conference Board of Canada, on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—honest, unbiased and unvarnished opinions that recognize that overall, this tax package will create some 600,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years. It will identify another \$47 billion in capital—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I recognize that it is a long weekend and a constituency week coming up. I would be very happy to facilitate an early departure for anyone.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Frank Klees: The attempt by the finance minister to characterize the work of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation as partisan will be seen for what it is by the average Ontario family.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimates that a family driving a mid-sized car will pay an average of \$246 a year more for the HST. Families in the GTA, rural Ontario and the north can expect the HST for fuel to cost them as much as \$400 more. In addition, the province of Ontario, as the minister will know, has a huge fleet of vehicles, and every dollar of additional HST on that fleet comes out of where? The average family's payment of their taxes and HST.

I ask the minister once again: How much more is this government prepared to take out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me re-emphasize: I reject categorically that assertion by the member opposite and by the source he quoted. I prefer to rely on the good work of Mike Harris and Preston Manning with respect to this tax package. I prefer to rely on the support we had from Jim Flaherty, from Lois Brown, from Larry Miller, from Mike Wallace—from all of the federal Conservatives who I think have actually read and taken a balanced look at this issue.

This is absolutely the right policy for a stronger future for Ontario. Most Ontarians will see their taxes come down. Most Ontarians will recognize that our future will be better and bigger and stronger if we stand firm and do everything we can to create those 600,000 net new jobs.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Acting Premier. Why did the Premier sign the taxpayer protection pledge in 2003 and, in doing so, promise not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I can say is that we committed to invest in health care, education and those services that the people of Ontario told us they valued the most—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I gave you the answer, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You did not ask the question; your colleague did.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I was just reiterating our commitments and priorities as government, and that is to invest in the services the people of Ontario said they valued the most.

When we were first elected to government—the members on the other side of the House don't like to admit this—we inherited a deficit, something that was hidden from the people of Ontario and something that we were forced to deal with. Also, as we have been in government, we have been hit with the single most significant economic event—the recession. It has been global and it has required that, as a government, we look at how we can—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Actually, the Premier signed the taxpayer protection pledge at least twice, in 1999 and 2003. Since signing an oath that he wouldn't raise taxes unless he had the consent of the people, the Premier has created the health tax, what amounts to a backdoor energy tax, taxes on electronics, plastic bags and now the HST. Voters of Toronto were not asked for consent to increase taxes for property transfers, vehicle registration and waste removal that the Premier knew he was enabling.

1050

The Premier had a choice before he put his promise in writing in 2003. Why did he promise Ontario voters in writing that he would not raise taxes without their consent and then repeatedly do exactly that?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have this opportunity to remind the members opposite that what we have done in our most recent budget is deliver the single largest tax cut for the people of Ontario. We have reduced corporate taxes. We have reduced business taxes. We have eliminated the small business surtax. We have reduced personal income tax: 93% of Ontarians will receive a tax cut.

The people of Ontario understand that we have established a balance here. We will continue to invest in health care, in education and in those services that are most important to them. At the same time, we are delivering tax cuts to those who need them the most. We are stimulating our economy by providing tax cuts to our businesses and to corporations so that our economy will be sustainable going forward, that we will be able—

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: In the coffee shops of Ontario, politicians who make election promises that they have no intention of keeping are called a word I'm not permitted to say in this House, but it begins with the same letter as Liberal.

The Premier's track record fuels a cynicism that led the Canadian Taxpayers Federation to say in its report, "The only thing that should surprise Ontarians (about Dalton McGuinty) is if he doesn't surprise them with new taxes after every election."

The next time the Premier offers his solemn pledge to the people of Ontario on taxes, who on earth is going to believe him?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What our Premier and our government—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just can't help but think of an interesting video I watched last night with a line that I use that says, "Take it outside."

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What people in the coffee shop remember is when the party on the other side was in government, when they said they weren't going to close hospitals, and they did; when they said they had balanced the books, and they hadn't. At the same time, in the face of all of that, they decimated those services that the people of Ontario valued the most.

Since we've come to government, we have invested in those services that the people of Ontario say that they value. We have hired nurses. We have hired teachers. We've hired doctors. We've hired water inspectors. We all know what happened when water inspectors were fired out the door. We've hired meat inspectors. When we came to government, there were 10 meat inspectors in the province of Ontario; now there are over 130. Those are the kinds of investments that the people in the coffee shop are interested in. That's what we've—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Speaker's almost at the point—although I don't have a family, I understand that if a baby cries a lot, you just let the baby cry itself out, and it will fall asleep. Perhaps for members of all sides of the House, we'll try something a little different today, and you'll talk yourselves out, talk yourselves all into silence.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. This coming May long weekend is the last one that's going to be HST-free. Come July 1, there will be no place like this. It will cost more to go for a weekend drive or take the kids camping.

Why is the McGuinty government making it 8% more expensive to discover Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Why did the NDP vote against a plan that would create 600,000 jobs in the province of Ontario? Why did the NDP vote against a plan that will attract \$47 billion worth of new investment to this province? Why did the NDP vote against the HST rebate, designed to provide some \$260 a year tax free to the people in this province who need the most help? Why did they vote against doubling the seniors' property tax grant from \$250 to \$500? I understand why they maybe didn't agree with us in regard to the Conservatives, but I can't understand why they would vote against tax cuts for the people in this province who need the most help. Really, that's the question that we have. All of us on this side of the aisle ask: Why are you against 600,000 jobs? Why are you against new investment? We—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government is making long-weekend family outings more expensive. After July 1, taking the train to catch a show in Niagara-on-the-Lake is going to cost 8% more. The show itself, not to mention the accommodation for a night's stay, will be more expensive too. So will taking the kids swimming.

What advice does the Acting Premier have for families this coming long weekend? Should they enjoy it while they can still afford it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I know that we have been encouraging the good people of Ontario to go to a website; over two million people have gone to that website. It is ontario.ca/taxchange. You can find out about the benefits of our tax reform package. This is the type of thing that people are looking at. I was asked recently: "Why is there a different reaction here in Ontario than in British Columbia?" I've told people that our single sales tax is part of a larger tax reform package, a package designed to get people back to work.

I remember when the NDP used to think that we should have full employment in this province. On this side of the House, we're doing something about it. We're making sure that there are more jobs in the province of Ontario. We'll do what is required as a government to ensure that we have strong economic growth. Maybe on that side of the House you don't understand that Ontario is leading Canada and Canada is leading the world when it comes to economic growth. That's—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: From enjoying a round of golf to a night at the theatre, from a visit to a fishing lodge to camping in a provincial park, the weekend adventure is about to get 8% more expensive. Yes, there's no other place like Ontario for great thrills this summer, but how is the McGuinty government's new 8% tax on just about all the thrills going to make things better for Ontario families?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The people of Ontario can't enjoy the wonderful attractions in this province if they don't have a job. This is all about making sure that we have people working in the province of Ontario. I can't believe that a party that has always promoted the value of workers voted against a policy that will result in 600,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario. Surely, they've lost their way over there when it comes to the importance and the dignity of a job.

I know that you're purporting to represent the people on the golf course and at the fishing lodges. But on this side of the House we are focused on making sure that people have a job in the 21st century. That's what our children and our grandchildren are expecting, and we will do what is required: working in partnership with the Conservative government in Ottawa to make sure that we have a strong Ontario, a requirement for an even stronger Canada.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is as well to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the unelected Metrolinx board approved a gutted Transit City plan, a plan that will delay long-awaited transit expansion for people in Toronto neighbourhoods like Rexdale, Malvern and Jane-Finch, a plan that will shorten promised transit lines by 22 kilometres and 25 stops, a plan that seriously puts into doubt the future of the whole Transit City plan. Was yesterday's announcement supposed to be good news for long-suffering Toronto transit users?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yesterday's announcement absolutely was good news for transit riders in Toronto. Yesterday's announcement commits to a plan that, instead of being completed over eight years, will be completed over 10 years, which is a pretty reasonable delay, given our economic situation. Yesterday's announcement put forward a plan that will start working on all of those projects. Yes, there will be some delays, but there will be work done on all five projects starting immediately. Yesterday's announcement reinforces our commitment to public transit in the GTHA.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The decision to cut this program, to cut the Transit City plan—and that's exactly what it is; it's a cut—rests at the feet of the McGuinty government. Toronto Mayor David Miller said it clearly: "This isn't [Metrolinx's] decision. It's the Premier's decision."

The Premier made a promise before the 2007 election that he would build MoveOntario 2020. He supported Transit City plans in 2008 to great fanfare. He has now broken both of these promises, but he still wants Toronto voters to trust him. Why the heck should they?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think people in Toronto understand that following through on a \$9.5-billion investment over 10 years, beginning the work right away, following through on a commitment to move on a regional build that is the biggest in a generation—I think that it is strange, actually, that the mayor can't see that this is part of his legacy. This is part of the work that he has done. He has worked with us up until now; it would be wonderful for him to work with us going forward.

I think that people understand that to get started on this work right away, they will have a better transit system for themselves, for their children and for their grandchildren.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is no doubt that the recession has been harsh and that the provincial deficit is real, but how is slashing public transit funding the best way to stimulate the economy and reduce the deficit? This government refuses to discuss the true cost of its decision. From slowing economic growth to polluting the environment, this is a wrong-headed decision that will cost much, much more in the long run. Why won't the McGuinty government realize its mistake and immediately reinstate the \$4 billion that has been cut from public transit in Toronto?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There has been no cut to the transit projects in the city of Toronto or in York region; there has been a delay. That's a commitment of \$9.5 billion, and yes, we're spreading that investment over a longer period of time.

But let's talk about the other investments that we're making in the city of Toronto. Let's talk about the \$172 million to revitalize Union Station; let's talk about the \$416 million that's going towards replacing TTC streetcars; let's talk about the \$874 million that is going into the Pearson-Union air-rail link; and let's talk about the fact that this is the party that has opposed that investment, that has opposed that work every step of the way. I am extremely proud to be part of a government that is making the biggest investment in public transit in a generation in the GTHA—

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

I remind the member from Hamilton East that it's much preferable, if he is going to interject, that he be doing it from his seat.

New question.

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Acting Premier. It concerns an abuse of trust in this House on three separate occasions in the last few weeks. First, the government House leader disclosed confidential details

about an in camera process to the media. The Liberals seated behind her know that the late night sittings are because she tried to push too many bills through this House before the summer, begged the opposition to help her fix up her mess and then backtracked on the deal when the Premier didn't like our HST motion. Then, the government House leader tried to blame the OPP for blocking the Ontario PCs on budget day, but yesterday, under oath, Nicolaas Cliteur, the OPP sergeant in charge of lock-up security, repudiated everything she said.

Ordinarily, it's three strikes and you're out. Why does the Premier still back his minister?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On two issues you raised in your question, I'm quite comfortable having those put.

The last part of your question pertains to an issue based on a ruling of the Speaker that was referred to a committee for investigation, and I don't think it's appropriate to have two parallel discussions taking place. I'm going to allow the question to be put, but will not allow in your supplementary anything dealing with the investigation stemming from my ruling.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think that it's important—for the folks who would perhaps be watching these proceedings, it may not be clear how we operate in this Legislative Assembly.

The House leaders do very good work on behalf of our respective caucuses. There certainly is an expectation that on every issue the goal is to ensure that the business of the province of Ontario is accomplished in a timely way. We know that the House leaders of all three parties have that goal in focus.

It does happen from time to time, however, that there is a parting of the ways in terms of how members of the opposition and our House leader may think the business should unfold in this place. We respect the consensus process that we have in this place. There certainly is and has been a great deal of respect among House leaders, and—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The three examples that I raised are really to illustrate our concern on this side of the House about the process not being followed. We thought we had an agreement in principle with respect to matters proceeding through this House, which was reneged upon with respect to—

Interjections.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: With respect to the government House leader, we thought we had a deal.

So my question is, how are we going to be proceeding in the future and can we rely on the word being given, when a deal is made, that will actually be followed through?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: For those who would be in this assembly today, it's obvious that the member from the opposition has presented a statement around a sup-

posed agreement, and I think there's a disagreement on whether or not there was an agreement.

At the end of the day, what the House leaders focus on is ensuring that we accomplish as much business on behalf of the people of Ontario as we possibly can, and we try to get that done with a consensus.

I think it's important for the people of Ontario to understand that as a result of the consensus that has been in place we have been able to pass our budget that would deliver tax—I'm sorry—that we have passed tax cuts for 93% of the people in the province of Ontario. That is our goal: to ensure that the work of this assembly carries on. There are some times that—

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

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Ontarians feel a very strong connection to Queen's Park and this Legislative Building. They see this place as a reflection of democracy and a place that belongs to all of them. So why has the McGuinty government stood quietly by while the OMB approved a super high-rise condo development on Bloor Street, which will cast an ugly blight over the view of this historic Legislature?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Yes, that will go to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. Our government is committed to protect heritage and heritage sites across the province. Speaker, let me read a statement here, through you, to the honourable member: "The primary Legislative Building is a listed property and is not an Ontario Heritage Act-designated property. It is listed on the register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest maintained by Toronto, pursuant to section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act..."

Since 2005 we have strengthened the Ontario Heritage Act and we believe the best decision will be local government's, which is the municipal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last fall, the NDP urged the Ministers of Culture and of Municipal Affairs to take some action on this very serious issue. While the Speaker's office and individual members spoke out against the development, the McGuinty government refused—refused—to even participate in the Ontario Municipal Board hearing. New Democrats are prepared, at this moment, to support legislation to protect the view and heritage of Ontario's Legislature. We all know that a heritage building includes the views and the vistas of any said property. What we're prepared to do includes supporting legislation, consenting to legislation that would have swift passage in this Legislature, if the government is prepared to bring such a bill forward.

My question is simple: Is the McGuinty government prepared, finally, to do the right thing and—

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

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again for the question. We believe the municipality is in the best position to make decisions about local heritage sites. Let me repeat: This is why in 2005 we strengthened the Ontario Heritage Act, to hand these municipalities the tools they need to protect heritage sites in their community. We believe this is the best decision and this is why we strengthened the act in 2005.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Ontarians know better than anybody how precious clean, safe drinking water is to our families and to our communities. They rely on your ministry, municipalities and their local public health units to ensure that water is protected and that swift actions are taken if there's even the slightest cause of concern. On Tuesday, when speaking about our proposed Water Opportunities Act, the leader of the third party raised the alarm about the quality of drinking water in four Ontario communities: Blind River, White River, Chatham and Wallaceburg. Would the minister tell the residents of these communities whether they need to be worried about their drinking water?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I appreciate the question from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. In fact, none of the communities that were mentioned by the leader of the third party currently have a boil-water advisory in place. All advisories associated with the four systems have been resolved and were of a short-term nature due to low exceedences or water main breaks. The only exception is Blind River, which was requiring treatment upgrades that were completed back in 2007. The drinking water advisory remained in place into 2009, until the system could provide proof that the annual average of THMs were under the Ontario drinking water quality standard.

We want to be clear to the residents of these four communities that they have an abundance of caution in our system and that their water is safe to drink.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Being the member who represents White River and Blind River, I want to tell you that the province of Ontario, as you know, has provided huge capital expenditures on both those water systems to bring them up to standard. I know the residents of these communities can be assured that their drinking water is safe, that the boil-water advisories were issued in an abundance of caution and that they were lifted as soon as it was confirmed that everything was safe.

Currently, we are marking the 10th anniversary of Walkerton, a tragic reminder of how sacred clean drinking water is. The Walkerton water tragedy sparked a massive transformation in how drinking water is protected in Ontario. Ontario went from a time when critical information was falling through the cracks in the system

to being ranked as the best province in Canada for drinking water protection.

How does Ontario's drinking water safety net protect Ontario families?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Once again, thank you to the member. First of all, we've implemented all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations from the Walkerton inquiry. As a matter of fact, we've taken the following actions: drinking water standards and tough inspections by hiring 119 dedicated drinking water inspectors that did not exist at the time that the Walkerton tragedy happened; standards are met across this province in well over 99% of all the tests that are conducted on an ongoing basis; the Clean Water Act, protecting the sources of our drinking water; and the water protection committees are at work right now to make sure that plans are in place to make that happen in the very near future.

We have implemented the toughest training and certification rules in North America for operators of our drinking water systems. We've created the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, which so far has done more than 23,000 new and existing—

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

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontario has a long history as a leader in science and technology and your government likes to claim some of the credit for that. Ontario is home to Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., a world leader in the nuclear industry. Ontario's nuclear industry provides 50,000 highly skilled, highly paid jobs.

Acting Premier, why is your government so silent on the history of AECL and Ontario's nuclear industry?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I really welcome this question, because I want to tell you that it's time for this country to get a federal government in place that's willing to stand behind the nuclear industry in this country. This province is investing billions of dollars in a refurbishment of our nuclear units. This province is engaged in a procurement process to purchase two new nuclear units.

