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Lundi 18 octobre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 October 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 octobre 2010

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: It's my pleasure to introduce Colleen Hochgeschurz, the mother of Carina, who is a new page here today. Carina comes from the county of Lanark in the municipality of Mississippi Mills. I'm sure she's going to have a great time here. Her mom is staying with her for the three weeks' duration.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm pleased to introduce some family that are here. We have a new page from North Bay, Nicholas Waltenbury. I know his member isn't here this morning, so I want to welcome Nicholas, but particularly his mom, Dawn Waltenbury, my cousin, and Nicholas's grandma and grandpa, Tom and Marilyn Campbell from Prescott. Welcome to the House.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi aussi, j'ai de la visite aujourd'hui, des gens de Chelmsford qui sont ici parce que leur petite-fille sera page avec nous. Il s'agit de M^{me} Louise Tessier et M. Guy Tessier. Bienvenue.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased to introduce my uncle Tony Connor and my aunt Helen Connor, visiting from the UK, and my mother, Sally Tabuns, visiting from faraway Hamilton.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: In the gallery today are members of the Burlington community who are here with the MS Society. I would like to introduce to you Carole Ward—wave, Carole—and Ross Bell and Joan Gallagher-Bell. Hi, guys.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome the members from the MS Society, but more specifically Mike Roche, from my riding of Durham, and I believe John Daley is here as well. Welcome to Queen's Park. Your presence here today is important.

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to introduce some guests in our gallery today. They are here with our new page Marie-Josée Vercouteren. Her dad, Peter Vercouteren, is here; grandmother Mary Ellen Vercouteren; grandfather Ted Vercouteren; grandmother Louise Tessier; and grandfather Guy Tessier. Would you welcome them all, please.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome as a guest from the MS Society

in the Speaker's gallery Cathy Topping; her assistant, who is with her today, Stephenie Inglis; and Cathy's cousin Fred Cass, who is a former Speaker of the Legislature. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANT

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question, in the absence of the Premier, is to the energy minister. Minister, how much exactly will Ontario families—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that we do not make references to attendance.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, how much will Ontario families now have to pay for Premier McGuinty's sudden decision to backtrack on the Oakville power plant?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We have heard a number of uninformed figures being thrown about by the opposition on this particular issue, and let me say this: Those figures are nothing but typical opposition fearmongering.

I guess my question to the Leader of the Opposition—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We didn't even get one minute into question period and I'm finding it difficult to hear. Members will please come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: A few weeks ago, Tory members were standing up in this very Legislature, saying that they didn't want to see us put this gas plant in Oakville. Today, after we've made this important decision, a decision that only became possible because of the important investments this government has made, investments that those guys opposed every step of the way—every one of those 8,000 megawatts that we've created made this decision possible. Those guys opposed every one of those megawatts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, with due respect, this is a very serious question that families and ratepayers across the province are concerned about. We would like a serious answer.

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Clearly, you must have presented to cabinet the plan to backtrack on the Oakville gas plant. You have had advice from your advisers or the Ontario Power Authority on

exactly what the costs would be to backtrack and to effectively rip up that contract. Minister, I know you might not be able to pinpoint the exact value but perhaps you can tell us the range of costs on your decision to backtrack on Oakville. Minister, just inform the House: What did you tell cabinet would be the cost of making this decision?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the question from the member opposite and I'm pleased to respond. I can tell him that indeed we know the costs, if there are any at all, would not even be close to the fearmongering numbers that he and his colleagues have been putting out over the last week.

I can tell you this: We are in positive discussions with TransCanada. They've played an important role in our energy system; they've been an important part of our energy system in the past; they will indeed be in the future.

I can tell you this: Because of the investments that we've made—the 8,000 new megawatts, the 1,700 megawatts we've saved in conservation because of diminishing demand—we are in a position not to have to build a gas plant that indeed our long-term planning indicated was not going to be necessary. This is a responsible decision, both from a fiscal perspective and from an energy perspective. We're very proud of the role that our local MPP, Kevin Flynn—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister's and the Premier's answers get increasingly puzzling about their decision to backtrack on the Oakville plant. The minister now seems to imply that maybe there are no costs, if I heard him correctly, for ripping up the contract that you had signed some time ago.

I don't think people believe that there is no cost, quite frankly, Minister, to ripping up a signed contract for what was a \$1.2-billion power plant. Steven Paget, an analyst with FirstEnergy Capital, indicates that families may be on the hook for a substantial amount. There are media reports that cite a legal opinion saying that the company may be entitled to up to \$1 billion.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister just said I'm wrong again. Clearly, Minister, if you are getting paid by the taxpayer, you must have brought in the costs to cabinet. Why don't you just tell the public how much we're on the hook to pay for a power plant that will produce no power whatsoever?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Here we go again. The opposition is throwing out figures that are uninformed and nothing short of opposition fearmongering.

Let's be very, very clear—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Member from Oxford.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let's be very, very clear. We made a decision based on the fact that we made very

important investments that put us in a position to use a transmission solution rather than build a 950-megawatt plant in Oakville. Had we listened to the member opposite, had we listened to the leader of the NDP on this when they opposed us every step of the way as we were building this new 8,000 megawatts of power, we would not have been able to make that decision and indeed, had we adhered to the policies of his party and the NDP, there would have been a plant going into Oakville. Because of the important decisions we've made, we're able to ensure that we can do this through a transmission solution that will ensure that these—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Now to the Minister of the Environment: Minister, your Premier has set a world record for backtracks in the past six months. He backtracked on the sex ed curriculum to start with grade 1. It's basically sex classes for six-year-olds. He backtracked on the microFIT rates for solar power. He backtracked on Super Corp. He backtracked on mixed martial arts and he backtracked on his plan to ban chocolate milk in schools—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The Minister of Infrastructure will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Interjection.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: But honest to goodness, even Dalton McGuinty outdid himself when he flip-flopped—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member of the use of names in the chamber.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier McGuinty outdid himself when he flip-flopped on the Oakville gas plant and on eco taxes within five days. He backtracked so fast he gave everybody whiplash.

Let me ask you: When it comes to the eco taxes, is this a full backtrack, is it a half-backtrack or is it something that the Premier plans to bring in if he gets re-elected?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the leader for the question. We listened to consumers. Consumers told us that on July 1—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the member from Renfrew: I would like to hear the answer; I was able to hear the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please don't be challenging the Chair.

Minister, please continue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: On July 1, Stewardship Ontario rolled out a program in this province. They didn't tell consumers that it was coming. They did not come up with the least expensive solution, and they did not come up with the most practical solution. So we

listened to consumers, and they were very loud and they were very clear. They want to do their part to keep hazardous materials out of our landfills, but they expect a program that, first, they can understand; second, that it is the most practical solution; and third, that it is the solution that costs the least amount of money.