We need our federal government, like national governments around the world, to stand behind the nuclear industry. You need to put in a call to Stephen Harper to tell him how important the 70,000 jobs in the nuclear industry are to us here in Ontario and to every Canadian.

This government stands behind the nuclear industry. It's time for the federal government to provide some backstop to this very critical industry in this country.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: What a load. Acting Premier, your government's lack of leadership and on-again, off-again decision on new-build nuclear at Darlington has contributed complete uncertainty—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The ministers will please come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That has contributed uncertainty around the future of AECL. Your Premier, who wanted to play Pontius Pilate in the André Marin affair, can't wash his hands of this one. The nuclear industry in Canada is Ontario's nuclear industry, and Ontario needs new-build nuclear and AECL is prepared to deliver.

Minister, what is your government going to do to support this important industry that adds \$6 billion per year to Ontario's economy? Ontario's nuclear industry is Canada's nuclear industry. What are you doing to show leadership?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This government stands with the men and women who work across Ontario and across Canada in the nuclear industry. Some 70,000 jobs are at stake here. We need you to stand up to the federal government, to tell them they ought to make the same commitment that we're providing to those 70,000 men and women in this industry. We're standing behind that industry. We're investing billions of dollars in refurbishment. We're purchasing two new nuclear units, but it can't be done without the backing of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: Were they on sale at Future Shop?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew, I know, understands the standing orders: (a) He should be listening to the answer, and (b) if he is dissatisfied with the answer, he should be filing a late show.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Every country around the world that has a nuclear industry has the backing of their national government. It's what is required to make these things happen: to ensure that there's a competitive price; to ensure that the challenges that come with these transactions can be mitigated. All we're asking is for our federal government to do what has been done in the past, to do what other—

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

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. This minister, this government and seniors' organizations know that sprinklers should be mandatory in every retirement home. Groups at committee hearings spoke of the need for sprinklers; the fire marshal, the fire chiefs, advocacy groups, the coroner, even insurance companies call for mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home. Just because the retirement home closest to your family was built before 1998 shouldn't mean that your mother or father should be put at risk.

In the face of mounting evidence and support for mandatory sprinkler systems, why are the McGuinty Liberals refusing to make all seniors' safety a priority?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: The safety of our seniors is a high priority for us. That's why, for the first time in the history of the province, we have legislation before the House to regulate retirement homes. Part of that legislation is to set safety standards—care standards and safety standards. The member will know that part of the legislation is that, if passed, we then begin discussion on the establishment of those safety standards. My colleague the minister responsible for the fire code has indicated that no door has been closed on that.

So I would say to the member, if the legislation is passed, part of that will be to establish safety standards. It's all about making our seniors safer. That's what this legislation is all about, and there's a logical next step in that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary, the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France G linas: Bill 21 does not afford safety to seniors; it fails seniors. All the stakeholders will agree that the failure to limit the amount of care that can be delivered in a retirement home puts seniors at risk. The regulatory authority that you want to create hands over oversight of the industry that will put profits ahead of all else. I have been waiting for three years to get this piece of legislation. Why all of a sudden is the government in such a rush, willing to compromise the democratic process to rush this flawed, dangerous bill through?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: It's not flawed and it's not being rushed through. I would just remind the public that four years ago we said we would do this; three years ago we had consultations across the province. We indicated we'd be introducing legislation; we introduced legislation to the House. I will say that all three parties voted for the legislation at second reading. We then sent it to committee. The committee sat for two days at hearings, but only used one day but it accommodated everybody who wanted to speak. I reject somewhat categorically that we're rushing this through. Four years of work; we introduced the bill several months ago; both opposition parties voted for the bill. We sent it to committee and everybody who wanted to come and be heard was allowed to come and be heard. The advice I get is that it's time to—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. My riding of Toronto Centre is at the heart of downtown Toronto. Many of my constituents prefer to hop on the streetcar, subway or bus to get around the city than to take their cars and sit in gridlock. I've heard from some of my constituents that they would like to see a more modern, comprehensive transit system that could easily take them to all parts of the city. The delay in funding of the big five transit projects, as

announced in the 2010 budget, has made many of my constituents wonder whether these projects are at risk.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the member for Toronto Centre is very committed to public transit, and I know he'll want to reassure his constituents that Metrolinx has worked very hard with our municipal partners both in York and in Toronto to get a plan in place that's rational and doable and that will allow the big five transit projects to be completed while slowing down the cash flow of \$4 billion in the first five years. That report was presented at the Metrolinx board yesterday. It was endorsed unanimously. We're reviewing it, and I look forward to getting started on these projects.

The plan recommends that we continue working on the Sheppard line immediately, we begin immediately on Eglinton and York Viva and we start to do planning and design work on Finch and Sheppard, and finish those in the 2015-20 period.

This is a \$9.5-billion investment. I was at the Canadian Urban Transit Association yesterday—

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

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I know my constituents will be pleased to hear that Metrolinx has a plan to move forward and get these important projects constructed.

Minister, Metrolinx has said that the Finch and Scarborough lines are going to be staged and construction will begin in 2015. The delay in their construction has been interpreted by some as a lack of commitment on the government's part to these two lines. The Scarborough Rapid Transit and Finch LRT are critical to help connect from those areas to the downtown and other parts of the city.

Could the minister please provide us with more details as to the government's commitment to these two projects?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said earlier, we're committed to all five of these projects in the next 10 years. Metrolinx is going to, in fact, be doing important work on the Finch and Scarborough lines in the first five years. What they will be doing is some design work, engineering, property acquisition and, in fact, will allocate \$70 million for the Finch line and \$100 million for the Scarborough line in the first five years. That work will be going ahead.

We're also going to be ordering the light rail vehicles for all four LRT lines, including Finch, in the coming months. Those are very concrete examples of the go-ahead. Metrolinx will be starting construction of the joint Sheppard-Scarborough carhouse.

I wanted to say that I was in Ottawa yesterday at the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Transit officials from across the country were looking to us, were talking about what's going on in Ontario, and they know that—

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

CEMETERIES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. It concerns the Mount Pleasant

Group of Cemeteries. A number of concerned Toronto residents made a submission to the Premier, the Attorney General and to your ministry with concerns about the administration of this body. On December 4, 2009, your ministry promised to consider their submission and to respond early in the new year. More than five months have passed without a response. Please tell me when these Toronto residents will receive a response?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm glad to respond to the member regarding the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. First, let me just say that I understand that the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries is working to strengthen its community outreach to better inform residents, including publishing a report of their annual activities on their website, which is a great thing.

In terms of governance, I am advised that the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries will commence advertising board openings as they arise.

Thirdly, I encourage both the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries and the Moore Park Residents' Association to work together to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want to clarify that the member for Durham asked your predecessor about this important issue last September, and at that time he asked about what measures the ministry was taking to increase transparency and public accountability. Today, though, Minister, what we're asking is when you are going to provide a response to the request that was made several months ago.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again, I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are looking at that. But again, let me just say that I do encourage both the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries and the Moore Park Residents' Association to work together to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

1130

TAXATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Acting Premier. I have here over 3,000 signed cards from First Nations citizens in northwestern Ontario demanding that the McGuinty Liberal government maintain the First Nations' point-of-sale exemption from the harmonized sales tax.

When the McGuinty Liberals announced, with much fanfare, the HST, you also announced a number of HST exemptions. Later, when you faced political criticism of the HST, the McGuinty Liberals suddenly and unilaterally decided to exempt newspapers, the Tim Hortons \$4 lunch and new homes costing under \$400,000 from the HST.

What these First Nations citizens want to know is this: The McGuinty Liberals had time to consider and implement exemptions from the HST; how could you forget about the point-of-sale exemption for—

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As I've said to the House before, and as people throughout the province of Ontario know, my colleague Minister Wilkinson and I have confirmed the direction of the Premier. We stand shoulder to shoulder with First Nations. We have told the federal government that we wish to maintain the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations in the province of Ontario. The memorandum of agreement confirms many, many months of work. The Premier's letter, the Minister of Finance, my colleague Minister Wilkinson, myself and my predecessor are all confirming, and we are calling on Prime Minister Harper and the federal government to continue the point-of-sale exemption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I hear the words of the minister, but here is the reality: You, the McGuinty government, have the unilateral authority to decide what shall be exempted from the HST and what isn't. Economists who have looked at your agreement over the HST have concluded that you have the financial room to continue the HST exemption at point of sale for First Nations and you have the unilateral authority.

Again, what these First Nations citizens want to know is this: How could you put in place HST exemptions for buyers of new homes, book purchasers, newspaper readers and coffee shop patrons but, at the same time, completely forget about the point-of-sale exemption from the HST for First Nations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: There's the issue: On all of the exemptions my colleague touched on, the federal government has agreed. The federal government administers the HST. They must agree to administer this point-of-sale exemption. That's why we've been working with the regional chief, with the grand chiefs, with the chiefs in communities. We stand shoulder to shoulder. We've signed the memorandum of agreement. We are calling on the Prime Minister to maintain the point-of-sale exemption.

I would simply add that there was much heckling from the official opposition during the course of my earlier answer. I'm looking forward to seeing the letters from them that call on Prime Minister Harper to maintain the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations.

HEPATITIS C

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you know, yesterday was World Hepatitis Day. In particular, hepatitis C may be considered a very serious virus in that there is no vaccine for it. Hepatitis C is currently the leading cause of chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer within the province of Ontario. One in five people with hepatitis C will suffer severe liver damage as a result of the virus.

My constituents recognize the importance of addressing serious illnesses such as hepatitis C. Could the

minister please inform this House of our government's progress in dealing with this debilitating disease?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for her question.

I want to tell you that our government is strongly committed to fighting hepatitis C. Shortly after taking office, we established the Ontario Hepatitis C Secretariat and the Ontario hepatitis C task force. I want to thank the chair of the task force, John Plater, and the entire team for their exceptional work that has guided our strategy to prevent and treat Ontarians with hepatitis C.

In 2005, we launched a sweeping campaign designed to raise awareness through television and newspaper ads, over 100 prevention and educational materials and a website, hepcontario.ca. We've invested in the Ontario hepatitis nursing program to provide nursing support for physicians. There are currently 13 hepatitis support nurses in 11 sites across Ontario—

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly proud that our government is taking a concerted approach to preventing and treating hepatitis C and I'm sure that my constituents will be pleased to hear this as well.

Last year, we received the Hepatitis C Task Force's recommendations for addressing the concerns of hepatitis C. I understand that their report has served as the foundation for our comprehensive hepatitis C strategy. In light of World Hepatitis Day, could the minister please inform this House of our government's strategy for hepatitis prevention and treatment moving forward?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to talk about our government's plans to build a stronger, healthier Ontario. We offer children in elementary school immunizations at no cost to provide protection against hepatitis B and other diseases. This saves each family \$580 for that vaccine alone in addition to the \$1,000 that is saved by families on our other vaccines offered to Ontario's children at no cost to them.

When it comes to hepatitis C, we're establishing hepatitis support teams to bring a coordinated, comprehensive approach to helping people affected with hepatitis C through a social outreach program. We're encouraging prevention through a harm reduction approach, which evidence suggests is one of the most effective ways to reduce infections.

I'm proud of the program—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Health. I recently received a letter from a constituent who needs frequent blood tests to control a serious health condition. Before you got into power and started bleeding the system dry, these blood tests were done efficiently by a local clinic just a 20-minute walk away. She got the results right away and got the medication the same day.

These days, her local clinic doesn't offer this service. She has to drive over an hour to Kingston General Hospital.

Minister, was it worth destroying this woman's local care so that you could set up your friends in a LHIN and add a new layer of wasteful bureaucracy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On the issue of lab tests, I will be happy to speak to that more in the supplementary.

Your attacks on the LHINs continue despite the fact that we know and people in this province know that the integration of health care services is a key part of our strategy to improve health care in this province. In the past, we have had siloed services when it came to health care. Knitting those services together so that people can access the right kinds of health support at the right time, as close to home as possible, is the future of health care in this province.

The party opposite wants to go back to a system where all of the decisions were made in the minister's office in the Ministry of Health. That is not the right place for decisions to be made. The closer to the community decisions—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, you talk about your LHINs as if they're helping people get local care and providing integration. Instead of performing blood tests, our health care system is just plain bleeding. Blood test requisitions from family doctors are no longer accepted at the hospital, so so much for your integration.

Let's face the facts: Since taking over this office, you've waged a war against rural health care providers. First, you snuffed out local clinics, adding layers of wasteful LHIN bureaucracy; now you're going to decimate small, rural pharmacies, which provide much of Ontario's front-line care.

In a document prepared by your office, you were warned that your reforms were going to hurt pharmacists. Why are you so adamant in your attack against good health care in rural Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would welcome the opportunity to talk with the member opposite when we have more time so I could tell him about the great things we're doing for rural health care in this province. We have opened family health teams in rural communities right across this province. We're on our way to opening nurse practitioner clinics in rural and urban areas across this province.

When it comes to health care, we are committed to providing health care for all Ontarians regardless of where they live, but when the member opposite talks about pharmacies, I cannot help myself. I have to say, why are you standing on the side of higher profits for pharmacies and against the people who need access to lower-priced generic drugs?

1140

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Labour. In 2008 your government, after years of

lobbying, gave part-time college workers the right to vote on whether or not to join a union. It's too bad that you didn't include the right to have the votes counted. The workers have voted, but part-time academic staff have now been waiting for over 17 months and part-time support staff have been waiting for over six months to have their ballots counted. The colleges are currently using an expensive army of lawyers to exploit a loophole in the legislation to deny part-time college workers their rights.

Minister, the colleges are making a mockery of your legislation. When will the votes be counted?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member very much for the question. I'll just speak to the question directly first and say, as he knows, the issue is before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It is an independent adjudicative tribunal. We don't interfere in their day-to-day operations; that's not what we do.

But I will say to the member that our government is committed to promoting a very stable and constructive labour relations climate here in Ontario, and that's why we did introduce the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, allowing part-time and sessional college workers the right to bargain collectively for the first time, I say to the member.

The new act modernizes our colleges' collective bargaining to provide a fair and productive labour relations environment, to better serve the needs of students and the college system.

I say that to the member. This is good news. Now allow the labour board to do their work.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They have been waiting for 17 months. I remind you: Warren Thomas, the president of OPSEU, says the following: "A law that has no practical use is no law at all." He's right, and I agree with him.

The colleges are manipulating the system, and they are using our money and your complacency to do it. The \$5,000 per day that the hearings cost would be better spent on our students. This money could be used to lower class sizes, reduce tuition, provide retraining programs and hire qualified staff.

When will you tell the colleges that this delay is a waste of resources and that they must let democracy take its course and count the ballots?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member's question asks me to interfere with the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and I say to the member I will not do that. I will not do that.

But what I will do, and what this government will continue to do, is enhance strong labour relations here in the province of Ontario, and that is what we have done over the last six and a half years. Again to the member, that's why we introduced the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, allowing part-time and sessional college workers to be able to bargain collectively for the first time.

We are going to continue to strengthen our labour relations here in the province of Ontario. We know it's

good for our economy. We know it's good for our workers and our employees. We have an excellent record, and we will continue to strengthen and build on that record.

TAXATION

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question this morning is to the Minister of Revenue. Jack Mintz states that our tax package will bring \$47 billion in new investment and create almost 600,000 jobs in Ontario.

But, Minister, some municipalities are concerned about increasing costs, including my municipality in the city of Peterborough. Municipalities provide important services many Ontarians rely on, including transit services, water and sewer services, and most importantly, road repair.

I know the Conservatives increased the burden on municipalities by downloading through their famous who-got-done-in exercise, and I know that our government is easing that burden by uploading these services. What will the HST mean for municipalities in Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the question, because I know municipalities have been delighted to learn that they will now receive the most generous municipal rebate, when it comes to the provincial portion of the HST, of any province in Canada. That rebate is going to be some 78% of the provincial portion of the HST. Their rebate from the federal government will remain.

What does that mean in Peterborough? For example, the finance department in your fine city, I say to the member, reviewed the city's spending in 2008 to find the potential cost or savings if the harmonized sales tax had been in place. They found the city would have saved \$600,000 last year. That is a good example of how under our tax reforms we are continuing to upload for municipalities.

Another example is London Transit, which is holding off the purchase of their new buses because by doing it after July 1—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: General Electric recently made a \$100-million investment in their Peterborough facility that will create 33 new high-skilled jobs and retain an additional 75 jobs.

I'd like to quote GE president and CEO Elyse Allan, who said, "It really was a recognition of how competitive Ontario has become on the global stage and our ability as a global company to invest here in Ontario, to grow here in Ontario"—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: —"to grow here in Ontario and to have the ability"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You sat; the minister stood. Minister.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Actually, they opened there in 1892. They found out how to create wealth in the 19th

century and in the 20th century for the good people of Peterborough. They just landed the largest large-motor contract in the history of their company. They are exporting the most advanced large motors in the world to the People's Republic of China. They have found a contract that allows them to compete and win in the global economy, and because—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Because the member for Peterborough got cut off, we'd support a unanimous consent motion to have him get another question.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members please take your seats.

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 23. All those in favour will rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.
Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 21.

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

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has filed notice of a reasoned amendment for the motion for second reading of Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 72 may therefore not be called today.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to welcome representatives of Canadian Tire's Jumpstart charitable program. They are in the east members' gallery with us this afternoon. This is an organization which aids disadvantaged youth to get involved in sports.

I am pleased to welcome Freida Rubletz, who's the employee engagement personnel and chapter manager, and Althea Evans, a business analyst. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. David Zimmer: It's my pleasure to introduce Joyce Thompson, who's the founding executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes here in Toronto, and her husband, Jim, and Cindy Accardi, the executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Last week, the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce held its 12th annual Awards of Excellence to honour businesses in our community for their success and to recognize the contributions to our community and our environment.

The entrepreneur of the year was a new business, Anastacia's Spa, which through their expansion has contributed to making Broadway Street even more beautiful.

Johnson Controls won the industrial achievement. The plant management submitted the nomination to recognize the contributions of employees who not only helped them stay in business during the tough economic times but expand—a great achievement through great team work.

Mill Tales Inn won the Tillsonburg Award of Excellence, and I want to commend the owners, Gord and Laura Lee Craig, on creating a great restaurant while preserving a piece of our history, the former Tillson pea and barley mill.

Another new business in Tillsonburg, Tillsonburg Future Road Solutions, won the environmental award not

only for their unique organic de-icing product but also their commitment to the environment in the way the business is run.

Coward Pharmacy was recognized for business achievement, and I commend them on the work they do for their clients every day. I was pleased to attend their recent public information session and receive the many petitions that their clients have signed to protect small pharmacies like Coward's.

Radio stations Easy 101—new country—AM1510, and Country 107.3 won an award recognizing their community service. This family-run business contributes to so many events and causes within the community. They are very well deserving of this award.

I want to congratulate all the winners and the many businesses that were nominated and thank them all for their contributions to the town of Tillsonburg and the great riding of Oxford.

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Ted McMeekin: May 25 is National Missing Children's Day. I feel very strongly that this is an important day to recognize here in the Legislative Assembly. In 2008, 20,526 precious children went missing in the province of Ontario alone. As a parent, I certainly understand the anguish of that.

I support the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign. It will bring awareness to the community regarding the issue of missing children and how we can safeguard our kids from predators, be they online or on the streets. The green ribbon has become a symbol of hope for families wanting the safe return of their children. While the Legislative Assembly is not sitting on May 25, I nonetheless want to acknowledge the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign and May 25 as National Missing Children's Day.

I am pleased to say that our government is dedicated to ensuring families and communities are supported should a child go missing, as evidenced by the very successful Amber Alert program. Yes, there's always more work to do, but that said, I applaud Child Find Ontario for organizing the 19th annual Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign and know that all members of the Legislative Assembly do, as well.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: May is National Physiotherapy Month across Canada. Over 7,000 Ontario physiotherapists practise in hospitals, community health centres, long-term-care homes, retirement homes, home care, community clinics and industry.

Access to physiotherapy facilities by hospital inpatients and outpatients is an insured service under the Canada Health Act. Evidence shows the effectiveness of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic illnesses and post-accident and surgery treatment to enhance patients' timely return to their daily lives. Studies have also shown that access to physiotherapy services reduces the demand

on hospital emergency rooms and the length of hospital stays.

Yet to cut short-term health costs, access to publicly funded physiotherapy is dramatically declining in Ontario, with hospitals downsizing their outpatient physiotherapy clinics and CCACs applying severe restrictions on the eligibility and number of treatments per patient. Despite promises to the contrary, the Ministry of Health continues to exclude physiotherapists from family health units.

National Physiotherapy Month is about showing Ontario physiotherapists how much we value their contributions to our health care system. On their behalf, I call on the McGuinty government to enhance patient access to publicly funded physiotherapy services.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was waiting for the member from Newmarket–Aurora to do his presentation because mine is also about physiotherapy. May being National Physiotherapy Month, I want to thank all of my fellow 7,000 physiotherapists for the very important work that they do.

Physiotherapists help people who have bone, joint and muscle trouble. For a lot of people, total hip replacement surgery alone is of very little value if it is not followed by physiotherapy. The pain may be gone, but it is the physiotherapy that will make you walk, be functional and allow you to return to your normal life, referring to the commercial, no matter what your normal life looks like. Access to physiotherapy reduces the demand on emergency rooms, reduces the length of stay in hospital, and reduces the need for expensive drugs. But as the member said, access to publicly funded physiotherapy is dramatically declining.

Every MPP now has a copy of the Ontario Health Coalition paper report, and that shows that many hospitals have closed or downsized their outpatient physiotherapy clinics. When I was in Picton, two people came to the hearing. They are forced to do without physiotherapy, although they need it, because their hospital has cut that service in order to balance the books. That's not right. Physiotherapists deserve better.

1310

DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm very pleased to rise today to recognize Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre, located in my riding of Willowdale.

June marks Deaf-Blind Awareness Month in Ontario, and on June 16, Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre will hold their eighth annual JuneFest, a celebration to promote greater public awareness of persons living with dual sensory loss and the organizations that support and provide services to them.

I'd like to make a special point of recognizing Joyce Thompson, in the members' gallery. She is the co-

founder and former executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes.

More commonly known as JT, Joyce has spent a lifetime working tirelessly in service to the deaf-blind community. Her level of commitment, passion and devotion is inspirational. Despite being diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, Joyce continues to be an activist leader and to provide yeoman service to her community.

Joyce is a person of special note and worthiness. To honour her accomplishments, Joyce will be awarded the first JuneFest Award of Excellence on June 16 here in Toronto. Please join me in congratulating her, welcoming her and thanking her for her years of service.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Robert Bailey: The Ontario Association of Food Banks reports that food bank usage in Ontario has increased by 20% in the last year alone. This means that roughly 375,000 Ontarians—our friends and neighbours—were forced to turn to their local food bank every month in 2009, which is an all-time high for our province. Yet, unfortunately, food donations are decreasing. In 2008 alone they decreased by more than one million pounds.

However, while food banks struggle to provide for those in need, Ontario farmers, who are also struggling, dispose of or plough back into the fields more than 25 million pounds of fresh, nutritious food. The unfortunate fact is that farmers often cannot afford the costs incurred to collect, process and deliver their unsold produce to local food banks, despite a clear desire to do so by the industry.

Yesterday, I introduced a bill, entitled the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, that, if passed, will provide a significant tax credit to farmers who donate unsold produce and other excess food.

I believe that this bill presents a concrete solution that will not only assist local food banks, but also local farmers and struggling Ontarians. It is my hope that the bill will help neutralize the cost placed on local farmers to collect and donate this excess produce, while at the same time providing a significant incentive for them to do so.

JUMPSTART

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise in the House today to speak about the partnership between the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families Jumpstart program. Working together, they will assist children from low-income families to become involved in sports and recreation.

On May 29, Jumpstart will hold its second annual Jumpstart Day. In York South–Weston, we have two Canadian Tire stores that can be involved in bringing about change through this program and getting children into the game.

All children should have the opportunity to be involved in organized sports and recreation, learning great teamwork skills as they grow. Providing children with great recreational programs decreases their involvement in street activity while increasing confidence, motivation and camaraderie.

As a community-based, not-for-profit organization, the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families has a mission to keep communities strong in times of difficulty. While one in three families find they cannot afford equipment and enrolment fees, with the help of Jumpstart, they can.

The Ministry of Health Promotion supports the initiatives of the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families Jumpstart program, which has been able to give more than 216,000 kids in financial need across the country a chance to play since its launch in February 2005—in the Toronto north chapter alone, 3,119 children over the past four years.

I would like to thank the Jumpstart program and the Ministry of Health Promotion for helping York South–Weston to be a stronger and healthier community.

BRIAN TARDIF

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is my great honour to recognize a good friend of mine and a true inspiration to my community of Ottawa and to Ottawa Centre, and that is Brian Tardif.

Brian will be celebrating his 25th anniversary as executive director of Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa. Citizen Advocacy is a charitable organization that enhances the lives of persons with disabilities through advocacy and support by increasing personal choice and community participation.

Brian has been working with Citizen Advocacy since 1985, and his passion for the voluntary non-profit sector spans more than three decades. Brian's dedication and leadership for people with disabilities and Citizen Advocacy is truly inspiring. Brian strongly believes in the principles of inclusion and valued social roles for people with disabilities as well as a strong and vibrant volunteer sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his continued commitment to my community of Ottawa and for all the work he does on behalf of every one of us. He is also engaged with Families Matter Co-op; 1 Community Place, which he was instrumental in creating; and the United Way.

Brian is a mentor, a coach, a leader, a friend and an all around great guy. Thank you, Brian, for all your service to Ottawa.

YORK UNIVERSITY

Mr. Mario Sergio: In the lead-up to Earth Day 2010, York University released a campus-wide report on sustainability with a strategy to reduce its ecological

footprint that goes beyond the usual approaches to being green.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work the students, faculty and staff at York University have undertaken. They should indeed serve as a model for sustainability for college and university campuses across Ontario.

York University has become a leader in sustainability, with innovative curriculum, campus operations, green buildings and the commitment to helping shape sustainable livelihoods.

President Mamdouh Shoukri's sustainability council has charted an innovative curriculum that emphasizes the university's vital relationship with the greater Toronto area, produces some of the most advanced research and thinking on sustainability, and educates and trains the next generation of sustainability leaders. The strategy developed by the sustainability council illustrates the type of approach that should be adopted across Ontario's urban centres where social, environmental and economic concerns are mutually addressed.

On Earth Day, York launched its zero waste program, which will divert 65% of campus waste from landfill sites by 2013. The university's Unplug initiative has already decreased campus energy use dramatically. It led to a 3.55% reduction in energy consumption over the Family Day weekend, amounting to 22,729 kilowatt hours.

I appreciate the work that York University is doing with respect to sustainability.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELIMINATION OF AUTOMATIC TIPS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 ÉLIMINANT L'IMPOSITION AUTOMATIQUE DE POURBOIRES

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to eliminate automatic tips in restaurants / Projet de loi 81, Loi éliminant l'imposition automatique de pourboires dans les restaurants.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. David Caplan: Eliminating automatic tips, 2010, or EAT, prevents restaurant owners from charging automatic service charges in restaurants across Ontario.

The legislation has one exception. It excludes private functions and banquets. In this case, restaurant owners and operators would still be able to charge automatic service charges when dealing with private gatherings and banquets.

1320

TORONTO CITY COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE CONSEIL MUNICIPAL DE LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Mr. Sergio moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 82, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I'll try and be short. The bill amends the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Legislative Assembly Act. The City of Toronto Act, 2006, is amended to restructure the city council by limiting the number of members to 32 and by establishing a board of control to oversee all financial and personal matters. The act is also amended to limit the number of consecutive terms of office held by a member of council to two, to shorten the nomination incumbent period of an election, and to require members of council to resign before running for other government office.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Motions? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do you understand the motion? All those in favour?

Interjections.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You asked for unanimous consent. I said no.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All right. I didn't hear the no, but I do now.

Motions?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 30 be waived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): No, you didn't get unanimous consent.

Mr. Frank Klees: You can try again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You can try again, but we can't go on forever.

Hon. Mr. Fonseca: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To do what?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's to waive notice.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do you understand the motion?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): He just wants the notice waived.

Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? No. I heard a no.

PETITIONS

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: This is one of the most important sessions of the day, when we get to share the people's will with this House. I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas there are thousands more in a similar circumstance across the province; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the wait-list, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services, the Minister of Health and LTC and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region" and thousands more in regions of the province "receive the necessary treatment."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in full support of this petition.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of the riding of Sudbury.

"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;

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the clerks' table with Lars.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

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

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

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

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

I'm pleased to affix my signature.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Kingston, London and Oshawa.

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

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

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

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

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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

“Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) 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 (CCVI) 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.”

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

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the good people of Oakville.

“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 ... 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’m pleased to sign this and pass it to my page, Lars.

1330

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a number of petitions here on behalf of a number of residents from the area of Timmins. It reads as follows:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Xstrata Copper Canada has announced it will permanently cease operation of its copper and zinc metallurgical plants at the Kidd metallurgical site in Timmins on May 1, 2010; and

“Whereas Xstrata plans to continue extracting ore from the Kidd mine site in Timmins until 2017 and is making plans to ship this ore out of province for refining and processing; and

“Whereas 670 employees will be directly impacted as a result of this decision, and numerous commercial and retail establishments both small and large will be affected by this decision; and

“Whereas several other communities throughout northeastern Ontario will suffer from the devastating consequences of this decision;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to protect the natural resources of this province, our industry and our jobs; and

“Furthermore we call upon the government of Ontario to take a firm stand and finally call a halt to the pillaging of our wealth by foreign-owned companies. If the leaders of Newfoundland and Labrador can do it, then so should the Ontario government.”

I have signed that petition, and I send it over with Stig, who is going to take all of these wonderful petitions to the table.

WATER QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government’s plan to introduce a new Water Oppor-

tunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I will attach my signature to that and pass it to Jacob.

TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it and send it down with Mary, my page.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: "Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe-Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food..., electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, veterinarian bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

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

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

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

I agree with the petition, and I will sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This is a further petition from the residents of the fine riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and send it down with Mary.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Ms. Horwath moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries /
Projet de loi 57, Loi plafonnant les hauts traitements du
secteur public.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 98, Ms. Horwath, you have up to 12 minutes.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I wanted to start out by saying what this bill is. Fundamentally, this bill is about improving accountability and oversight in the public sector, something that New Democrats have been calling for for quite some time, something that the people of this province have been calling for for quite some time.

Why? Because we need to make sure that our public dollars are invested wisely, that every cent that we take in is invested in a way that meets the needs of the people of this province and meets those needs effectively and efficiently; because every single dollar that is wasted could be invested in the services that people need, services like long-term-care beds, services like front-line nursing care, services like the building of better schools,

services like keeping our hydro rates more affordable in this province. These are the kinds of services that people expect their tax dollars to go towards.

Unfortunately, what we see happening more and more is a greater proportion of those tax dollars going into public sector salaries of top executives. I'm not talking about the everyday personal support worker, several of whom were with me today in a media conference in the media studio talking about the important work they do. I'm not talking about those folks. I'm talking about the people at the very, very top who are pulling down hundreds of thousands of dollars on an annual basis.

Governments keep promising that they are going to do something to address this situation of the out-of-control top executive salaries in this public sector in Ontario, but it never, ever seems to happen. Instead, those salaries keep climbing and climbing and climbing. We have million-dollar executives right now at our publicly owned electricity companies and sky-high hospital executive CEO salaries as well. It seems this has become the norm in our province, where the people at the very top of these public service organizations and institutions are making millions of dollars.

The bill I'm introducing today is a very simple bill. In fact, it sits on but one piece of paper. One piece of paper contains the entire bill, and it would apply to all of the executives in public sector organizations and the greater public sector in this province. What it does is very simple: It puts a hard cap on the salary of public sector executives. The cap would be, pretty logically, twice the salary of what the Premier of this province makes. That's where the cap would lie. It would equate to two times what Premier McGuinty currently makes. It basically means that the top executives of our public institutions would make a maximum of twice the amount that the president and CEO of the government of the province of Ontario makes. That seems pretty logical. That seems pretty fair.

1340

The bill would apply to all executives in the public sector, as I said, organizations that are currently subject to the sunshine list. This is when this issue gets a great deal of attention, when the sunshine list is published and we see yet again, year after year, the climbing salaries of these top executives. The executives on that list range from organizations like the Ontario public service itself to crown agencies like Hydro One, OPG, universities and of course hospitals, as I've already mentioned.

The Premier's salary right now sits at about \$209,000. In effect, doing the straight math, the cap would be about \$418,000. That's almost half a million dollars—half a million dollars. Certainly, half a million dollars to lead a public service organization in this province is plenty of compensation. The bill itself would come into effect as these salaries are negotiated. We wouldn't expect to break any current contracts. That's something that simply cannot be done, and we understand that. But what it would do, going forward, is cap those salaries in the future.

The government likes to tell us that nurses, teachers and front-line workers are the ones who should bear the brunt of freezes for salaries, that they should actually voluntarily freeze their own salaries. Yet public sector executives will still be raking it in. They're still going to be raking in huge increases every single year. The government is pretending that they're doing something about this. They have Bill 16, which they claim freezes the salaries of executives and managers, but as we saw when that bill was scrutinized, in fact, there are all kinds of loopholes that allow for pay-for-performance bonuses, for example. It's tough talk, but when you look at the legislation itself, the government built in this opportunity to continue to allow these salaries to increase, although not calling it a salary but calling it a performance bonus. We know that if it quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's a duck. In fact, it's a raise; it's actually a raise. Whether you want to call it a performance bonus or not, it is a raise. They could get 2%, 3%, 4% or 5% more on a salary that in many cases is already extremely high.