Listening to that, I made a determination that the program that was rolled out on July 1 met none of those criteria. That's why we permanently cancelled that program, listening to the consumers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, you were there at the cabinet table when Premier McGuinty brought this plan forward. You weren't environment minister but you were there at the cabinet table, as I recall, when Premier McGuinty allegedly said that when it comes to the eco tax grab, "We can't do this fast enough." That's the exact quote reported in the media from one of your fellow colleagues at cabinet.

I'm proud that the Ontario PC Party stood with hard-working families, fought this tax grab, caught you in the cookie jar and forced you to do a U-turn. But now we worry that these guys will just bring it back.

Minister, on August 12 in the Flamborough Review, you said that when it came to the eco tax program, it was "the right way to go." Then on October 12, you did a backtrack.

Minister, which Minister Wilkinson do we believe: the one of August 12 or the one of October 12? Ontario families can't tell.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would say that I have been very, very consistent that the good people of Ontario want to keep hazardous materials out of the landfills. When you were in government, those very materials were getting into landfills. We've done something about that. We have a number of programs to ensure that hazardous material stays out of our landfills. That's why last year alone, some 91,000 tonnes of used tires were redirected from our landfills and are creating new products, which result in new jobs. It's why there are tens of thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste electronics which today are being recycled and diverted in the province of Ontario.

We are keeping those programs. But when it comes to the program that was rolled out on July 1, which was neither practical nor understandable nor communicated—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew will withdraw the comment.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson:—nor the least expensive program, we decided that that needed to be permanently cancelled. That's why we've done that.

We're going to keep the things that are working. We made sure that the program that the good people of Ontario did not understand and did not feel was appropriate, where it was applied to items where it just didn't make any sense—we cancelled that permanently.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, I don't think anybody buys this babe-in-the-woods routine. You were there at cabinet that authorized this program when Premier McGuinty sold it to you. You were there on July 1, when he tried to sneak it in under the shadow of the HST. Minister Wilkinson himself said on August 12 that it was the right thing to do. Then on October 12, we saw a different Minister Wilkinson.

We also saw that the previous minister had a plan to bring them in on automobiles, snowmobiles and ATVs. Now this minister has tossed the previous minister to the wind and says he had nothing to do with that plan.

I don't think people buy it. Honest to God, he takes so many positions, it's like Premier McGuinty's top adviser is a Magic 8 Ball.

Minister, just come clean. What is the actual plan here? How can we have any faith whatsoever in a Premier who says one thing one day and then backtracks and says the opposite the next?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Exactly which Progressive Conservative caucus is speaking today? I have a quote from your colleague Bob Bailey, who is the member for Sarnia–Lambton, who said on October 13, "I applaud the government for this"—

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment. He used the riding name and the name.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To clarify the ruling, you should be using the riding name alone.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Everyone in this House knows that the MPP for Sarnia–Lambton is in that member's caucus, and he applauded us on October 13.

What I find interesting is that we have a clear contrast in the province of Ontario: a party opposite that wants the greenbelt gone, that wants the coal plants to stay open and that did not even vote for the Clean Water Act; on this side of the House, we're listening to consumers, but more importantly, we are keeping hazardous waste out of our landfills. That's why we're working with our municipal partners. That's why we're ensuring that the programs that are working are staying. We are committed to making sure that they are—

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

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Later today, the Ontario Energy Board is going to tell Ontario families just how much more they're going to be paying for electricity. The announcement won't be bringing any relief to Ontario families who need a break on their hydro bills.

As we head into winter, why won't the McGuinty government give families some relief and simply take the HST off of hydro?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I too am looking forward to seeing the Ontario Energy Board releasing today their regulated price plan. This is another indication of the way that this government has reformed our energy sector. As the Ontario Energy Board takes a good look at projecting what our costs for energy are going to be every six months, we're able to bring some certainty to consumers and to businesses so that they know what the next six to 12 months will bring in terms of increasing or decreasing rates, whatever that may be. I'm looking forward to the work that the OEB has done. I think we'll see later on today exactly where that's going. I'm looking forward to being able to provide some certainty to consumers in the coming six to 12 months.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families are looking for relief, and this government simply looks the other way.

Suzette Desroches, a single mom, writes this: "I live in a two-bedroom apartment and am paying about \$200 a month and this is without even turning my heat on ... God help us when winter arrives."

I ask again: Why won't this government take the HST off of hydro and give people like Ms. Desroches a much-needed break?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We certainly recognize the challenges that Ontario families have been going through in this province, whether it be adjusting to the changes that the global recession has brought to Ontario families or whether it be the fact that, yes, energy rates are increasing.

But this leader, time and time again, during the course of this session, has stood on her feet to oppose these important investments. The NDP have shifted from the principles that they once had—principles that would have said that we need to build a strong energy system, that we need to make investments in generation, that we need to make investments in reliability and that we need to get out of dirty coal.

We're not going to be able to get out of dirty coal if we go the NDP route and not make those investments. The NDP want to take us back to where the Tories had us seven years ago. I think if I were an NDP member today, listening to the rhetoric coming from the side opposite, I would say, "Where did you lose your"—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last month, the Premier promised a lower off-peak electricity rate, but people don't want more tinkering on their hydro bills; what they want is a real break.

Debrah Habinski writes, "Since the smart meter and the HST, my hydro bill has doubled."

Why won't this government give Ms. Habinski and her family a break by simply taking the HST off of hydro?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It was only weeks ago—and I guess the leader of the opposition has forgotten that—that this government came forward, through the leader-

ship of our Premier, with the energy and property tax credit. Two thirds of seniors across this province are going to get relief from that tax credit. It's going to go to lower- and middle-income people and assist them in adjusting to the increasing rates.

If we were to listen to the party opposite, we would be going back to where we were seven years ago. We need to make these important investments. I would think the NDP, of all parties, would recognize how important it is to invest in generating the power we're going to need to provide to Ontario families going forward into the future, to invest in a reliable system and to invest in moving away from dirty coal so we can clean our air and provide better health outcomes for our kids and grandkids. That's what it's all about and it's time the NDP recognize that they should be standing—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew.

New question?

POWER PLANT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Acting Premier. Last week, the McGuinty government cancelled its agreement with TransCanada on the Oakville gas plant. New Democrats actually have thought for a long time that that plant should never have been built and we've said so. But the Liberals only agreed when their jobs were on the line. How much more will this politically calculated decision cost Ontario families?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Here we go: the NDP riding the fence again.