I have to say that anything that allows the salaries to continue to climb is obviously not a freeze. A freeze is a freeze. It reminds me of a kid's game. They're in a certain game that you play, and when the person turns around, you're supposed to freeze. That's what a freeze is: You stop. It's stopped dead in its tracks. It's not something that you allow to continue to creep, creep, creep up. That's why we are where we are now, where we have CEOs making almost a million dollars while nurses are being laid off. That's why we are in this situation where we are now, because the creep has been allowed to continue. It's time to stop. It's time to put a hard cap on those salaries and make sure that those dollars are going into the hands-on care that we want to see happening in Ontario, whether that's hands-on care in the health care sector or whether that's making sure that we have qualified teachers teaching in our schools or providing educational assistants for kids with special needs. Those are the kinds of places that those dollars should go to.

There's another bill that the government brought forward, Bill 46. It takes the same kind of approach to bonuses. It makes hospitals tie their executives' compensation to meeting certain kinds of criteria. In other words, you can only get a raise if you meet certain criteria, one of which is patient satisfaction surveys and a number of other criteria. But what it doesn't do is put a cap or a freeze on the salaries of these CEOs. We've already seen what happens with this kind of system. In fact, the Ottawa Hospital has a CEO who is basically being compensated based on this kind of pay-for-performance type of model. What's happening there? What's happening there is this CEO is making well over \$700,000 a year. It's already apparent that this is a failure of a model, that it doesn't keep a cap on those increasing salaries, that it doesn't restrict the spiralling increases that happen year over year.

But what's happening in the meantime? In the meantime, in Ottawa, nurses are being laid off. The hours of care that Ottawa citizens are able to receive from

nursing staff in their hospital is being reduced. Meanwhile, the CEO is walking away with all kinds of great salary and bonuses.

All over the health care system, in fact, this is happening. We see nurses being laid off. We see hospital emergency rooms closing. We see personal support workers struggling just to keep caring for their patients, which is one of the things we heard about today. They're saying, "I don't even want a huge salary increase," these personal support workers. They're saying, "I don't want the money from these CEOs. I want them to have a reasonable amount of pay"—which is not what they get now; it's completely unreasonable—"but those dollars, I'm not asking for in my salary. I'm asking for those dollars to go towards giving me some help to meet the needs of my patients, to meet the needs of the people in the long-term-care facility I'm struggling to provide services to."

That's true public service. These women provided an insight today at my press conference about what true public service is. That's what we have to get back to in this province. It's not about the race to the top, to see how high you can go in terms of your salary as an executive in the public sector. It should be about how much quality you can deliver to the people of this province in terms of the public services they rely on.

We've had intensive care beds closing in places like Leamington. We've had day surgeries slashed in communities like Chatham. Cuts have been made to the breast screening program in London and Cambridge. Day surgery has been cut in Hamilton's St. Joseph's hospital. Ten beds were closed at St. Marys hospital. Renal care is cut in Thunder Bay. Ambulatory care is cut in Sudbury. Elderly patients are waiting for long-term-care beds, waiting sometimes months and months and months. Often, when they get the bed, it's hundreds of kilometres away from their community and their family.

This is not the kind of health care system that people want in this province. What they want to see is our precious dollars being invested in good-quality services that are equally accessible to all of the people of Ontario. That's why we believe that we need to cap those salaries.

If we don't do it now, we're going to see the same kind of thing next year and the year after that and the year after that. We're going to see these salaries—which right now in the hospital sector are pushing the \$1-million mark—far exceed that in very short order. There's an argument. People say, "We have to attract the top executives." Why is it that in the province of Ontario we have to pay Ontario Hydro's CEO over a million bucks, when Quebec Hydro pays their CEO about \$420,000? It seems to me that's about the same amount my bill would implement here in the province of Ontario: twice the Premier's salary. This argument that you need those huge salaries to attract the best I don't think is true whatsoever. We see quite successful Quebec Hydro managing with a salary of about \$420,000.

That can be accomplished in Ontario only if the government has the guts to do the right thing, which is to put a hard cap. It's not only New Democrats who call for

that kind of action. We saw Obama in the US do this with corporations that got public money, and we've seen the same kind of action coming out of the UK. We need to do it here in Ontario. We need to do it now.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'd like to share my time with the honourable member from Etobicoke Centre in response to the proposed act, Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries.

1350

Bill 57 would require that any public sector employee's salary would not exceed twice that of the Premier, with exception for those salaries already in place and for those negotiated through a collective agreement. Let me provide an excerpt:

"Salary cap

"(2) A public sector employee's annual salary shall not exceed the amount that is twice the Premier's annual salary as described in subsections 3(1) and (2) of the Executive Council Act," with the exceptions—and I say this again—that it does not apply to "a salary established before the day that this act comes into force" or "a salary established under a collective agreement."

Our government has taken leadership on this issue. We have had a salary cap in place for senior public servants since December 2008. We announced in 2008's fall economic statement that the salaries of all senior managers in government making over \$150,000 were frozen, and they remain so as of today. The McGuinty government also led by example across all Canadian provinces with salary freezes in place for members of provincial Parliament, first announced in the budget of 2009 and extended for a full three years in the budget of 2010.

The NDP have consistently opposed the government's austerity measures, voting against the MPP pay freeze and voting against it again in 2010's budget. The NDP have a record, also, of ripping up collective agreements when they were in power. They imposed the social contract on provincial employees and they broke collective bargaining agreements, whereas the McGuinty government has vowed to respect those agreements in place and freeze pay, on an ongoing basis, going forward. We've also introduced legislation this past month, the Excellent Care for All Act, a bill which would make sure that hospital senior management teams' pay is linked to health care outcomes.

The NDP governments from other provinces have recognized the need to pay a competitive salary for their senior public servants who are managing government agencies, crown corporations, provincial utilities and others. Folks who disagree with this NDP bill include Roy Romanow, the former Saskatchewan NDP Premier; Lorne Calvert, former Saskatchewan NDP Premier; Gary Doer, former Manitoba NDP Premier; and the current NDP Premier in Manitoba, Greg Selinger. I say this because they've all hired public servants who earn more than twice a Premier's salary. Those NDP governments

know that if you want to have a strong public service with quality public agencies, then senior managers need to be compensated accordingly, often in competition with the private sector.

Public servants do an incredibly important job and work for Ontarians. They run the high-quality programs and services that Ontarians depend on and deserve. I consider the excellent work, for example, of the CEO of Trillium hospital and Credit Valley Hospital as extraordinary.

Mr. Michael Prue: How much does he make?

Mr. Charles Sousa: She—and both of them—do extraordinary work, and they deserve what they get paid. In fact, one of those CEOs was doing double duty by supporting the hospital in Kingston. I can't say enough of how much they've been able to save our community and improve the service and efficiencies within our community. We need to attract good-quality people to do the work.

When government goes to hire—and as I said, we compete with the business community for the best people—we also recognize that we have to save costs, so we've shown leadership by freezing MPPs' salaries. That's because in this House we chose to put our names forward to do our civic duty in representing the people of our constituencies. But for many of us, we do this knowing full well that we may be compensated possibly less than we would in the private sector. After our terms, we can return to the private sector or we can ask our communities to support us again to work here, but public servants didn't make that particular choice. It is their career, and they deserve to be compensated appropriately.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You don't think that they chose that profession as well?

Mr. Charles Sousa: They chose to work on behalf of their careers and their families, just as I and others have chosen to work prior to doing our civic duty.

I appreciate the members for bringing forward the suggestion, but I worry that tying public sector compensation to my compensation or that of the Premier may not be the most effective way to manage costs, because we are here to do something different than those whom we ask to act on behalf of our agencies. They do tremendous work, and if I go out there looking for some good people to do that job elsewhere, they won't choose us if we're going to make limits and prohibit them from doing their job or, for that matter, from being compensated on the results that they can achieve. That's exactly my point: We want them to be compensated for the work they do and for the results they provide.

In our 2010 budget, the Minister of Finance put forward a number of measures that speak to these issues of compensation and reducing our deficit, which I would like to mention quickly and then I'll pass it on to my colleague.

As announced in the Minister of Finance's budget of March 26, 2009, the size of Ontario public service will be reduced by 5%, or 3,400 employees, over a three-year period through attrition and other measures. We will be

realistic and flexible in the approach we take to achieve that target, and the quality of service delivered to the public will not be compromised by those changes.

The size of the OPS has fallen considerably since the early 1990s. In March 1992, the OPS had approximately 86,000 full-time employees, but in December 2008 the number was capped at 68,645. By March 2012, that number will be further reduced by 5%.

The staff reductions will be phased in through attrition, through voluntary retirement other forms and other measures, including, for that matter, our tax reforms. Our HST initiative alone was allowing for a number of jobs to be moved from the Ministry of Revenue to the federal public service.

Ontario has the lowest number of public servants per capita compared to other Canadian provinces. The Ontario provincial government has the lowest total current expenditure per capita. Total current expenditures per capita of \$7,339 in 2008-09 are lower than that of any other province. Total current expenditures in British Columbia were \$8,259; Alberta's were \$10,698; and Quebec's, which was mentioned by the honourable member from across the way, were \$9,361—all of which were higher than Ontario's.

We are compensating effectively. Our public servants make a valuable contribution to the health and well-being of our province. As I said, unlike the previous NDP government, we're not proposing mandatory days off. We've taken steps to control expenses so we can protect public services. MPPs, non-bargain political and Legislative Assembly staff and those in the House would also be compensated through structures that are frozen. The fiscal plan provides no funding for incremental compensation increases or any future collective agreements.

At this point, I would like to pass it on to my honourable colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That's fine, but we do go in rotation, so I'll call for further debate in a minute.

Ms. Freedman, one of our table officers, reminds me that if you need copies of the bill, they are available at the table.

Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to speak to the private member's bill this afternoon, Bill 57, which is the Capping Top Public Sector Salaries Act, 2010. If the table has a copy of the bill, I wouldn't mind having it, actually.

This bill has the idea of trying to cap some of the public sector salaries at twice the salary of the Premier. I think the intentions of trying to conserve public sector dollars and putting a limit on some of the very high executive salaries are good, although I do think that the bill is flawed.

If you look at the bill itself—now that I have a copy of it—you note that it doesn't apply to those people who are already making more than the double the Premier's salary, so it would only affect some 113 people for a savings of about \$40 million. It doesn't deal with bonuses and stipends, which could be driven further

underground as a consequence of the bill. Really, the logic of twice the Premier's salary, the arbitrary nature of that, just doesn't make a lot of sense.

What is the problem with the public sector salaries? First of all, I'd like to point out that the problem in terms of the budget of Ontario is the difference in public sector versus the private sector. There are some 1.2 million public sector employees in the province of Ontario. We've just gone through quite a significant recession in 2008. Really, the public sector should reflect the ability of the private sector to pay, and that has not happened in recent years in the province of Ontario.

Despite this major recession in 2008, the government has handed out some fairly significant increases in the contracts they've negotiated. When you have the budget of the province of Ontario, they're spending \$127 billion this year, and roughly half of it is wages. The government has brought about some restraint measures, but they're quite half-hearted, really. They have a freeze on non-unionized wages, although there are a number of loopholes, I should point out, even in that part of it. They've left loopholes so that they can still increase some of those wages. Based on your length of time in employment in the office or based on an assessment of performance or based on whether you've completed a program, you can still get a pay increase for the non-unionized employees. The immediate freeze is really just a small part of the total wages. Most of them are the unionized wages.

1400

As I've said in the past, this government has a very cozy relationship with some of the unions. Despite the fact that we've been in a big recession, many of the contracts have been 3% a year for four years, which is the biggest part of the budget, the biggest part of the monies being paid out by the province. They're not touching those contracts until they expire. Conveniently, most of them expire after the next election. So the government really hasn't taken on any significant restraint. They've actually created a lot of problems in some organizations with this different approach for union and non-union.

I was on a committee recently for Bill 16, the budget bill, the one day of public hearings we had for that. The Ontario Hospital Association came to that committee and pointed out how they have workers in two different hospitals, some union, some non-union, and how it's really creating inequities for them, within one organization. That's what the government is doing.

The one thing we have also seen, though, with this government is significant increases in the number of people who are making over \$100,000 on the sunshine list, particularly this new bureaucracy that the government has created, the local health integration networks. I note that our leader, Tim Hudak, has been raising that issue. On Wednesday, April 14 he was in the Niagara area. The press clipping from the Hamilton Spectator states:

"Ontario Conservative Leader Tim Hudak calls it a 'culture of entitlement' that's crying out for greater restraint ...

"In the last few days, the Niagara West–Glanbrook MPP has turned his guns on the local health integration networks, pointing out that, according to the sunshine list, some LHIN employees are inappropriately hidden on hospital payrolls while others have received honking salary hikes.

"As a case in point, Hudak singled out Pat Mandy, CEO of the Hamilton LHIN, whose salary in the past three years jumped more than \$30,000 to \$289,000."

The government has created this new mid-level bureaucracy and, certainly, when I went on the public pre-budget hearings with the finance committee, we heard from groups in Niagara, we heard from groups that were concerned that—in my own riding, in Burk's Falls, when I attended a health care day, there were concerns that this money is going to this mid-level bureaucracy instead of front-line health services.

I know that the North East LHIN just hired a new CEO, Louise Paquette, who used to work for FedNor. There she was paid roughly \$160,000; she switches over to the LHIN, no previous health experience, and now makes \$260,000, so a \$100,000 raise to work for this mid-level bureaucracy. Certainly, the opposition is questioning whether we're getting value for our money from those bureaucracies.

There are people who make significant amounts of money who I am concerned about, but I'm not sure that this bill will necessarily address the concerns I have. For example, the Sick Kids hospital foundation's president was paid \$2.7 million. That was, admittedly, as a golden parachute when they were ending a contract, but the annual salary was quite significant as well. I certainly have a problem with that, but this bill wouldn't address that situation.

A hospital foundation is raising money to benefit a hospital. I would have thought that there would be very qualified people, professional executives who are retired, who would do it for free because they want to help out their community or their hospital, or who would do it for a lot less than the salaries we see being paid out. Really, I think it's the responsibility of the foundation board to come up with a financially responsible way of raising money for their hospital.

Another one that certainly caught my eye was the Art Gallery of Ontario. Matthew Teitelbaum made \$1,070,000 in total compensation last year to manage the Art Gallery of Ontario. That seems to me to be way out of hand.

Once again, I don't see that this bill would address that kind of situation either. As I mentioned, it would actually only apply to some 113 employees because of that particular loophole that states that the act "does not apply to,

"(a) a salary established before the day that this act comes into force; or

"(b) a salary established under a collective agreement."

I can see the intention of the leader of the third party to try to control some of the high salaries. I just don't think this bill is going to accomplish that, and there are other, more sensible ways of going about it.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: It's a pleasure to be able to stand and have an opportunity to speak to this particular bill. It's also an opportunity to sort of have a remembering when—I remember when a social contract took place, so I can understand why the unions have been excluded from this bill, because certainly they wouldn't want to repeat the disaster that occurred during the social contract time.

Also, I can understand why there is resistance and reluctance on the behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party because certainly, when we inherited a \$6.3-billion deficit, we also inherited a significant number of contracts that indeed we honoured, because we do believe it's not cozy in terms of respecting people; it's actually the right thing to do to respect their contracts, and that we have done. Sometimes it is has been with difficulty and sometimes it's not easy to do, but in fact we have managed to do that through all of this entire process.

It's really important to acknowledge the work that public sector employees do. I've had the pleasure of working with three ministries: energy, transportation and natural resources. I've worked with some of the finest people who do extraordinary work, ensuring the policies, practices, procedures and regulations that successive governments and our government have put in place. They work hard, tirelessly, and they work with extraordinary commitment to public service as a whole.

So, when I looked at this bill, I thought to myself, "Why do I find this illogical?" I find it illogical because when I have a job that needs to be done, I want the very best person I can find. I want that person to bring with them the skills and experience they've accumulated over the years, and to then have successfully put themselves in front of a panel, probably to be accepted for the position, and that I know they bring with them the capacity, the capability and the willingness to do the job. That isn't always the case.

When you have very difficult portfolios or very difficult challenges ahead of you, you must seek out and look for all those skills and capacities within these individuals. I think it's incumbent upon you, and then you sit down, not unlike any union, and you negotiate what that salary will be commensurate with those skills.

Should there be openness, transparency and accountability in the process? Absolutely. There should also be a process for some formative and summative evaluation process, so that in fact the person who's been hired to do the job with these skills is in fact doing the job. There's nothing wrong with those. We've had those in place for many years.

But to suddenly suggest that just the public sector has to bear the brunt of this particular salary cap and not unions, to me, smacks of two-tiered, which is exactly what I think the New Democrats have fought against for years—a two-tiered system. And yet that's exactly what they're proposing to put in place. So I find it illogical.