I guess the question we have for the NDP on this is, do you support our efforts to ensure that we can provide a better alternative to the people in the southwest GTA or do you not? If you're going to support that, then you need to support the important investments we're making in energy generation that are allowing that flexibility to occur in the system. It's because of the investments we've made, which you continually have been opposing here day after day and, indeed, in your previous question you indicated opposition to—you can't have it both ways. Either you're going to support the important investments we're making to build a stronger energy system that allows us to ensure that we can move forward in the southwest GTA without building this plant, or you don't.

In my view, if they're not going to support those investments, then any future under the NDP would ensure that that plant would go back into Oakville.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families are used to paying private companies for energy they don't use. After all, they paid Bruce nuclear \$60 million not to produce any electricity at all.

Suzanne Spence writes this: "We are having such a hard time" keeping "our hydro bill down ... it started

when I got hurt and was unable to work for three months and got behind.”

Will the government tell families like Ms. Spence’s how much more they’re going to pay as a result of this TransCanada deal?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I’ve been very clear and will continue to be. I guess the NDP want us to build a \$1-billion gas plant in Oakville that we don’t need any longer because of the important investments we’ve made. That would be fiscally irresponsible to do.

We’re in discussions with TransCanada right now. Those discussions are going positively. This is a company that indeed has made a great contribution to Ontario’s energy sector and will continue to.

The fact of the matter is, the NDP wants to oppose everything. They absolutely stand for nothing. They oppose investing in our aging infrastructure. They oppose the measures we’re taking to create jobs and build a clean-energy economy. They oppose the clean, reliable, emission-free nuclear power that we’re investing in our system. They oppose the support we’re bringing to northern Ontario and they oppose the Samsung agreement that’s creating jobs right across this province.

It’s easy to oppose everything. I think it’s incumbent on—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families deserve a straight answer on this question. They deserve a straight answer from their government. There needs to be full disclosure on this TransCanada deal—period. Why won’t the government tell already-hard-hit Ontarians how much more they’re going to have to pay—to cough up—to get out of this TransCanada deal?

Hon. Brad Duguid: During our deliberations on the long-term plan—and fortunately for all of us, because of the huge investments we’ve made in building a stronger energy system—we identified the fact that this 950-megawatt gas plant would no longer be required—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That’s one of the reasons why I say to speak through the Chair, because when you’re speaking through the Chair, you’re looking at me and then you’ll know that I’m standing up.

1100

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew, please come to order.

Please continue, Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That’s one of the reasons that we’ve been able to make this decision. It’s a responsible decision. We’re no longer going to need that 950-megawatt gas plant in Oakville; we can resolve those challenges through a transmission solution. That’s a fiscally responsible thing to do.

We’re in discussions with TransCanada now. The member opposite is just going to have to allow those discussions to take place. We’ll be happy to share with her the results of those discussions when they’re done.

But those discussions are positive and we’re confident they’ll result in a good solution for everyone.

GOVERNMENT’S RECORD

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Acting Premier. During the Toronto Centre by-election, Ontario families paid \$15 million that the McGuinty Liberals handed out to the Grace Hospital. During the Ottawa West–Nepean by-election, Ontario families paid \$500 million that the McGuinty Liberals used to boost the pension benefits fund. Now, in what will be a hotly contested seat in Oakville, Ontario families are on the hook to pay up to \$1 billion so the Premier can backtrack on the power plant that he wanted to build there. So I ask the Acting Premier: Why does the price of seats keep going up?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Thank you—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I’m just going to give you 10 seconds to rephrase that question so that one isn’t impugning motive.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Oh, that’s a challenge, Mr. Speaker.

What will the next by-election or election seat cost in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I’m delighted, actually, to take this question because I think it really does point to what the true intentions of the Conservative Party are. This party opposite is prepared to oppose all of those health investments that we have made since 2003. I will be available to remind the public of Ontario—in fact, this particular member opposite was the Minister of Health when those cuts in health care began, and they have already identified for the campaign ahead that they will be taking \$3 billion, at a minimum, out of the health care system.

So I would ask the member opposite: Will you be revoking those extremely good decisions we made about health care investments in this province? Will you be revoking the decisions we made for those investments? That, to me, is the question for the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Through the Chair: She’s cuckoo. Honest to God.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member will withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I withdraw.

Shortly after Ontario families paid \$15 million in Toronto, the Premier appointed the former mayor of Winnipeg to cabinet over dozens of long-serving and loyal Liberals. After Ontario families paid \$500 million, the Premier appointed the former mayor of Ottawa to cabinet over dozens of long-serving and loyal Liberals. So I ask: Now that Ontario families could pay up to \$1 billion for the Premier’s backtracking in Oakville, will the member for Oakville become the new Minister of Energy?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: It’s pretty instructive to understand the road we’re going down with the com-

ments from an experienced member like this in the Legislature. And quite frankly, I think, even for you, it's a little bit over the top.

Let me just say this—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm standing; you should be sitting.

Interjections.

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

I just remind members that it's very easy to not speak through the Chair, but it is much easier when you are speaking through me, because it does start to take away some of the personal pointing across at each other. As well, let's not bring things down to a level where—this is three times today I've asked members to withdraw comments that are truly of a personal nature. Let's keep things at the political level, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please don't argue with the Speaker.

If the members desire that the Speaker start to crack down 100% on everything, I'm very happy to do that, and we'll just start turfing people left and right. We're over halfway into a question period right now and it's just dragging and dragging. I think the public who are here and the people watching at home want to see, as I've described before, that cut and thrust of question period. I ask for the support of all members to do that.

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre par intérim. This Wednesday, as a result of an NDP motion passed at committee, the Auditor General will produce a report on consultants' contracts in the health care system.

Ontarians have watched front-line care disappear from their communities: millions of hours of nursing hours cut, emergency rooms shut down, and home care and physiotherapy vanishing. Instead of protecting the interests of Ontarians, this government has allowed these precious dollars to go to lobbyists, consultants or to salary schemes.

Can the Acting Premier explain why her government has supported this culture of entitlement?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm delighted to have this question from the member opposite. The reality is that we have had more investment in health care. It has absolutely been a historic level of investment in health care since 2003.

What that has meant is that we have taken a very careful look at how we spend the money so that it results in the hiring of 10,000 nurses, not the firing in the previous years from both the NDP and Conservative governments of the past.

We realize that as we continue to invest in health care—we, as the majority of the members on that very

committee that she mentioned, moved to have the Auditor General review these kinds of expenses. If we see that there is something that needs to be fixed, this, in fact, is the government that steps forward to fix it, not ignore it. That has been the history of the Ontario Liberal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, hospitals use lobbyists and they use consultants because your government is forcing them to work in that way.