I don't find a continuity in the process. I think that if you wanted to be able to sit down and look at the broader

public service as a whole and how we can make it better, then the best people to bring to the table are those folks themselves. They work and live this every day and certainly, with goodwill, can sit down and help you through that process, if in fact that's your objective. And that's what we did.

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If you really wanted to reduce, then you should have voted for the budget. But you didn't vote for the budget. So here you are on the one hand requesting this; on the other hand, you're not prepared to work with the budget.

Mr. Michael Prue: We're on the other side.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I know. There are times when you just vote for a good thing because it's the right thing to do.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Every day I come to this House. I don't think I've ever missed a day, or if I did miss, not very many. Every day I watch the Premier rise in his seat. Every day I watch the Premier answer the toughest questions from the other side of the House. Every day I marvel at what he is able to accomplish in talking to the press, the bureaucrats, the other members of this House, his own caucus and his own cabinet. I know, and we all know, that he makes \$209,000 a year.

This motion says that no one ought to be paid more than twice as much as the Premier. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to put this the other way around and I ask the Liberals to put this the other way around: Is the Premier only worth a quarter of what some of these bureaucrats are? Is this Premier only 25% as good as some of the people that we are paying? Is this Premier only one third as good as some of the hospital bureaucrats? Is this Premier lesser in some way than someone who manages a very small university in Ontario?

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes. Far less.

Mr. Michael Prue: I expect my Tory colleagues to say "yes" on all accounts, but what I'm asking is to the government members: Do you think your Premier is that poor in quality that he should be paid that much less than you're willing to pay all these other bureaucrats? Because that's the way you have answered. That is what you have said today. You have said that your Premier is somehow deficient, that he ought not to be getting that kind of money, that he is somehow only capable of earning a quarter or a third as much as some of these people, that he is somehow substandard.

I want to just point out these people that you think are so much better than your own Premier. You think that James Hankinson, president and chief executive officer, who earns \$2,150,000 a year, is 10 times better than your own Premier. You don't want to cap his salary because he's 10 times better and you want to leave it that way. Isn't that what you're saying, member from Etobicoke? Isn't that what you're saying, member from Mississauga, that he's 10 times better than your Premier?

Then you've got this next thing: You've got Thomas Mitchell, president and chief executive officer of Ontario Power Generation, who makes \$1,011,000 a year. That

person is five times better and is to be compensated five times more than your own Premier, the person that you follow in here every single day. Tell me how that person is five times better, because maybe he is. If you believe that your Premier is that deficient, stand up and say that.

Then we've got Hydro One. You've got Laura Formosa; she earns \$975,000. She's four and a half times better than your Premier in terms of compensation. Is that what you think?

Then we go on to all of these other people: the Art Gallery of Ontario, the University of Waterloo, the University Health Network, St. Joseph's Health Centre, Ontario Power Generation, the Hospital for Sick Children. And on and on and on it goes. All of these people are paid two, three or four times more than your own Premier, who has to stand up every day and answer the questions from all sides of the House, who has to deal with the press, who has to deal with the \$107-billion corporation that's the province of Ontario.

How much money is being spent at the Art Gallery of Ontario? How much money is being spent at each and every one of these hospitals? How much money is being spent at Ontario Power Generation? I ask you. The corporation that's being managed out of this chamber is 10, 15 or 20 times the size.

The employees that the Premier of Ontario has to answer to—he has to answer to them; he has to answer to me; he has to answer to you; he has to answer to the Conservatives. Does somebody at OPG have an employee who can stand up and tell him every single day what he's doing wrong? No. Is there anybody in the art gallery who's going to stand up and tell Mr. Teitelbaum what he's doing wrong? Is there anybody who's going to run off to the press and say what is being done wrong? No, but you think these guys should make lots more money.

I don't understand Liberals. I don't understand why you hold your own Premier in such disregard. I don't understand why you think all these people should make more money than him. Maybe some of you will stand up here and answer that. Maybe some of you will explain why a place like the London hospital—we have here Cliff Nordal, head of the London hospital. He makes \$732,000 a year. Anybody here from London want to explain why that person is worth \$732,000 a year? Why is this person almost four times as good as the Premier of this province?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, on a budget which is miniscule in comparison, absolutely miniscule in comparison, and employees who cannot answer back to him.

Why do you think this? Tell me, Liberals. You've still got a minute or two. Come back and tell me why you think your Premier is so deficient. Tell me why he's no good to the point that you only want to pay him a quarter as much. Tell me why each of you is so deficient that you're only going to get paid one eighth as much as them. Are all of you that bad? Are you? You must be. You must think you're totally ineffective and you're not worth your own money, because you think this guy's eight times more important than you are.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That doesn't follow.

Mr. Michael Prue: It follows completely, the Minister of Transportation; it follows completely because this is the argument that has been made by your colleague from Etobicoke and this is the argument that has been made by your member from Mississauga. There's still a minute left. I'd like to hear your argument too. You've still got a minute. Stand up and tell me why you think these guys are so good.

We go back to the whole thing. I also want to deal for a couple of minutes here with the universities. Although they don't make that much in terms of the Premier—they're only paid double or triple what he is—we have a crisis in our universities. We have people, young students, people in their 20s mostly, who are going into university and who are paying the highest fees in all of Canada to attend. They have the worst class sizes. They have the worst ratio of professors to students. Then they turn around and every year this government says, "I think you aren't paying enough. I think that even though we have the highest fees in Canada, you should pay some more."

I think those students need to know that this government thinks that the people who run their universities are many times more important than the Premier of this province, many times more important than the members of cabinet and many times more important than the backbenchers who stand up to defend this policy.

Just a couple of figures here: McMaster University, Peter George, salary and benefits, \$536,000—two and a half times or more than what the Premier makes. But that's not the end of it because when he leaves that office, he is guaranteed \$1.3 million as his severance pay—\$1.3 million. Who do you think is paying that? The government of Ontario is paying that, and the students are paying that in their fees. You all think this is great. You all support this. You all stand up and say that he is worth two and a half times as much as the Premier of the province. More importantly, who is going to pay this? Those students who pay the highest university fees in all the country are going to pay that.

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Then you've got Guelph, which is a nice, small university, lovely place. You have the president, Alastair Summerlee, making \$459,000 a year, more than twice what the Premier of the province makes. As a minimum, when Alastair retires he'll get \$416,000 in severance pay. Who's going to pay that? The students from Guelph university. You're saying he's worth twice the pay of the Premier of Ontario—more than twice. We're only trying to cap it at twice. All that would happen to poor Alastair if this passed is that his salary would go down from \$459,000 to \$418,000. That's all that would happen.

Surely, we could take that money and invest it in students. Isn't that what Liberals talk about every single day in this House? Isn't that what you do? That's what you talk about, but it isn't what you do, no.

Then you've got other people: at the University of Toronto, David Naylor, \$430,000—we'd only have to reduce his salary a few bucks, not much at all; Waterloo,

David Johnston makes \$485,000; York, Mamdouh Shoukri, \$498,000 a year. That's where there was a strike last year.

Do you remember the strike last year or the year before that? Remember the strike? Remember all the poor graduate students who were teaching all those classes? Remember how they had to strike for just a couple of bucks? Well, there you've got this guy making that much money, and all the members over there on the Liberal side, all of you think that this guy who forced that strike and put those people out and stopped the classes is worth twice as much as your Premier.

I ask you, start thinking here. I think the Premier's worth \$209,000. I think that nobody in this province is worth more than twice that. You'd better start—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I have been listening with great interest to the debate. I am puzzled by the intent of the bill. I'm puzzled because, first of all, it's leveraging from the level of pay that the Premier is getting. The Premier is the last person in this province that I would want to gauge anyone else's ability against or anyone else's income against. I would simply suggest if perhaps—

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: That's exactly my point, you see. Depending on who is sitting in the Premier's chair, one might think that it's worth leveraging or registering someone else's income or ability against that. Certainly, I can't support this bill for that very reason. It is illogical, in my opinion.

I would much rather that we would have been debating today how we can make the salaries and the income levels of our public service more effective and more geared to productivity and results. I'm one who believes that we still have in this province one of the best civil services anywhere in this country and in the world. We can be very proud of the people who work in the government of Ontario. What we can't be proud of are the policy decisions that often are made by the governments of Ontario, but it is the civil servants who are charged with the responsibility to implement, in the best way possible, whatever those decisions are.

I would like to see some debate around how we can incent our civil service, how we can depoliticize our civil service more, because I'm concerned that often we expect our civil servants to do things that, quite frankly, they find distasteful. We see more and more of that happening today. I won't support this. I believe that there's a better way to get the message out that we want salaries to be commensurate with results and with the work that we're asking people to do.

I just want to close by saying this: I want to thank the civil service in this province for the work that they do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Ms. Horwath has up to two minutes for her response.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank the members who have taken the time to speak to my bill: the member for Mississauga South, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, the member for Etobicoke Centre, the member

for Beaches–East York and the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

I have to say that I'm surprised by some of the remarks that were made today, particularly by the government members, because although they claim to want to deal with this issue, they simply are not bringing anything to the table that is going to have any effect whatsoever on the spiralling salaries of our top executives here in the province of Ontario. It's really from them that we're looking for some action, and in fact here today find that they believe that whether you pay somebody a million dollars, a half-million dollars or \$2.5 million, it's the amount of money that determines the quality of the person. I disagree with that 100%. When other organizations in this country can get people to work at salaries at a fraction of what we're paying, it's obvious that that whole argument about competitiveness, of attracting those top executives, simply holds no water whatsoever. It's simply a mug's game, and we know who's winning it; it's the people at the top. Meanwhile, we're losing services on the front lines.

Limiting the amount of public money that executives in top positions receive is something that is not only happening here; that dialogue, that debate, is happening around the world. You see it happening in the United States with Obama, and newly elected British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the salaries of public sector managers in the UK are going to be capped at 20 times the salary of the lowest-paid worker. It's happening everywhere. It's time this government gets its head out of the sand and does something firm and productive in this regard.

I'm open to alternatives. That's why I'm hoping that the people who spoke to this bill and everyone else in this chamber actually votes in favour of it, so we can get it to a committee and talk about what the appropriate measures are. Whether it's the Premier's salary, whether it's 20 times that of the lowest-paid worker, I don't care. Let's get a handle on this and put a hard cap on the salaries of the top executives in this province who are walking away with our tax dollars.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The time for this ballot item has expired. For those watching in the galleries today and at home, we'll vote on Ms. Horwath's item in about 100 minutes.

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY
COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT
LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF
DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

Mrs. Cansfield moved second reading of Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia / Projet de loi 52, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie d'Alzheimer et élaborant une stratégie de traitement et de prévention de la maladie

d'Alzheimer et d'autres formes de démence et de recherche en la matière.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to begin by offering thanks to my co-sponsors of the bill, Christine Elliott from Whitby–Oshawa and Cheri DiNovo from Parkdale–High Park. I think this demonstrates that in fact this is a non-partisan issue, as Alzheimer's impacts and affects virtually every riding in this province.

I'd also like to take a moment and introduce some guests who have joined us in the gallery today. I have Delia Sinclair, David Harvey, Gale Carey, Philip Caffery, Françoise Hébert, Robert Howe, Dan Andraea, Beth Martin, Rebecca Amyotte and Shane Pratt. The first six or seven are from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

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First, I'd like to speak to the bill itself and try to establish what the bill is going to do: primarily, put together an advisory council. What is the purpose of this particular council? The council will raise public awareness and provide for public education. The primary reason for this is to overcome the stigma that's related to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to foster that supportive community; the second is to provide access to the community, respite care and home support services for patients with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia; and third, integration of primary care medical services in community support services for patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

Dementia-specific training: If I've heard anything from the people that I've spoken with, this is something that is absolutely crucial, dementia-specific training to strengthen the skills of patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia; accessibility to specialized geriatric and psycho-geriatric services for patients and family caregivers for patients with this disease; interdisciplinary research, acceleration of treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia; and rarely do we speak to the issue of prevention; innovation in assistive technology and housing, workplace policies and income supports for informal caregivers of patients and other matters as requested by the minister.

It's important to acknowledge that the composition will be made up of informal caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's, persons with the disease and other forms of dementia, and persons from various cultural backgrounds. This is a critical issue as we try to pull in the community, all of the communities, the diversity in this province, that Alzheimer's isn't related to one particular ethnic group; it is something that impacts and affects all of society. So those are the reasons. Then we thought, "Well, we need to have some time," so we put two years around this so that we could look to the other jurisdictions; we could see what was happening in other parts of the province.

Someone is going to ask, "Well, why now? What's the specific reason that you picked on Alzheimer's and

related dementia?" Hopkins and Hopkins, back in 2005, said there will be a 35% or 36% increase in dementia over the next decade. We're halfway through that decade. That's a significant number of people. In fact, it translates to one in three baby boomers will end up with Alzheimer's or a related dementia disease—one in three. Our population is growing, and although Alzheimer's is not specifically related to just the aging process, because you can in fact have this disease in your forties, certainly dementia is related to aging; and our population is aging. We're doing a really good job fixing the hips, the knees, caring for diseases; the body is in pretty good shape. It's now time to concentrate on the mind. We need to know what impacts Alzheimer's to begin with. What is it that starts this disease and the progression of this disease? That's the whole issue around research, critical research, ongoing research—because remember, people with Alzheimer's and related dementia can live 20 years, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. So this isn't a disease that goes away quickly: It stays within the family, within society, for a long period of time.

We also need to look at the numbers. In Canada it's estimated, I think it was in 2008, at about 500,000 people; that's 181,000 in Ontario, in 2008, and we're now in 2010. As I indicated, that number will continue to grow, but as it grows, it's not just the individuals we know of who are diagnosed with the disease, it's the ones we don't know about and the challenges that they're facing. That's why it's so important to pull in the different cultural groups.

But interestingly, as well, regarding the impacts of that disease as they go through it—I remember as Minister of Transportation—driving and dementia is a very significant challenge. I'm sure the current Minister of Transportation is struggling with that. We need research on how to deal with that impact as more and more of those individuals are on our highways and on our local roads. I would suspect the insurance companies are very interested in what the outcomes of that kind of research will be. Maybe that's the kind of partnership we'll be able to put together. So you can look at this disease from a whole host of perspectives.

The economic cost is estimated at \$770 million a year, or \$7.7 billion over that 10-year span. And that's just the beginning, because by 2030 the population will probably be up close to 30%. Think of the economic impact if we do nothing on how we develop this.

Now, we did put together \$1.1 billion or \$1.2 billion on an aging at home strategy. But it also speaks to why we need this bill, because that strategy may not, in some cases, include how to deal with Alzheimer-related dementia in aging at home; they're dealing more with the high-risk patients coming out of hospitals and trying to keep them in their homes for longer periods of time.

That then takes you to what happens in our long-term-care homes. The greatest number of people in those long-term-care homes are in fact Alzheimer patients or related dementia disease patients. The greatest cost in community services is people with Alzheimer's or related

dementia diseases. That's not going away. That's going to continue to grow, and I'm suggesting that if we do nothing—in fact, when Carol Taylor said at the public forum that we have a tsunami, this is it. We must plan ahead for the challenges that are going to be facing us in terms of actual economic costs: that burden, if you like, on our health care, which is now 46 cents of every dollar. It's an enormous cost.

But we also need to look at the cost to our families, to caregivers and to society as a whole, and what we're planning to do to make a difference. We put together a website, alzheimerstakingaction.ca. I sent out a few thousand letters just to my constituency, because I have such a significant number of people who are getting older, as my grey hair will attest. I asked them to tell me their stories of what they were doing to try to live with this disease in their families. Well, touching of course; without question. Striking challenges: You wonder how people can be torn between fathers, mothers, children, working and 24-7 care, and then you look at that related health care cost on them.

I can think of a specific situation where an individual is at home providing 24-7 care for someone with Alzheimer's. She has gone from someone who enjoyed golf and tennis and very vivacious living to someone who now has diabetes, heart problems and significant stress. That places that other burden on our health care system. Add to that the terrible stress of struggling with someone as they are leaving you with this disease—and that's exactly what they're doing. You need to help them in a psychological way, to provide for that respite care, to provide for the counselling as they deal with this very difficult progressive disease.

They say there are over 100 forms of dementia and some half-dozen primary forms. I can't imagine what it's like for people who have lived with someone for 50 years or 60 years to find a way to now care for that person—they're aging themselves—and realize that one day that person will wake up and say, "Who are you? Where am I? What are we doing?" and then becomes incontinent, can't feed themselves and maybe has co-morbidity issues such as Parkinson's, cancer or others.

It's not something we can ignore. It's something we in fact must deal with. We must look at prevention. We must see what it is we can do to help delay the onset of this disease. We must encourage people to get active and get out there. I remember when we used to have adult programs throughout this province, where you could take anything from bridge to knitting to upholstery, or take another degree if you liked. That changed, but that socialization and using those grey cells is absolutely critical—physical exercise; using Minister Best in terms of her health and wellness promotion for seniors; encouraging more people to get out, to do, to get active, to get involved.