The Auditor General will give us a small glimpse into health care consultant use, and let me tell you, you wouldn't believe the number of hoops I had to go through to get this investigation to get that small glimpse. Why is this government refusing to allow the use of accountability and transparency measures that already exist, such as access to freedom of information and Ombudsman oversight of health care agencies?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think that all members of the House will be happy to note that our Minister of Health will be bringing forward items, probably by this Wednesday, to address the things that the Liberal members of this House are concerned about.

I think it's instructive to have a little review of what all members of the House would perhaps see as inappropriate, which would probably include that their own member for Toronto–Danforth was a lobbyist, even after two months of having been elected to this House—a lobbyist in fact on behalf of the Ontario Nurses' Association—or that even in this day, after the member for Hamilton became the leader of the NDP, when she was at city council in Hamilton, she was part of decisions to hire lobbyists to lobby the government.

These are members of the NDP who today stand in the House and suddenly have had some kind of an epiphany. The reality is that the Ontario—

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

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Accountability in government agencies is something that we all take very seriously, and I know many other members of this House do so as well. Agencies like Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation are large entities with extensive operations that function day to day largely under their own management. As with all large organizations, outside expertise is sometimes needed to add value to a project or to the operation as a whole.

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I think Ontarians want to know that those sorts of practices which exist at these large public corporations are ethical, that they are accountable and that there is openness and transparency. Can the minister confirm that this is the case?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. I made it very clear to all of our energy agen-

cies that our expectation is and always will be that they strive to ensure that our taxpayers and our ratepayers in Ontario are receiving full value for money.

At a time of rising costs, we've directed our energy agencies to freeze management salaries and lower their expectations on potential rate increases, and we've opened them up to freedom of information.

That stands in stark contrast to the Tories, who removed Hydro One from being subject to freedom of information. One can only think that was to hide that healthy retirement fund they were creating for prominent Tory hacks like Mike Harris's campaign chair, Tom Long, who got \$2.3 million to provide insight and leadership techniques. When Tom Long was a partner at Egon Zehnder, they got \$635,000 in contracts. That included an \$83,000 search fee to find a job for Deb Hutton, another Conservative—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: This is quite a list. Back to the Minister of Energy: I recall those headlines seven to 10 years ago highlighting the abuses going on at Hydro One with regard to contracts being given out in questionable circumstances. We know another one of the hangovers from the Tories' mismanagement of the energy system is something that Ontarians see in their hydro bills every month called the debt retirement charge.

There are some in this House who dish out a lot of criticism about investments this government has made to move away from dirty coal to cleaner sources of power. My constituents in Peterborough can appreciate these investments, but something they didn't expect to see in their bills and don't fully understand is the debt retirement charge. Can the minister explain this debt retirement charge in more detail?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is a totally different question. The supplementary had nothing to do with the question.

New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Toby Barrett: My question is for the environment minister. How much did Ontario families pay for Premier McGuinty's greedy eco tax grab in the 20 days before he backtracked on it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The member opposite will remember that the Waste Diversion Act, 2002, was passed by your government, and under the structure of the Waste Diversion Act, 2002, organizations are created which are completely run by and completely funded by industry. That is the status quo today. So when it comes to programs and any fees associated with that, it was set up by the previous government to ensure that that money was controlled by industry, spent by industry, and that the fees charged were from industry.

We've been very clear that the program that started on July 1 was not practical, it was not understood by the consumers because they did not take the time to explain it to them in advance, nor was it the most cost-effective

solution. That's why we're proud, on this side of the House, to cancel that program. And to be very clear, there will be no new eco fees going forward either.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: People want their money back. The program cost \$5 million and Ontario families paid something like \$1 million until you were caught. Retailers say they handed the money to Stewardship Ontario. Stewardship Ontario says it has no involvement with eco taxes, doesn't govern eco taxes, wants nothing to do with them. Your office says you're not the best person to talk about this.

Even Hansel and Gretel had a plan before they backtracked. Why does refunding the money to Ontario families who overpaid for your eco taxes not matter to you?

Hon. John Wilkinson: As I was saying, there they go again, talking about things which they know, because they created the act, are not true.

Stewardship Ontario and other industry-funded organizations are industry-funded. We've been very clear to retailers: If you have charged your customers fees and you weren't supposed to, you had better refund that money to your customers. We have been extremely clear with our retailers. In most cases, retailers do not pay Stewardship Ontario. It is the stewards. It is the importer or the producers of those materials who pay. So, we're going to be very clear with our retailers: If they have charged consumers improperly, the best thing they can do is to refund.

I want to say that there are large retailers, for example Canadian Tire and Home Depot, who are doing the right thing and are refunding fees that they charged improperly. We want to thank them for doing—

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

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A question for the Minister of the Environment: Does the proposed shipment of radioactive nuclear steam generators to Sweden across Ontario's Great Lakes exceed safe levels set by the International Atomic Energy Agency?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm surprised that a member who came to this place known as an environmentalist would ask that question. He knows that the question, when it comes to the transportation of radioactive material in this province, is the sole purview of the federal government. Perhaps he's had some amnesia since he got to this House, but when it comes to this place we know exactly what our responsibilities are.

I would say to the member that you may want to talk to Mr. Layton who, on your behalf, may be able to raise that question in the federal House, because that's exactly where that question belongs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, some ministers think that they have responsibility for their portfolios, like the environment, and apparently some don't.

In late September, a spokesperson for the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission stated that the proposed shipment of plutonium and other nuclear waste in those generators exceeds by six times the overall radioactivity limits allowed on a single ship. There is no need to ship this waste thousands of miles. This minister is responsible for protecting the Great Lakes and belongs to the government that is, indeed, the owner of the Bruce nuclear facility. Why is he refusing to stand up to protect the Great Lakes?

Hon. John Wilkinson: This government has a record that we're extremely proud of when it comes to preserving our Great Lakes.

Did the member not just refer to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission? Did he not refer to that? Why? Because, in Canada, when it comes to the regulation of radioactive material, that is a federal responsibility.

We're very clear on this side of the House—we're very clear—that the Great Lakes are a wonderful legacy for our province. We are working every day to make sure that our lakes are as safe as possible. We have, of course, an interest in those things that deal with the federal government. We express our concerns to the federal government, but we do not want to allow the federal government to believe that somehow they can shirk their responsibility for the environment. We will not be apologists for the federal government in this House, and that's exactly why we'll ensure that their responsibilities are theirs. We look forward to—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question today for the Minister of Transportation. Public transit is one of the most important issues to people in my riding of Oakville. Many of my constituents commute daily into downtown Toronto for work and school. This often involves travelling on three different transit systems: Oakville Transit to get to the GO station, the GO train to Union and then the TTC to other parts of Toronto.