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Then we need to look at what we can do in terms of encouraging exercise. We actually took exercise out of our curriculum for many years, right? We're starting to

put it back in. Older people need exercise as well, but how do we encourage that exercise? You can exercise in a wheelchair; you don't have to run on a treadmill. There are so many things that we can do by working together. So the idea is that the council sits down and they bring the experts, the people who are living with it, the people who are caring for it, the doctors, the nurses, the long-term care, whoever it takes.

The Alzheimer Society put together the 10 points and those 10 points are the basis on which we can move forward if in fact we work together to do this, and just maybe we can stop this tsunami from actually overtaking us; just maybe by working together and providing for the prevention, the research, looking at the disease, looking at the people who are impacted, both as individuals and as caregivers, we can truly make a difference. The time to do it is now because it is the right thing to do.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Certainly I'm going to be supporting this bill to enact the Alzheimer Advisory Council Act, 2010. I want to congratulate my three colleagues who have brought this initiative forward.

I believe it's extremely important that we establish an Alzheimer Advisory Council for the purpose of considering matters related to informal caregivers and patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, and then being in a position that they can make recommendations to the minister, because the minister ultimately is responsible for developing and implementing a strategy respecting research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Of course, the minister would be required to take into consideration the reports of the Alzheimer Advisory Council and the Ontario Health Quality Council to contribute to the development and implementation of the strategy.

The act states the government of Ontario's undertaking to address issues related to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

This has been an issue that has certainly been of tremendous concern to past governments. I just want to acknowledge at this time that it was back in September 1999 when I, as Minister of Health, and also Minister Johns, who was responsible for seniors, identified this as a significant issue in response to concerns that had been brought forward, and we jointly announced at that time Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias: Preparing for Our Future.

That was a very multi-faceted and comprehensive strategy. In fact, in 1999, it was unprecedented anywhere in Canada, but thanks to the stakeholders in this province who had brought this issue to our attention, the government did move forward. Some of the action items were: to become involved in staff education and training; physician training; increasing public awareness, information and education; planning for appropriate, safe and secure environments; respite services for caregivers; research on caregiver needs; advance directives on care choices; psychogeriatric consulting resources; and intergenerational volunteer initiatives.

Again, it did include an advisory committee which advised the Ontario government on the implementation of the strategy. We were focused on taking a look at the prevention and the treatment of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

However, today, we are at a different place. The Alzheimer Society has come out with a report, *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*. It is very alarming to see how the rate of Alzheimer's is going to increase over the next 30 years. We take a look at the health and the economic burden of dementia: My colleague has spoken to that. Also, we need to make sure, in light of those statistics, where we see that the prevalence of Alzheimer's and related dementias in Canada will increase from 2008, when we had 480,600 people with dementia, to 2038, when we're going to have 1,125,200 people with dementia—again, the hours of informal care during that time period will increase from 231 million hours to 756 million. Of course, the economic consequences are enormous, because the economic burden of dementia doubles every decade, increasing from \$15 billion in 2008 to a startling \$153 billion in 2038.

We have to take action. We have to develop a strategy. We need to turn the tide, and we need to intervene. We know that in other countries they are trying to do exactly that. I applaud my colleagues who have brought forward this initiative, which establishes the Alzheimer Advisory Council.

It's extremely important that we again take a look at the informal caregivers and the impact that this disease has on those individuals, and that we also consult with those who have a lot of familiarity with the disease. I know that in my own community, certainly, we have the institute there, and I think we're really quite excited about some of the research that has been undertaken. We really need to try to improve the quality of life for patients and also for their caregivers. It takes a huge toll on those individuals who have Alzheimer's and who suffer from dementia.

I'm certainly pleased that this council is being considered here. I would hope all members of this House would lend their support, because there is so much more to do.

I think all of us know family members who probably have had Alzheimer's or who are in the first stages of Alzheimer's, and certainly they need support. We need to educate the public and we certainly need to raise the awareness.

I applaud my colleagues. Let's make sure we move forward without haste.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thought somebody else would be speaking before me, but certainly I'm pleased to rise today to stand here and declare my open support for Bill 52, and I hope it receives the support of all members of the House.

It's great to see a bill like this that is co-sponsored; it's good to see the members trying to work together. It's great to see that the member from Whitby–Oshawa has

co-sponsored it along with the member from Parkdale–High Park. I think it's a bill that deserves the support of all members of this House.

Over the last year or so, I've had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It's an all-party committee. We've heard from people all over the province of Ontario. We travelled around to some of the communities that some of us would not ordinarily get to. We've talked to people. We've engaged the Ontario public in a discussion on mental health and addictions. We've heard some incredible stories about the challenges that are faced by people who are either suffering from a mental health condition or have a family member who is suffering from a mental health condition.

Now, in those travels we've also heard from the Alzheimer Society very, very strongly about what they're finding. They're finding that it's one of the most common forms of dementia in seniors and that 66% of those who will experience some form of dementia will indeed experience Alzheimer's.

It's a timely bill that the member from Etobicoke Centre brings forward. According to the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, more than 180,000 Ontarians are dealing with dementia on a daily basis. They expect that number to double in less than 25 years. This is going to be a huge challenge, and that's why I think this bill is so timely, in that it sets up the advisory council that can perhaps come forward with a strategy that would allow the Ontario government to deal with this in a way that it should be dealt with.

I think the efforts like the one being brought forward today to establish the advisory council would also help in the research, the treatment, and perhaps the prevention—the education we can do with people in the province of Ontario.

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I'll tell you what we said in our interim report from the select committee. We said that “according to presenters, a co-ordinated, integrated response will enable service capacity to keep pace with growing numbers of persons with dementia and their caregivers and” may “assist them through the continuum of their condition.”

What we heard as we travelled around the province of Ontario about mental health treatments that are available, services that are available, is that Ontario has a very fractured system. People often don't know where they should turn to next, don't know where that help is available from. Presenters who came before us said that “additional specialized geriatric services, training for staff, assessment, diagnosis and early intervention, and consideration of the effects on the acute, community and long-term care systems” should “be part of the response.”

We know already that early diagnosis and treatment can lead to very, very positive health outcomes. I think the goal of the bill we have before us complements what we heard from experts at the committee.

I'm pleased to support the bill. I congratulate the member from Etobicoke Centre for bringing it forward. It deserves the support of all members of the House.

People in Ontario now are beginning to speak out on an issue that has been held behind the doors, I think, a little bit too long. People want to talk about mental health. They want to talk about Alzheimer's. They want to talk about dementias. They want something done about it. I think, if we work together, all three parties in this House, just today will be a very small step but a very important step to making sure that we treat this with the seriousness that it deserves.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very happy to have an opportunity to speak to this bill regarding the establishment of an Alzheimer Advisory Council, and I too would like to thank the members from the Alzheimer Society for joining us today for this debate and for all their hard work in producing the report, which was really the impetus for this bill in the first place. So thank you very much.

As a fellow committee member, under the leadership of the member from Oakville on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, I can certainly echo his report to us today about the many concerns that we've heard expressed by family members, caregivers, the society and other organizations about the real need to develop an Alzheimer's strategy for Ontario. So when the member from Etobicoke Centre approached me about co-sponsoring this bill, I had no hesitation in saying yes, and I would like to thank her for her leadership in bringing this really important matter forward. I did listen carefully to her speech. It's obviously a great passion for you, and you're very dedicated to it. So I'm really honoured to be a co-sponsor of this bill with you, along with the member from Parkdale-High Park.

Just to start with, the member from Kitchener-Waterloo did mention that in 1999 under the Progressive Conservative government, Minister Witmer, as she then was, and Minister Johns jointly announced Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias: Preparing for Our Future. The Ontario government invested \$68.4 million in this comprehensive multi-faceted strategy over five years, ending in 2004.

This Alzheimer strategy was the first of its kind in Canada at that time, but since then, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Newfoundland have taken on formal plans to address this important issue, following Ontario's lead. It's now time, as the member from Etobicoke Centre said, to renew this commitment and move it forward to the next stage.

The proposed legislation follows recommendations identified in the 10 by 20 plan for dementia released earlier this year by the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. The plan itself, since my colleague has already outlined the specifics of the bill, focuses on five key areas, and I'd like to speak about that just very briefly at this point.

The first area the plan focuses on is prevention, earlier diagnosis, and intervention. This is incredibly important in any health care issue, and I would say particularly so in this area. Thanks to innovative research here in

Ontario and abroad, new evidence suggests that it may be possible to delay and even prevent the onset of Alzheimer disease.

There's some research that has indicated some pretty staggering statistics that I'd just like to share with this House. One is that smoking after age 65 can increase one's chances of developing Alzheimer's by 79%—that's huge; obesity in midlife makes a person three and a half times more likely to experience Alzheimer's; diabetes makes one twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's; genetics accounts for only 25% of Alzheimer's cases; and chronic stress can quadruple your risk of developing the disease. Some of these findings show there are some things we can do in a preventive sense, perhaps to prevent the onset but also to maybe delay some of the symptoms and make life a little easier for people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

But it's not just the physical steps we can take by not smoking, controlling diabetes and so on; I think there is some research being done that suggests there are some brain exercises you can do that can really help delay the onset of it. I had the occasion yesterday to speak to some people who are leading the way in terms of music therapy, and how learning to play the piano, listening to music programs—all of those—can spur and stimulate certain parts of the brain that may help prevent Alzheimer's from becoming as severe as it otherwise might. I think there's some really promising work being done by a variety of organizations that will be announced within the near future. We need to move forward on all these fronts in terms of prevention.

The next focus of the plan is creating accessible caregiver supports. The society has already identified the importance of increased access to community support, respite and home care services for sufferers. I think this is particularly acute, and I would say that probably every member of this House has heard some of the really tragic stories about caregivers who are dealing with a family member who has Alzheimer's, who are dealing with the stress of that diagnosis, of maybe not having their loved one know who they are, and not getting the kind of positive feedback that other caregivers might be getting when they're helping someone in a stressful situation like that. They become physically burnt out themselves and in some cases may even pass away before the family member who has Alzheimer's.

We really need to support this group of people for the wonderful work they are doing, and make sure they and their family members have access to home care supports that will allow them to live in their own homes, where the outcomes will no doubt be much better. Some of the suggestions that have been made to introduce flexible work hours and supports for caregivers are welcome. Many people are caught in the sandwich generation, caring for parents as well as for children. We need to make sure we relieve them of some of the stress and offer them whatever help and incentives we can for them to continue doing their good work.

The Canadian Caregivers Association notes that 20%—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Sorry, the honourable member's time has expired. I hate having to do that.

Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I'd like to preface my comments with two things. First of all, I'm in total, complete and utter support of this bill, and I want everyone to understand that no matter what I might say from this point on, I am in support of this bill. The second thing is that I want to talk about and pay homage to a woman who is very dear to me, and that is my mother-in-law, who is now deceased.

She was born in Hong Kong in 1919. Her name was Norma Blake. She lived in that place for the first 17 years of her life until her father, understanding that the war was coming, took his family away from Hong Kong to make sure they were safe. She had to pick up roots and move from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom. She was a young woman there during the Second World War. She volunteered in the Red Cross; she volunteered in all the public service events that a young woman could volunteer in during times of war. At the conclusion of the war, she felt it was her patriotic duty to go off to Germany, and worked there in the control commission on behalf of the British government, trying to restructure Germany so that the German people and the German government could get their country back intact.

She was there for a number of years. She met my father-in-law, Jack Curson, there. They were married and had their first child, who was born in Germany. She returned to England with Jack in the late 1940s or early 1950s, set up shop and developed a brand new life in Glasgow, Scotland. They came as a family from Glasgow to Canada. She worked incredibly hard and built a life for herself and her family. She worked for CHUM radio in those heydays of CHUM radio in the 1950s and 1960s, with the huge—I don't know—enormous impact that that radio station had on the people of Toronto. I say all of that by way of the fact that she was an incredible woman.

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When my father-in-law died a number of years ago, my wife and I started to notice that something wasn't right. It wasn't just the fact that she had lost her husband; something wasn't right. We tried as best we could, over a number of years, to maintain her in her own house. We brought in Community Care East York, who looked after her. We brought in Meals on Wheels, who brought meals to her. But she became increasingly unable to focus, until the point came that we had to take her to Ina Grafton Gage Home in East York. They looked after her for the balance of her life.

We found out, when things started to go wrong, that she had Alzheimer's. We found out that this vibrant woman, who had lived in Hong Kong, who had lived in Britain, who had lived in Germany, who had supported governments, who had worked for governments, who had raised a family, who had held down a responsible job with CHUM, who had done all of these things, suddenly was incapable of looking after herself.

In those days at Ina Grafton Gage, I would often go to visit her—almost every Sunday. I would go to visit her there, and not only did I talk with her but I talked with all of the other residents. They were all women, because Ina Grafton Gage was for women only. I would talk to them. Most of the residents there had some form of dementia—mostly Alzheimer's, but other forms of dementia as well. It was sad, I have to tell you, absolutely sad to see this vibrant, exciting and smart woman descend down that road, over a number of years, with the horrible effects of Alzheimer's.

I watched her as she at first knew everything that was going on, or seemingly had good days, and then some bad ones. In the end, she thought I was somebody else. She thought I was her first boyfriend. She started speaking to me in Cantonese, because that's the language of her youth, and when I couldn't understand what she was asking me—she called me Frank then, because she thought I was Frank, and tried to teach me Cantonese so that we could re-establish.

She died, and I remember feeling so incredibly sad because in the end, at the time of her death, she did not know any of us; she did not know who we were.

I say that by means of why I support this motion: to pay homage to her, but also to understand that what happened to her can literally happen to anyone. It can happen to me; it can happen to you. It can happen to anyone, and we need to do something about it.

I am supporting this bill because, if it is passed, it will establish an Alzheimer Advisory Council. If it is passed, the chair and members of the council will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to represent the caregivers, the people with disease, and people with various cultural backgrounds, so that we can all work together. If it is passed, the council will give a report to the ministry each year, while the Ontario Health Quality Council, formed in 2004, will give a yearly report card to the minister as well. If it is passed, the minister is then bound to take both reports into consideration in planning to combat Alzheimer's, and dementia in general. And finally, if it is passed, the Alzheimer Advisory Council will be charged by the bill with supporting interdisciplinary research; advising the government on public education and awareness to overcome the stigma of dementia; fostering supportive communities; facilitating early diagnosis; and encouraging lifestyles that promote healthy brains.

I do this in remembrance of that vibrant woman, but I also do it in the full knowledge of the homes that I, as an MPP—and I'm sure all MPPs share this: We all go into these homes. We all see these people. We all need to understand that they were once vibrant, exciting, smart and capable people, who sit there, oftentimes, not even knowing their names. We need to find out how to combat that. We need, as a society, to make sure that some day, some scientist, some doctor, some learned person, someone who can study this, can make sure that we put an end to it. That is ultimately the goal, because science has made it possible for all of us to live longer lives.

When I was a boy, I remember in my classroom that they would show us that we would probably have a life expectancy of 68 years of age. I remember looking at the statistics. When Bismarck brought in the first old age pension, it was set at 65 because hardly anyone would reach 65. When we brought in our pensions in Canada, the average payment for an old age pension was 13 months, from 65 until 66 and one month. That was the average length of a pension.

Science and medicine have made enormous strides in making sure that people live now into their 80s and 90s. Unfortunately, one of the consequences is that Alzheimer's is taking its toll. The next goal, in my view, isn't to make us live longer; it's to make us live better. If we can accomplish that there is no dementia and no Alzheimer's, then to live to 80 or 90 will not be a fear for some people. If you can live well with all your wits about you until you're 80 or 90, that will surely be the scientific breakthrough of my lifetime. So I support this; I support this with all my heart.

I want to ask the government members, because I'm a boomer—I was born in 1948. I'm on the leading edge of those guys who are getting to be 65, which is going to happen in a couple of years, and I know that unless we do something, there are going to be a lot more people with Alzheimer's. It might even be me. It's going to be people I know; it's going to be people who are sitting around in this room. I think that we need to start looking at that problem today. I am saying this not as a criticism of this bill but as a wake-up call to this government and to this Legislature. We need to take Alzheimer's seriously. We need a caregivers' strategy. It needs to have doctors and nurses who are dedicated to this today. As the boomers work their way through, we know that there is a tsunami coming. We know that there are going to be tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people who turn 65 or 70 or 80 in the next 10 to 15 years. We all know that. We know it's going to happen, and we need to be ready for it.

We cannot afford to be cutting expenses in hospitals. We cannot afford to cut nurses. We cannot afford to cut drug research. We cannot afford to vote down the recommendations made by the Alzheimer Society before the committee hearings on Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act. We need to take all of those to heart. We need to have requirements for training on dementia and care of individuals with dementia in all of our retirement homes. In general, the government needs to allow seniors with Alzheimer's dementia to live in settings which are entirely appropriate.