Last November, 500 Oakville transit riders were part of a pilot project with the Presto card. My constituents enjoyed the convenience of using one card for Oakville Transit, the GO and the TTC. I'm sure people in the other parts of the GTA would enjoy the convenience of Presto as well. Can the minister provide the House with an update on the progress of the Presto card?

1120

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to do that, and I thank the member for the question.

One of the goals of my ministry, being the Minister of Transportation, is to encourage as many people as possible to get out of their cars and get on public transit. I think the Presto card is a very important incentive to help people do that.

In fact, with the Presto card, transit riders can ride seamlessly around the GTA, and I think that's how

people see this region: as a place where they should be able to travel without changing the method of paying a fare.

Fourteen thousand riders have signed on to the Presto card since it came out. Over the summer it was rolled out on the Lakeshore West GO line, Oakville Transit, Burlington Transit and at nine TTC stations. This fall it's going to go live on the Milton and Georgetown GO lines. By March 2011, it will be fully rolled out on all seven GO Transit lines, including buses, and eight municipal transit systems in the GTA.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you for the response, Minister. I know that many of my constituents are pleased to see these steps taken to integrate different transit systems in the entire GTA, and it makes their daily commute easier.

I understand, however, that there's been some discussion as to whether the Presto system uses the most advanced technology. Over the summer, I and others in my community read stories in the newspaper that places like New York City, for example, are testing technology that allows riders to tap on to public transit using their own credit cards.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you tell us if and when transit riders in the GTA can expect to have the same convenience?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm happy to talk about the evolving technology, because that's what it is. Technology is developing very quickly. The Presto system is the first step in bringing that seamless ridership, that seamless convenience of smart cards, to the GTA—the GTHA, in fact. We're developing a complex system of linking these regions together. As I said, 14,000 riders have already signed on to Presto.

We've also begun to develop the next generation of Presto technology, and that's what the member from Oakville is talking about. What will happen is, Presto will be able to accept different types of payments, such as contactless credit cards, debit cards and cellphones.

We know that jurisdictions in other parts of the world are also looking at how to bring open payment to their systems, but it's important to note that those systems are also not yet developed. We'll be working with Presto to go to that next generation of technology.

PHOTO CARDS

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Transportation: The Photo Card Act, as you know, was passed in November 2008. One of its objectives was to give Ontarians who don't drive access to a government-issued photo card. People with disabilities were especially welcoming of that initiative.

My question to the minister: Two years after that legislation was passed, that card is still not available. Can the minister tell us why?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very pleased that the member opposite has asked this question because it gives

me an opportunity to talk about what we are going to be doing, going forward. I recognize that the legislation has been passed. One of the first meetings that I took as the Minister of Transportation was from some folks from the CNIB who brought this issue to me. I want the member opposite to know that we are working.

It's very important to note that there are a number of options possible. There are some very complex smart cards that would have more than just basic ID available on the card. Then there's the option that's available in other jurisdictions, where it's simply a driver's licence for non-drivers that has that basic ID on it.

We're looking at how we might move forward. I know it's very, very important to people with disabilities. It's also important to the senior population. When people stop driving, they need that ID card. I hope we'll be able to bring an announcement forward soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Perhaps the minister could infuse some urgency into this matter; it's been two years.

Here's what my constituent Kathryn wrote: "When I phoned the Ontario government information line, they had no information about the card at all and had not heard that it was going to be available, so this doesn't leave me feeling very hopeful."

What can the minister tell us that will give Kathryn some hope that this card will in fact be made available? Or is this another Liberal, McGuinty backtrack?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, I have been meeting with the folks from the CNIB in particular. There's a coalition of groups who are interested in this card, and they are advising us. We want to do it right. If we were to rush into something and create a card that didn't work, that had privacy concerns, that cost more than it should have, then we would be open to attacks from the opposite side.

What we want to do is make sure that we provide an option for people who are not eligible to get a driver's licence. We are working on that, and I look forward to giving the member opposite and, more importantly, the people of Ontario news on that in the near future.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. I've heard from thousands of Ontarians worried about making ends meet. One of the saddest stories comes from Windsor, where Don Lefaive writes this: "The HST added to my hydro bill and the upcoming smart meter will force me to make decisions that I never would have dreamed I would have to make in my 78 years ... I am a retired auto worker and suffer with chronic breathing difficulties which forces me to run my electric oxygen pump 24/7 ... We COPD patients cannot regulate our times of breathing and will be forced to pay the high (smart meter) rates due to our conditions. Where will we find the money?"

Mr. Lefaive asks a good question. Can the minister tell him where he will find the money?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Let me just say I appreciate hearing from someone in Windsor who might be concerned about hydro bills and bills in general because we are very concerned about our seniors. This is exactly why the Minister of Finance attended, in Windsor, the launch of both the electricity and the property tax credit. This is exactly the kind of initiative that is meant to help our seniors make ends meet.

We recognize that over time prices do go up. We also recognize what we've had to do with the electricity sector in building new energy, something that, frankly, had been avoided for over two decades in Ontario. But we have made a number of initiatives available for families who need help.

Let me remind both the residents in Windsor, my own hometown, and people across Ontario to watch the record very closely in terms of what the other parties have done with every initiative that we have brought forward to help Ontario families. They—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Lefaive isn't alone. Many other Windsorites are hurting. Bozena Wojnarowicz writes this: "I lost my job. I am 54 years old ... So far, no prospects in Windsor. The HST is one more hole in my wallet. Now we're reduced to one step closer to thrift shops, food banks or soup kitchens."

John Marcotte adds: "It seems every time we do something to reduce our hydro consumption ... the hydro rate doubles ... Rate increases, the HST, guaranteed profits for utilities, time-of-use rates will make our bill go up so high that we will probably end up losing our home."

Will this minister continue to ignore people like Mr. Lefaive, Ms. Wojnarowicz and Mr. Marcotte, or will she support giving them a real break by taking the HST off of hydro?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I want to be certain that every member of the House understands the number of initiatives that this government has brought forth to help Ontario families with their everyday costs. The reality has been that the opposition parties, including the NDP, have opposed every one of these initiatives.

In my hometown was one of the greatest take-ups for the Second Career program for exactly an individual that you might mention in this House, who, at mid-career, needs to change careers because jobs were disappearing during the height of the crisis. That Second Career program was so successful, especially for hard-hit cities like Windsor. The NDP opposed these very initiatives meant to help people.

1130

At the same breath, when we wanted to help families at low income, when we introduced the family child tax credit, the NDP opposed these initiatives that today are giving those families \$1,100 of assistance every month. Let's be clear: We are here to help Ontario families—

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, one of the biggest consumer complaints I get at my office has to do with energy retailers, particularly the sometimes shady practices applied by their salespeople to peddle expensive energy contracts to consumers that can be next to impossible to get out of. Common complaints include excessive consultation fees, not being made fully aware of the whole cost and terms of the contract, and not clearly knowing what they can really expect to pay compared to choosing service from their local distribution company.

Minister, can you tell me, my constituents and the people of Ontario what you are doing to protect the vulnerable customers who are paying a big price for those retailers?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is one member who has constantly stood up for the vulnerable in his community and, indeed, for vulnerable consumers. I want to thank him for his advocacy on this.

Yes, indeed, assistance is on the way, but we've got to think back: When the market originally opened to energy retailers in 2002, the Tory government failed to put in place measures to protect the public from potential abuse from some members of the retailer industry. This past spring, the Legislature passed the Energy Consumer Protection Act, and just last week regulations were announced that are going to address many of the concerns the Ontario Energy Board hears from consumers when it comes to this industry.

Beginning January 1, energy retailers will be required to disclose exactly how the contract price they're offering compares to the price offered by the local utility. Consumers will be able to cancel their contracts without financial penalty in many circumstances, and in other circumstances cancellation fees will be capped and lowered.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: There is no question that these regulations will have a positive impact on the way energy is being delivered across our province.

My supplementary is also for the Minister of Energy. Minister, since our government announced its intention to put in place regulations to better protect Ontario families from unscrupulous energy retailers, I have heard many positive comments from constituents in my riding. That said, I have also heard from several constituents on a matter pertaining to one of the new regulations. As of January 1, 2011, suite meters will be mandatory in all newly constructed units in the province of Ontario.

With all the fearmongering going on in this House, many people are confused about how this smart meter will impact their lives and the cost of energy. Can the minister tell me how we can protect our consumers and our customers?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a second. I'm going to give you 10 seconds to bring that into how it related to the first question, and—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We are talking about consumer protections, and as you know, Mr. Speaker, when the retailers come and sell to people about many different costs, those smart meters will help protect the consumer. That's why I'm asking the Minister of Energy to tell us what's going on—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm referring this to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to thank the member for the question and thank the member for his incredible dedication to promoting a greener Ontario. This is what our government is all about: It's about committing to building a stronger, greener economy; protecting the environment; protecting the consumer. Suite meters are one tool towards doing that.

It is important to note that while suite meters will be mandatory in all newly constructed units, in existing units landlords will have the option of installing them and existing tenants will always have the option of saying either yes or no. Resident tenants who decide to take part in the suite metering program will see reductions in their monthly rents.

All this aside, suite meters are an important tool, and I encourage tenants and landlords to work together to help Ontario reduce its energy use.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Acting Premier. This provincial government's Second Career program is rife with problems. Recently in this House, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities lauded the program's success based on the number of people using it. I noticed that the minister didn't comment on how many people actually get a job out of it.

My constituent Mike Seeley, a father of four, remains in exactly the same financial situation as he was when he qualified for the Second Career program. Will the Acting Premier explain to him why upon entering the second year of his paralegal program, his living allowance is cut off?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: We appreciate the question about one of the most historic programs that a government has ever brought in in response to a serious world recession, which affected Ontario, frankly, more than any province in Canada. In particular, in areas in Ontario where manufacturing jobs were lost, those really were—people working in these sectors were particularly hard hit. That \$355 million is a historic amount to pour into a brand new program called Second Career.

To this particular case, we're happy to look at this particular individual. We wouldn't have that kind of data here to respond to that. But overall, these are individuals who have to make a hard choice mid-career, in their 40s or 50 years old, where they've already gone to school, they already have 20 years in one particular location with an employer. It is a monumental decision and our government stepped forward to help these folks with the

kinds of expenses that ordinarily, younger students wouldn't have to incur. It was an important program—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: With that response, I can understand why there was reference made to her diminished intellect earlier.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Withdraw the comment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Whether it's HST, microFIT or eco taxes, this government fails time after time to consider the real people—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Please continue.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Whether it's HST, microFIT or eco taxes, this government fails time after time to consider the real people they affect with their decisions. My office has received numerous complaints from people in this program. They say that your ministry qualified them for financial assistance at the start of the program only to have that assistance yanked out from underneath them partway through their studies.

Perhaps the Acting Premier can answer a general question: Why are you promising down-and-out workers a second chance and then stealing their financial assistance from them?

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: We're just getting a real sense about how this next campaign is going to go, and if you think that's going to put us off, you've got another thing coming, because we'll be ready. We will be ready for you, my friend.

The reality is, I'll be heading down to that particular member's riding and I will say, "Here's an individual who opposed the program to give these folks a second chance at a career." They opposed the opportunity to retrain workers who knew they wouldn't be able to get a job back in that same sector; that they needed to develop new skills—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm a little disappointed as to the tone within the Legislature today. Yes, I too, like everyone else, recognize that there is an election taking place in a year. But at the same time, this is a place where one can ask questions and answer questions. It is a place for debating. The debate is healthy and it's a part of our democratic process.

Bringing things down to a personal level—personal attacks on one another—is not helpful for any of us and, quite honestly, brings down the level of all of the good things that this chamber is supposed to do.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I don't need the member from Durham commenting to me. I can read the newspaper clippings every day. I would appreciate it, though, when the Speaker is speaking, if you would listen to what the Speaker has to say.

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. Hamilton's community care access centre is facing \$12 million in cuts. These cuts will effectively grind the home care and long-term-care systems to a halt and force our hospitals into a tailspin. These cuts mean that seniors will be forced to take up hospital beds, to go without adequate bathing services or stay indefinitely on home care waiting lists. Vulnerable seniors and their families are begging—begging—you to address the funding shortfall before a disaster occurs.

Does this government have a thought, let alone a plan, for preventing this catastrophe?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I hate to return to the old theme, but the reality is that every step we have taken to reinvest in health care—and especially health care in Hamilton, which is a beacon, frankly, for health care in the world, with terrific facilities there; let's say that first—all of these measures of significant investment were opposed by the members of the NDP. That's pretty hard to believe, considering that Hamilton, a significant part of Ontario, like the rest of Ontario, when we began in 2003, was suffering the same ills of hospital cutbacks, nurses being fired, CCAC services and home care not being provided. When we poured hundreds of millions of dollars into these sectors, every one of those measures was opposed by the NDP.