I am asking the members across this House: Please, please vote for this bill. But in so doing, please understand that you have another obligation: an obligation of government, an obligation of budgets, an obligation to help those people who are of our age and who will surely find themselves in this place unless and until such time as we find a cure. We need to find that, we need to do it, we need to put the money there and we need to put the full force of this Legislature behind that initiative—

1510

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: I want to join all members of the House in support of Bill 52. I want to commend and congratulate the member from Etobicoke Centre and the other two members of the two other parties. I think it's a very noble gesture to see this wonderful co-operation in the House, especially on a particular piece of legislation as this. As well, I want to welcome the members of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

The intent of the bill is to create, if you will, a strategy. The aim of the bill is to prevent dementia and increase the level and quality of care for Ontarians with this disease—disability—their families, as well, and manage at the same time the health care cost.

I've heard the various members speak on the issue. I don't want to repeat them, but let me say that this is one of those diseases that doesn't see or have barriers when it comes to colour, religion or ethnic background. When we say 65 and over—no longer. We see people in their 40s and 50s affected by this disease.

A couple of weeks ago, I was at a meeting in my constituency and we were speaking about diabetes. I have one of the highest diabetes percentages in the province of Ontario, given the socio-economic factors in my area. Then, the Alzheimer's debate came on. The people were really wondering as to why we didn't have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy when it came to Alzheimer's; I think we should.

I think it was the member from Kitchener–Waterloo who said several years ago—I believe in 1999, the government at that time took the leadership role to create a strategy. Unfortunately, since that time, the numbers have increased, we've been falling behind and there is no cure for most types of Alzheimer's. When we hurt, we hurt, and it's sometimes serious, sometimes not so serious, but we feel we are hurting. Imagine people who are affected with this particular disease. For years they have to live the rest of their lives—and not only them. It's their family members as well who have to take the toll.

I have four nursing homes in my area and I go there from time to time. I think we can all sense what it feels like when you sit down in front of one of the people affected with Alzheimer's, especially in an advanced stage. You look into their eyes and they look back at you and you are wondering if they know who you are, if they know your name. You're trying to speak to them and they look at you and there is no response. This is the type of sickness that robs them of their minds, their brain. They can't articulate any more, they can't feed themselves, they can't act on their own. Eventually, they pass away. They lead the rest of their lives until they are gone.

I think today we have an opportunity to do something about it. I hope that all members of the House will support the bill that is in front of us and move on in doing some wonderful things. It's about time that we do something about Alzheimer's disease.

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

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I too want to add a word of appreciation to the three sponsors of this bill: the member from Etobicoke Centre and the members from Whitby–Ajax and of course Parkdale–High Park.

It's an important issue, and it's interesting that it's these kinds of issues that so often bring us together as a focus because we all want to do what's right, and this is the right thing to do.

The member from Beaches–East York talked about paying homage to an incredible woman he knew. I want to pay homage to an incredible woman I knew, my late mother. This is very personal for me. She suffered from Alzheimer's. It's a tragic illness, and she left us far too early. So, I know from some painful experience what this disease can do to patients and also to families.

That having been said, there's a lot of hope out there too. There are a lot of good things happening. We don't want to just curse the darkness and, in so doing, add a deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. We want to light some candles of hope. We want to pull together those resources and all the good people there. I think this bill does that.

As a type 2 diabetic myself, I also know that I and hundreds of thousands of others need to be monitoring this very closely. Ms. Elliott spoke about diabetics having twice the risk. It's certainly that. While I hope to live a good, long time and not have my kids worry about going through with me what we had to go through with my mom, I'm prudent enough and have been around long enough to know that we're not here to fear the future, we're here to shape it, right? And if we want to shape it, we need to act. That's the difference between a great idea and an implementable great idea. So there is a lot to be hopeful about.

Just this last weekend, communities across Ontario held the annual Alzheimer's Walk for Memories. I was once again privileged to be part of this. There was some \$1.7 million raised in support of local programs for patients and families of those dealing with Alzheimer's. It's an amazing commitment from the volunteers every year, and this is just one of several things they do.

We have an opportunity today, as members of this House, to understand the need to pool research, treatment and what we know about the care of dementia patients and simply take it to the next level and move forward with it, right? I certainly support that. I don't think that anybody in this House who's had even an inkling of experience with this illness wants to go through that or wants anybody to go through it.

So, we'll move forward. The comprehensive advisory council will help us do that. As we prepare our medical system to adjust, we'll remind ourselves of Abraham Lincoln's admonition: "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Let's do something special. Let's give some years back to people.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. I would just remind honourable members to please not

have their BlackBerrys near the microphones. When they vibrate, it drives the interpreters crazy, because they've got earphones on.

The honourable member Mrs. Cansfield has up to two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I would like to say thank you, first of all, to my co-sponsors, the members from Whitby–Oshawa and Parkdale–High Park, for their generosity in sharing this bill with me. Also, to Kitchener–Waterloo, Beaches–East York, Oakville, York West and Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, thank you for your heartfelt comments on this.

The member from Ancaster–Dundas is correct. One of the things governments get to do is provide hope to people. It's part of our responsibility. We get to identify the challenge and provide the hope. But we're not doing this from scratch. We've been blessed to be able to work with some pretty phenomenal people: David Harvey from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, and Françoise Hébert, whom I just think the world of and who has been an absolute joy and a dear friend. They are the people, along with all those other chapters, who take that very tiny amount of money, go out into the community and make a difference in people's lives today.

But the challenge is, it isn't enough. It isn't dealing with research and prevention. Actually, it's dealing with the sheer numbers and the tsunami that in fact is coming. That's our responsibility; that's the hope that we can give them by building on the work that they are already doing.

1520

I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for the support that you've given me, for the phone calls and the comments that you've made. In particular, to all of those volunteers, those patients and caregivers, bless you for the work that you do in ensuring that people you are caring for are getting the very best they can get in the circumstances. Again, thank you to the Alzheimer Society and all the boards of directors and the people who every day—every day—work hard and very tirelessly on behalf of these folks.

Now, you know what? It's our turn to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for that ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mrs. Cansfield's item in about 50 minutes.

BREAST CANCER
SCREENING ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE
DU CANCER DU SEIN

Mr. Oraziotti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à accroître l'accès aux services de dépistage du cancer du sein.

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

Mr. David Oraziotti: I am pleased to speak to this bill, Bill 56. As members of the House are aware, this bill was introduced prior to the House proroguing. This bill has been reintroduced and passed first reading, as you know. At the time of second reading debate, all parties supported this bill. I want to thank members from all sides of the House for their support in the past on that. I hope that today all members of the House will again support this bill because of what it is designed to do.

I want to take a few minutes to talk a little bit about why we need to do this in Ontario, what the benefits are, some of the organizations that support the bill and some of the individuals who have been very instrumental in helping to lead a discussion around increasing access to breast cancer screening in the province of Ontario.

I want to take just a moment to introduce a couple of folks who are in the members' gallery to my right. Dr. Martin Yaffe is a senior scientist of imaging research at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and a professor of medical biophysics and medical imaging at the University of Toronto. Dr. Yaffe is seated in the members' gallery, as well as Natalie Gierman, who is the manager of health promotion and policy and advocacy for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation; and Beth Easton, who is the vice-president of health policy at the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, the Ontario division. I want to thank the folks who are here in the members' gallery as well. There are a number of other individuals, and I will be referencing them momentarily.

But I think it is so very important that we get this right. I have to say that I think we often believe that we have the policies and the practices in the province on this issue right. It's adequate, and we think we are doing a good job, and we're comfortable with where things stand today in the province of Ontario. But I think if we spend a little bit of time to take a look at the research, to examine the evidence and to examine what is being done in other jurisdictions, we will find that Ontario is behind when it comes to access to breast cancer screening.

The bill, if it's passed, would allow women in the province of Ontario who are between the ages of 40 and 49 to enter the Ontario breast screening program. The OBSP, which is a program that is delivered through Cancer Care Ontario, is a fantastic program. I don't think anybody in this House and, frankly, in the medical community and the health sector is not proud of the Ontario breast screening program. It's a great program.

The point is that women who are 40 to 49 in the province of Ontario cannot get in that program. They do not have access to the OBSP. If the bill is passed, this would allow a woman in the province of Ontario who has a referral from her primary health care provider, her physician or her nurse practitioner to enter the Ontario breast screening program. We know that the Ontario breast screening program has sites where they have high-quality mammograms, digital mammography; accredited sites with the Canadian Association of Radiologists. There are well-developed quality assurances at these sites. The physical exams are done by individuals who

are specially trained in this area. The results of the screening and the appointment are provided within several weeks to both the patient and the physician. There is help to set up additional tests or referrals, if that is what's needed, and a reminder letter is sent for indication as to when it's time to return for a further follow-up.

This organized program is very important to women in the province of Ontario, and presently there is a large group of women who do not have access to it. Some 20% of all breast cancer in this province is being presented in women who are under the age of 50.

Just today, in fact, there was an article that appeared in a paper in British Columbia—and British Columbia is one of the jurisdictions in this country that allows women into an organized breast screening program at the age of 40. The individual who is referenced in the story is 41. Her name's Kim Tempest, and she said she was eligible for an annual mammogram paid for by the government in British Columbia. She felt healthy, felt like there wasn't a need for it and avoided going in. It says here in the article that that well-intended decision cost her: Three months later, she needed far more invasive treatment and surgery because she had breast cancer, and it would have been less invasive treatment and procedures that were required had it been detected earlier. She says, according to the article here, that she regularly spreads the word about early detection and healthy living. That has obviously had an impact in her life and can have an impact on the lives of so many other people.

The reference is around British Columbia having the lowest cancer rates in the country. Now, there are obviously a number of factors for that, but with respect to this individual I think it's important to note that the organized breast screening program that's present in the province of British Columbia, according to their information, has indicated a 25% reduction in mortality rate as a result of that program.

The point of this legislation is a fairly simple and fairly straightforward one. Women in the province of Ontario today are having mammograms done with the referral from their primary health care provider. It's, I suppose, a bit of an ad hoc process. OHIP pays the cost; the province pays the cost. This is being done today. But these mammographies are not done in an organized breast screening program. The technology and the ability to have better detection is improving. Film mammographies, compared to digital mammographies, are not as thorough, and MRIs are being used more intensively. We have better equipment today to be able to detect breast cancer in women who are pre-menopause, as opposed to post-menopause. We know with earlier detection that in women who are younger the cancer is often more aggressive. It's harder to detect. In women who are a bit older it is easier to detect and sometimes less aggressive. It is still very important to remember that we are developing the technology and it does exist today, through the Ontario breast screening program, to include women in our province 40 to 49.

I want to take just a second and reference a few of the comments that were made with respect to the proposed

bill. Susan Whelan, who is a former MP and a former Canadian Cancer Society CEO of the Ontario division, said, "This bill will allow more women who want to be proactive about their own health to have access to the highest-quality mammogram and screening available in the province." She also said, "Last August, at the age of 46, my own diagnosis of stage 3 breast cancer came as a shock as I had been having regular mammograms. However, I didn't know that there were better-quality mammograms available through the OBSP. I am convinced this bill would have provided me with access to better screening and an earlier diagnosis."

1530

Earlier diagnosis saves lives and saves the challenge, the difficulty and the struggle of having to deal with breast cancer at a later stage. As far as the cost—because I know there will be those who will say, "What about what it costs to do this?"—the Cancer Care Ontario 2009 report said that the cost of mammographies delivered through OHIP as opposed to through OBSP is a \$17 difference. That's what the difference is; it's \$17. We are paying for this through OHIP right now, today, and the difference is \$17 for women who are already receiving mammographies, who would still require the physician's or nurse practitioner's referral. When you look at the examples in this province of later detection and the cost of that on a per-case basis, for example, not to mention the loss of life, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars to begin with in terms of that treatment.

Dr. Yaffe said, "There is excellent scientific evidence that high-quality mammography screening can help prevent these deaths and improve the quality of life for these women and their families; therefore I urge the Minister of Health to waste no time in implementing this initiative."

Sandra Palmaro, the CEO of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, said, "Since 2007, the foundation's position has been that women aged 40 to 49 should be allowed access to screening mammography in the Ontario breast screening program to ensure that they benefit from the highest standard of care."

I've introduced this bill for a number of reasons, but because I think it's to do the right thing. My aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 28 and she died when she was 40. This is a disease that is affecting women earlier and earlier. We have the ability now to save lives. We know that many other jurisdictions out there allow women into organized breast screening programs. In fact, in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, PEI, other international jurisdictions and European countries, organized breast screening programs starting at the age of 40 are the benchmark for this type of screening. We are behind in the province of Ontario, and this needs to change.

Again, I want to thank those tremendous advocates who are here today in the members' gallery to support this, for the work that they do on a regular basis, fighting this disease and raising awareness about this disease

because it is so, so very important for many people in the province.

I want to thank members opposite, who, as the bill was introduced previously, spoke in favour of it. I hope you'll do that today. I want to thank you for the support then and I trust you'll be supporting it today.

I want to thank people in my community who have been supportive of this bill.

This needs to change in the province of Ontario. It is time that women who are aged 40 to 49 are allowed entrance into the Ontario breast screening program.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to join in the debate on Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. I certainly would like to commend the member from Sault Ste. Marie for reintroducing this legislation and for his continued commitment and persistence on this most important topic. I can assure you that I am very pleased to support his bill once again.

I'm sure that every person in this chamber has had some instance where breast cancer has affected them personally, either through a loved one having breast cancer or a colleague or a co-worker. We all know the physical and emotional impacts of breast cancer.

As the member from Sault Ste. Marie indicated, the legislation, if passed, will allow women from ages 40 to 49 to have access to the breast cancer screening programs with a referral from a physician or nurse practitioner.

Just a few things to note about this: First of all, breast cancer diagnoses are not as common for this demographic as for the age group currently eligible to access screening. The number of diagnoses within this age group is still statistically significant. Even though studies do report that there are certain risks associated with breast screening, including exposure to radiation and false positive diagnoses resulting in sometimes unnecessary treatment and stress and other psychological repercussions, it is certainly to be minimized if they are accompanied by the appropriate referral and certainly don't mitigate against the need to have this breast cancer screening process available for women in this age group.

A paper written on compiled associated research in 2007 indicated that while less helpful than for those in the 50-to-69 age group, screening mammograms for women 40 to 49 years of age showed a decreased incidence of breast cancer deaths. In fact, seven out of eight published studies on breast cancer mortality in this age group indicate some degree of benefit via reduced mortality from breast screening. This averages out to about a 15% difference, which is significant.

The paper also indicates that the screening should be individualized and should include an assessment of the woman's risk for breast cancer, a discussion regarding the benefits and risks of screening, and a discussion of her concerns about breast cancer or risks associated with screening mammography. The review concludes that the authors support women in this age group participating in

screening as long as they are fully informed, which currently happens. It also recommends that if a woman decides to defer screening mammography, the decision should be revisited every one to two years. So it's obviously a process of constant vigilance to make sure that screening is done as appropriate.

We're not talking about every person being involved in this breast cancer screening process. We're talking about women who are at high risk participating in screening under the advice of a physician or a nurse practitioner. I think that it has a real impact on people's ability and quality of life to be sure that they are screened as early as possible. As the member from Sault Ste. Marie indicated, the earlier diagnoses are often types of cancer that are more aggressive than breast cancer that maybe an older woman might experience, so all the more reason that we should be screening at an earlier age.

Breast cancer in younger women is more difficult to diagnose currently. Much of the discussion surrounding this issue relates to women under 40, but it's still applicable here because as a woman ages, the breast tissue becomes less dense. In women who are younger, dense breast tissue can often be a barrier to finding a lump during a breast self-exam. So the benefits of screening and mammography are all the more important here because it's far more difficult to detect lumps that are cancerous in women who have dense breast tissue.

By 40, the data suggests that there is some benefit, as mentioned earlier, to mammography screening, but too often, by the time a younger woman finds a lump in her breast, the cancer has advanced and is therefore harder to treat. Anything we can do to save more women from the ravages of advanced breast cancer we should certainly do. That is why I am supporting this bill.

I would like to just comment on the program at Sunnybrook, the breast screening program that I am familiar with. It is excellent. It offers excellent care, excellent diagnosis, excellent treatment. I'm very grateful to Dr. Yaffe for being here today to offer his support for the bill that is being presented by the member from Sault Ste. Marie.

Also, I had occasion to participate in the walk to end breast cancer in its first year, along with a group of people, to support my best friend, whose sister passed away early from breast cancer. I can only tell you how incredibly moving it was at the end of the walk, when all the women came in. The women who were just participating in the walk were given blue T-shirts and the women who were currently battling breast cancer or breast cancer survivors were given pink T-shirts. It was incredible, the number of women in that group who were then surrounded by their children when they came forward at the end of the line. That, to me, was incredibly moving, the number of young women who are being diagnosed. So anything that we can do to detect it before it becomes life-threatening, that we can make sure that they are able to receive less invasive procedures, absolutely we should be doing.