When it comes time, we will be back to the people of Hamilton, as the good representatives from Hamilton are today, to tell them that those great institutions offering services to their community can do so because of the infusion of funding—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, we're on the spin cycle, I see.

The minister-announced funding is less than half of what is needed now and less than a quarter of the projected funds needed. The fact is it's not keeping pace with our seniors' needs in Hamilton. Ensuring a robust system is essential to the well-being of our seniors and the entire health system, yet the government is prepared to stand back as the CCAC services in Hamilton are gutted.

Will this government stop the shell game and actually address the root problem and funding shortfalls in Hamilton now?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important to note that since 2003 there has been a huge increase, not just in money but in services being delivered in the Hamilton area and through home care services through CCACs.

Since 2003, over 182,000 more clients are being served in this area. It's important to note that 600,000 of them today are receiving services. This is a phenomenal number, far more than was ever the case.

It's true that we have to continually improve to respond to the needs in that community. That is why, since 2003, there has been a 73% increase in funding for that CCAC—again, something the NDP have opposed.

It's hard to receive a question about an issue when it's the very party that opposed—

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

BIRTH OF MEMBER'S CHILD

Hon. Gerry Phillips: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is a point of order I think all members might agree on, and that's to congratulate our fellow colleague John Milloy and his wife, Sara, on the birth of a son over the weekend. That's a happy occasion.

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

The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to rise to recognize and celebrate with the MS Society, who are here at Queen's Park today. It's my privilege to welcome—and I did, earlier today—Mike Roche, who's from the Durham region group for MS; John Daley, who's a member at large; Jim Marsh, who was unable to attend, but is a volunteer who works very hard; and William Krueger, who's the coordinator for the Bowmanville MS Walk.

Every day, three or more people are diagnosed with MS in Canada, but thanks to the work of the MS Society, we will find a cure. But finding a cure costs money. I encourage all members to support their local MS chapter.

I'd like to congratulate Katharine Mcmurdo, who raised \$5,200 in the Bowmanville walk, as well as Ben Schell, who raised over \$4,500 from the walk in Uxbridge. Katharine and Ben were two of the top 100 fundraisers in Ontario this year.

Congratulations to all who have shown outstanding community spirit as individuals, families and businesses work together to support MS research.

Remember: Every step taken and every dollar raised brings us closer to a cure.

On a personal note, on Sunday I attended the Blackstock Recreational Centre, where I was very impressed. There was hardly room to breathe in the room, it was so closely packed. The event was to raise funds for Margo Larmer and her husband, Craig, to make a trip to Costa Rica. This family, the Larmer family, is a highly respected agricultural family. Their father, Glen, and Margo's father, Gary MacGregor, came all the way from Sarnia to

help mark this very special occasion. I wish them well on their trip to Costa Rica.

The hope is that the liberation therapy from Dr. Zamboni will find part of a cure for MS. I'm sure everyone in this House will join with me in celebrating the work that the MS Society has done to make us aware of a disease that affects individuals and all those people around them.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Phil McNeely: Our government believes in preserving our environment while making positive choices for Ontario's economy, and so we are making investments that will benefit Ontarians for generations to come. Our commitment to exploring and investing in green energy is creating 50,000 jobs in this province that will help Ontario families.

We are working hard to attract new investment in renewable energy to create well-paying green jobs, to make Ontario a world leader in clean energy, and all the while creating a culture of conservation in this province. Our feed-in tariff program will not only provide 20,000 jobs and create 2,500 megawatts of power, but it also creates a stable investment climate by providing guaranteed incentives to wind, water, solar, biomass and biogas developers.

Our plan is producing tangible results in Ontario communities. In Guelph, 500 jobs will come from the Canadian Solar manufacturing facility; 900 direct and indirect jobs will come from Siemens turbine blade manufacturing plant; in Oakville, we'll see 200 jobs at the new Solar Semiconductor manufacturing facility; 800 jobs are coming from the Lower Mattagami hydroelectric project; and in Niagara region, the Niagara tunnel hydroelectric project is providing 230 jobs.

It is disappointing that the opposition have taken a position against investments that will create jobs and bring many new manufacturing facilities to Ontario. By investing in clean energy—

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

NATIONAL FOSTER FAMILY WEEK

Ms. Sylvia Jones: On behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus, I rise to recognize this week as National Foster Family Week. I'd like to acknowledge the tremendous commitment that foster families make to vulnerable children in Ontario.

Children's aid societies have done an excellent job in acknowledging the important and sometimes difficult job that foster families have. Just this past week, the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society recognized Linda Barkey as foster parent of the year. Throughout Linda's 11 years as a foster parent, she has taken many children into her home and made their health and development a priority.

The children's aid society of Algoma, Algoma Family Services, Community Living Algoma and Nog-da-win-

da-min Family and Community Services recognized foster family week by hosting an art exhibit. This exhibit featured the artistic talent of local foster children with the theme: “Why my foster family is important to me.” These are just a couple of examples of how foster families are being acknowledged across the province.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the Foster Parents Society of Ontario, who provide training and support for over 8,000 foster families.

We must remember that foster families dedicate their lives to allow vulnerable children in Ontario to live in a safe, healthy and caring home. Our communities have been strengthened because of these remarkable citizens. I thank and applaud them for their efforts.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have in my hand a memo dated October 4, 2010, from the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant community care access centre to patient care vice-presidents at the hospitals within that huge LHIN jurisdiction, advising them that as of October 18, 2010—today—“it will be necessary to wait-list new CCAC clients with care plans requiring a high level of service. These are individuals who are eligible for discharge from hospital and require greater than 60 hours of personal support services per month.” It’s the estimate of this CCAC that will amount to 150 clients a month.

You understand what this means is that people who are treated, recovering, eligible to go home, who require not 60 hours a week but 60 hours a month—less than 15 hours a week; approximately two hours a day of support—are going to be kept in hospital rooms at an expense far beyond what it will take to assist these people to the tune of around two hours a day in their own home. This is nuts. It’s nuts and it’s cruel, because these people in the hospital are going to become re-infected. They’re going to become demoralized. They’re going to fail as the hospitals are understaffed and don’t have people to assist them with mobility, in moving about and about and around, with bathing and other fundamental daily needs that add to dignity.

This government, the Liberal McGuintys, is forcing sick people to stay in expensive hospitals rather than returning to their own homes at the cost of a mere two hours a day of CCAC care—

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

EVENTS IN OTTAWA CENTRE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to take this opportunity to celebrate the beautiful new architecture and public art that has been displayed in my riding of Ottawa Centre as of last week.