I really can't say enough how much I appreciate the member from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing this forward

again. It's going to make a real difference in the lives of many women in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a privilege to rise today on this private member's bill. I'd like to thank Mr. Oraziotti for bringing it forward.

1540

As David Letterman would say, "This is déjà vu all over again." I can remember back on September 17 of last year that here in this House, this exact bill was brought forward for debate, word for word, except the bill in September was numbered Bill 200 and this one is numbered Bill 56.

Bill 200 passed second reading on September 17 of last year. It didn't just pass, it didn't even need to go to a vote, because no one was voting against it. The bill is eminently sensible. It saves people from personal tragedy and it reduces the cost of health care. It is a bill that deserves to be implemented. Thus, all parties in this House unanimously supported it then, as I expect will happen today. My colleague France Gélinas, our health critic, spoke in support of the bill. Bill 200 enjoyed support from the speakers from the Conservative and Liberal parties.

All members in this Legislature voted and spoke in favour of this bill, but that didn't seem to matter, because the government left it to languish in committee. It didn't go anywhere. It went into purgatory. The McGuinty government didn't see fit to put it on the agenda of the committee, so it languished there for the remainder of September 2009, then right through October, November and then December. Bill 200 celebrated New Year's still sitting there, languishing in committee, waiting for its day to be called forward. The bill spent the cold days of January and February stalled, in a state of suspended animation, until that fateful day in March, when the Premier pulled the plug on this bill. He took the lead from Mr. Harper and said he was going to prorogue the House, and Bill 200, along with numerous other private members' bills, died on the order paper, died with a simple stroke of the pen.

So we're here today to debate this bill once again. We have our allotted time to speak to it, and I'm happy, frankly, to rise today to lend my support to the bill. Along with the rest of the NDP caucus, I'm going to be supporting it and I expect that it will pass. But the question then becomes, what then? What will happen to this bill? Will it in fact be implemented? Are we going to see this bill languish yet again in committee? What's the point if all the members of all the parties vote in favour of a bill and then the Premier's office decides the bill isn't worthy of appearing before committee?

This is a good bill. This bill will ensure that women, as has been mentioned, between the ages of 40 to 49 can be referred to the breast cancer screening program run by Cancer Care Ontario. Women 40 to 49 will need a referral from their physician or nurse practitioner in order to access the program free of charge.

Bill 56 is important because we know that with higher screening rates, breast cancer mortality decreases. As has been mentioned, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in women in Ontario. It makes up 27% of cancer diagnoses. It has the second-highest mortality rate, next to lung cancer. So it's important that women, on the advice of their primary caregiver, can gain access to the program.

We also know that increased screening leads to earlier detection, which allows for a greater variety of treatments and decreases mortality. Between 1989 and 2004, breast cancer mortality rates in Ontario women aged 50 to 69 decreased by 33% due to improved cancer treatments, but also due to increased participation in breast screening. So the simple reality is that Mr. Oraziotti's bill follows in the path that has been set before of preventive action that reduces human misery, reduces health care costs and makes this province better for everyone.

There's clearly an important role for high-quality, well-organized breast cancer screening programs; therefore, this bill is, without a doubt, a step in the right direction.

For this program to work, these women need to be referred by a physician or a nurse practitioner. But what happens to as many as 500,000 women who don't have access to primary care? That is a very serious problem. Without ensuring that every woman has access to primary care, how many women will be missed? This is a good program, but if you don't have access to it, it will not save lives and reduce health care costs as it can and should be doing.

We need to address the crisis in primary care. As I've said, I'll be supporting this bill, and my New Democrat colleagues will support this bill. It's extremely important to ensure that we make breast screening available to more women to detect breast cancers earlier. I want to quickly touch on prevention here. We spend \$42 billion per year on our health care system to treat people who are sick. We spend very little on keeping people healthy, which will prevent some illnesses and save precious health care dollars. That makes no sense.

We know that leading healthy lifestyles lowers the chance of people developing all sorts of cancers, including breast cancer—lifestyle issues such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, the elimination of smoking and maintaining a healthy weight. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We need a strong and vibrant Ministry of Health Promotion to keep costs down in terms of money and in terms of the human cost of suffering from illness.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but this new screening initiative is a step in the right direction. I wish the member for Sault Ste. Marie well on the journey of seeing this bill become law. I truly hope that this bill gets called before committee and comes back to this House to be debated and voted on at third reading.

My guess is that the majority of people who sit in this Legislature have had a personal experience of being in a hospital ward while a friend or a family member dies

from cancer. I would be surprised if there were many people here who had not had that experience. It's not an experience that any of us want to have on any sort of regular basis. So when we have an opportunity to actually reduce the number of people who go through that particular process and course of treatment, who are forced to address that fate, then I believe that this Legislature and this government should take action to ensure that this bill actually comes to fruition.

I'd like to say to the government today that this backbencher has brought forward a bill that makes sense. This private member is speaking to something that shouldn't just be debated as a private member's bill, although I'm very pleased that the member has taken the initiative to bring it forward. This is an initiative that should be taken on by the government, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Health Promotion and made a part of government policy, because for all of the people in this province—men and women together, children of mothers, mothers of young women, all those who can be touched personally by this—action to reduce the number of people who are diagnosed late with breast cancer is something that will be a lasting gift to them and to all of us in this province and in this House.

1550

It was a shame that this bill simply died before in committee. It's a good thing that it has been brought forward again. My hope is that this time, rather than simply going through second reading and being sent off to committee and joining a long list of private members' bills that essentially get to sit or are parked in orbit around the Legislature, this one goes forward to committee, to hearings and is adopted as government policy and fully implemented. That would be a fitting tribute, an act of respect on the part of this Legislature and this government, to the men and women of this province.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to rise in the House in support of Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. As so many people have said, we commend the member for being persistent and bringing this bill back to the House again as a private member's bill.

I'm particularly pleased about the aspect of this bill that wishes to have women 40 to 49 screened through the auspices of the Ontario breast screening program. It is a program that, as a physician and former medical officer of health, I remember early on, when it was first proposed that Ontario look toward a province-wide screening program. In fact, I was visited by physicians from Sunnybrook, coming up to York region explaining the concept to me and asking for our help at the York region health department to promote the screening of women, particularly between the ages of 50 and 69.

The reasons, of course, were clear. Breast cancer is a very common cancer in women. In fact, in the next year it is estimated that some 8,700 Ontario women will develop breast cancer and approximately 2,100 women

will die from breast cancer. We know that older women are more at risk, as has been stated. Some 80% of cases are in women over the age of 50, leaving 20% under the age of 50. But the vast majority of those would in fact be in the ages of 40 and 49.

We've also heard that the earlier breast cancer is detected, the greater the chance to lower mortality from the disease. Between 1989 and 2004 in Ontario, breast cancer mortality has decreased by some 33%. Now, we know that improved treatment regimens and so on are reasons this has occurred, but the organized breast screening program is also very much part of that very encouraging statistic.

Now, some of the reasoning behind why women between the ages of 40 and 49 have not been included in the breast screening program and are not necessarily recommended for regular mammography has been that perhaps there are too many false positives; that some people may have a suspicious lesion and may have to have more biopsies and various interventions; and that there is anxiety generated with the testing and, perhaps, with these false positives. This has always struck me as a particularly paternalistic view of the way women are going to react.

As the member from Sault Ste. Marie has stated, women now can, of course, obtain a screening mammography at younger ages than 50. They do so through OHIP on the recommendation of a physician. What we are doing here is simply expanding that opportunity for women to be referred by a physician or nurse practitioner to an organized program.

The organized program has many benefits. Obviously it's a very comprehensive screening program where a visit will include a mammogram, instruction in breast self-examination and, in some locations, a physical breast exam by a specially trained nurse. The sites and the machinery used are all accredited by the Canadian Association of Radiologists, and there's a quality assurance program at each site.

I'm really pleased that since those early days of the breast screening program we now have some 140 sites across the province. There's also a mobile van service that services the north. Some 30 more northern communities are serviced in this way from Thunder Bay.

An organized program allows us to have a registry of women. We can follow the statistics. Even though the scientific evidence to lowering mortality in women 40 to 49 through an organized screening program can be somewhat controversial—certainly I have looked at many of the different studies; some seem to show an improvement in mortality, some don't—by including these women in an organized screening program, such as the one we have here in Ontario, we will be able to follow these women; we will be able to know statistically whether there are benefits. This is why I am particularly in favour of this particular move to including these women in this program.

The goal of the current breast screening program is to try and increase participation rates for women to some

70% of the eligible group. I think not only is the member from Sault Ste. Marie's proposal to expand this program something very valuable that we can talk about in this House, but also, it gives some of us an opportunity to urge all women 50 and over, in fact, to obtain a screening program through the Ontario breast screening program.

So I commend the member. I know that certainly those of us on the government side will be urging the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to look at this particular initiative should it pass today, a lot, with great seriousness, with a view to including it in the ministry's programs.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to support the bill that has been put forward by the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I had supported the bill last time. I do hope that this time we have an opportunity to get it through committee, and that we can bring it back into the House and we can move it on and we can make sure that as a result of this initiative, all women over the age of 40 to age 49, who are currently not provided with free access to breast screening services, will be covered.

This bill, I think, is extremely important. I think for most women this is certainly a disease that they do dread, and I think that whatever we can do in order to make sure that we identify those who do have breast cancer as early as possible, we need to take those steps. This bill would mean that there would be, as I said, free breast screening services available to all women between the age of 40 to 49 years old as a result of a referral that they would obtain from their physician or a specified nurse. The screening services would be provided through the Ontario breast screening program or that program's successor.

This is an issue that has touched each one of us in one way or another. We all know either of a family member or a friend or a neighbour who has suffered from breast cancer. Some have very successfully fought the disease for many, many years. Others, sadly, have lost the battle. I can remember an aunt that I had who battled breast cancer for years and years, and I really admired her tenacity, I admired her optimism. Eventually she did lose the fight.

It is a very common type of cancer faced by women in this province. We know that each year, there are going to be 22,000 women who are going to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Unfortunately, it still kills about 5,000 Canadian women. This is more than any other type of cancer except for lung cancer. In our province, it's estimated that next year 8,000 women will develop breast cancer, and approximately 2,100 will die. To put this into perspective, one in nine will be diagnosed, and one in 27 will die of breast cancer in their lifetime. So it is important.

1600

This bill is important because one of the most significant preventive initiatives that we can undertake is the breast screening. Screening can find cancer in its early

stages, and like any other cancer, that's when you have the best opportunity to treat the cancer successfully. That means it's going to be less likely to spread. That's going to leave more treatment options available, and, ultimately, we are going to be able to save precious lives.

A lot has been done to increase access to breast screening in this province. Currently, the OBSP already provides high-quality mammography services for all women in the province who are 50 years of age or older. Those screenings are free. The results, I can tell you, are provided very quickly. Follow-up is arranged and yearly reminders are given to the participants. Our government certainly was very strongly committed to this program when we were in office: We invested \$24.3 million to set up an additional 88 screening sites across the province. As well, women across the province have access to stand-alone OHIP funding clinics. I can tell you that the success of the program that we already have in place has been quite obvious, in that mortality rates in Ontario for women aged 50 to 69 did decrease by 35%, due in large part to increased participation in breast screening.

However, we need to not only make it available for women 50 to 69, we need to make it available for women between 40 to 49. But we need to make sure that we raise the awareness, because even though it's free, there are still many people who don't access the breast screening programs that are available. We need to encourage their participation.

Cancer Care Ontario has established a target to have 70% of women aged 50 to 69 participate in regular screening by this year and 90% by 2020. As you can see, based on the fact that only 66% of women aged 50 to 69 are now participating, we have a long way to go to reach the target.

So I applaud the initiative of the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I trust this bill, which will increase access, will be passed by the Legislature and, again, we can see a positive impact for women.

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

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm more than pleased to join colleagues from all sides of the House today in supporting David Orazietti's excellent bill. It is, for me, the first opportunity I've had to speak to a private member's bill, so my maiden voyage is certainly well spent on an excellent, excellent bill.

I joined David Orazietti and his excellent guests this morning, just to listen quietly in the corner at the press conference downstairs, and I had the opportunity to chat again with Susan Whelan; Mr. Orazietti has mentioned that. She was just 46 last year when she was diagnosed, and I think she is adding a great deal to join this effort to see that this bill goes through. Susan and I shared the federal world together—Belinda Stronach as well, another person in her forties who was a victim of breast cancer—and you get a whole sense of the collegiality and of the people in your life. That has been mentioned by many of the speakers today. There are none of us who

have not been touched—our friends, our families—by this horrific disease.

While I will have to be redundant, I think many of the points that have been made are worth saying again. The bill, of course, proposes that we admit women between the ages of 40 to 49 to the Ontario breast screening program, but as has been pointed out by the author of the bill, these are women who will have been referred by a physician or a nurse practitioner. So the argument that the current system is going to be overwhelmed by thousands of new applicants for mammograms is certainly not sustainable.

I think the point has been made as well that the cost here of having a woman included in the OBSP in that age category will be a cost of \$17 per woman; in other words, their mammograms that had been done outside of the OBSP are indeed now covered by OHIP, just the same as those who are participants over 50 are as well covered by OHIP. So it's not going to be an overwhelming cost.

If I might address that, I would say that we are in deficit. I am a member of a government that is working hard to eliminate the deficit, but even in deficit times choices are made. Choices are made by the government, choices are made by the Ministry of Finance, choices are made by the Ministry of Health, and the choice to lower the age of women to 40 who can then receive a mammogram through the OBSP is an imperative choice that the government and both ministries I think must make.

I would just say that in preparing today to speak in support of my colleague's bill, I was taken really aback to learn—and again, this has been mentioned—that here in Canada the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, PEI, Nova Scotia and the Yukon have already been including women over the age of 40 in similar programs. I am stunned, as someone who originally hails from the east, to think that the great province of Ontario has yet to follow all of those other provinces and other jurisdictions such as Japan, Austria, Australia and Greece in allowing this kind of program to be in place. I would just say that I hope that that is going to change. I hope Ontario will indeed join other provinces and other countries in their wisdom.

After Mr. Orazietti spoke to me last week, like all of us going at the pace we go in this job—not just we are busy; everybody's busy today—I got home to Barrie and there's a ton of mail all piled up from the week. As I went through the mail, as coincidence would have it, there was my notice from RVH that it was time for my mammogram. That's what triggers it for me. That's what makes me realize it's time again. I don't, rightly or wrongly, think, "Oh, it is time." It's getting that trigger performed elsewhere, and that's a trigger that women in Ontario between 40 and 49 with the referral have to receive as well.

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

Seeing none, the honourable member Mr. Orazietti has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the members in the House today who spoke in favour of Bill 56. The member from Whitby–Oshawa; the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, a former Minister of Health; our doctor and colleague the member from Oak Ridges–Markham; the member from Barrie; and the member from Toronto–Danforth: Thank you all very much for the opportunity today to support this bill.

I hope that all members of the House will support this bill and it's something that we can get on with. It is time in the province of Ontario to allow women between the ages of 40 and 49 into the Ontario breast screening program. It's a tremendous program. It's a thorough program delivered by Cancer Care Ontario. I think everyone knows that this is the best way to have screening done in the province.

When you're 40 to 49, you need a doctor's referral to go for mammography. When you're 50, you don't need a referral. You can walk into the best screening program in the province. Something doesn't make sense. When you're 49, you should be able to get into this program as well, and the additional criteria is having that referral.

I think it's time that a change is made in this province that puts Ontario on a more level footing with access to health care screening in the area of breast cancer screening like other jurisdictions in this country. Other provinces in this country allow women 40 to 49 into an organized program. European jurisdictions and other jurisdictions in the world allow this to take place because they know it's the right thing to do.

This is the right thing to do for Ontarians, especially for women in the province of Ontario, and quite frankly, there is no cost argument on this. This will save the health care system money and it will save lives. I want to encourage all members to support Bill 56 because I think they should be eligible to be in the Ontario breast screening program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has now expired.

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR
SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT
DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 22, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after we deal with the next two ballot items.

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY
COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT
LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF
DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 23.

Mrs. Cansfield has moved second reading of Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mrs. Cansfield?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I would refer the bill to the justice committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed to refer the bill to the justice committee? So ordered.

BREAST CANCER
SCREENING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE
DU CANCER DU SEIN

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 24.

Mr. Oraziotti has moved second reading of Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Oraziotti?

Mr. David Oraziotti: I'd ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. So ordered.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1612 to 1617.

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR
SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT
DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 57. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles
Gélinas, France
Hampton, Howard

Horwath, Andrea
Kormos, Peter
Marchese, Rosario

Miller, Paul
Prue, Michael
Tabuns, Peter

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Klees, Frank	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kular, Kuldip	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dickson, Joe	Murray, Glen R.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	Pendergast, Leeanna	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	
Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 9; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters pertaining to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some nos.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, May 31, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
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