Last week, we had the great opportunity of unveiling the Chinatown gateway on Somerset Street in the great riding of Ottawa Centre. This is a beautiful royal arch which has been built, perhaps for the last time, outside China. We had collaboration from the federal govern-

ment, from the provincial government, from the local municipality of Ottawa and from the Chinese government for this beautiful arch.

1310

I want to thank the Chinatown gateway project committee—Peter Yeung, Larry Lee and many other members like Katie Ng—for making this project happen, and also the Somerset Street Chinatown BIA—Grace Xin was a huge proponent—and the Dalhousie Community Association. I want to mention Eric Darwin for his contribution.

Also what we have seen in Ottawa Centre is beautiful public art being displayed on Preston Street. These are called Postcards from the Piazzas. It’s by local artist c.j. fleury and it’s installed along Preston Street. Big congratulations to Lori Mellor, who’s the executive director of the Preston Street BIA, for that contribution.

Also, the Wellington Marbles have been installed on Wellington Street West in Ottawa Centre by artists Marcus Kucey-Jones and Ryan Lotecki. Again, congratulations to Pat O’Brien of the Hintonburg Community Association, Jason Thomson of the Wellington Village Community Association and the Wellington West BIA as well, through Annie Hillis.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mrs. Julia Munro: On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, I’m pleased to recognize this week as Small Business Week across Canada. It is a time when we honour small businesses and their vital contributions to the economy of Canada and Ontario.

The CFIB reports that small businesses with less than 50 staff represent almost 98% of businesses and employ 31% of all workers in Canada. Small businesses also represent more than 30% of Canada’s exports—of prime importance to a trading nation such as ours.

Small business owners work long hours to ensure their companies succeed, yet they receive little in the way of support from the Ontario government. The priorities of this government when it comes to business are to tax and to regulate. Ontario businesses are drowning in red tape, and the Ontario government has made minimal efforts to cut red tape. Contrast this with the Liberal government of British Columbia, which has eliminated more than 40% of regulations in its time in office.

So let’s honour our small businesses and their contributions this week, but understand that Ontario’s government has to start seeing itself as a friend and helper of small business. Business leaders can succeed; they just need the government to stop putting roadblocks in their way.

McKELLAR PLACE

Mr. Bill Mauro: Last week, I was part of another terrific announcement in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Our government provided \$1.8 million of financial assistance towards a \$10-million construction

project that will renovate the old McKellar hospital building.

The hospital building, owned by Habib Enterprises, has been converted into the new McKellar Place: 100 units for seniors' retirement living as well as 35,000 square feet of office space. When fully occupied, this building will create 35 new full-time jobs, and that's in addition to the construction jobs that were associated with the project.

It's always exciting when we see the private sector investing in Thunder Bay. We're very pleased to partner with Mr. Habib, owner and president of Habib Enterprises, who stepped up and made this project happen. With the revitalization of this site and the soon-to-begin new consolidated courthouse, the downtown south core is receiving a significant shot in the arm.

As I mentioned, once occupied, this project will create 35 new full-time jobs. That's in addition to the 340 men and women who recently were called back to the Terrace Bay mill, the 200 or so back to work at the Lac des Iles mine and another 200 to 400 soon to be hired at the local Bombardier plant, in addition to the hundreds already brought back. The list goes on.

The world is slowly emerging from the greatest recession since the Great Depression. There's more work to be done, but we are seeing important signs of progress. I want to thank Mr. Habib for his faith in Thunder Bay and its economic future, for helping to preserve part of our architectural heritage and for partnering with our government on this project.

SMART METERS

Mr. Rick Johnson: Our government is working hard to protect our environment by upgrading our energy system and introducing initiatives for producing clean energy while fostering a culture of conservation. The opposition, on the other hand, were content to let the old, broken energy system fall into disrepair because they did not want to make the investments that would have helped bring our system up to date.

While we are committed to bringing the energy system into the 21st century, the proposals put forward by the opposition leader would drag our province backwards. Forcing local distribution companies to provide two parallel infrastructures—one, time-of-use, and the second, optional traditional meter—would result in substantial cost increases. The Leader of the Opposition says he wants our energy system to be more like Florida's. Well, it turns out the flat price per kilowatt hour in Florida is 12.6 cents, while Ontario's highest time-of-use rate is 9.9 cents. That's almost one third higher. Our lowest rate is 5.3 cents between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.

According to a recent Toronto Star article, the spokesman for the Florida distribution company said that most of the customers who choose time-of-use over the flat rate save 10% to 15% annually and are saving energy 87% of the time.

The Leader of the Opposition suggests that Ontario cannot afford the investment that we've been making to

update and renew our energy system. However, it is clear that what is unaffordable for Ontarians is the energy system proposed by the opposition.

JEAN LUMB

Mr. Reza Moridi: It was my honour to have been invited to attend the annual Jean Lumb Foundation Awards.

I was truly amazed to learn about Jean Bessie Lumb, who was a pioneer in so many ways: as the first Chinese-Canadian woman restaurateur, chair of the Save Chinatown Campaign, board member of Mount Sinai Hospital and recipient of the Order of Canada. Over her many years of dedication and service to the Chinese-Canadian community, Jean Lumb received many awards, far too many to list here today. That's quite an accomplishment.

Her impact on her community continues today with the establishment of the Jean Lumb Foundation. This not-for-profit organization was established to advance education by providing scholarships to high school students of Chinese heritage. Over the past 13 years, many accomplished students have received scholarships from her foundation. In order to receive a Jean Lumb Foundation scholarship, a student must have excelled in four areas: academics, athletics, the arts and community services.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board of directors of the Jean Lumb Foundation, Arlene Chan, Stephen Wong and Greg K. W. Wong, for their dedication to continuing the legacy of Jean Lumb.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND PERSONS DAY

MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES FEMMES ET JOURNÉE DE L'AFFAIRE « PERSONNE »

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I rise to acknowledge October as Women's History Month in Ontario.

Je prends la parole pour souligner qu'octobre est le Mois de l'histoire des femmes en Ontario. Nous célébrons, ce mois-ci, les contributions exceptionnelles des femmes dans tous les domaines de leur vie au sein de la société. Et nous célébrons aujourd'hui, le 18 octobre, la Journée de l'affaire « personne », qui représente un tournant d'une importance fondamentale dans l'histoire canadienne pour toutes les femmes du Canada.

This month, we celebrate the extraordinary contributions of women in all areas of their life and society, and on this day, October 18, we celebrate Persons Day, which represents a critically important milestone in Canadian history for all women in Canada.

Thanks to the determination and courage of five women—Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards,

Louise McKinney, Irene Parlbay and Nellie McClung—on October 18, 1929, women in Canada were declared persons under the law. This resounding victory for equality allowed women to participate fully in politics and affairs of state.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the landmark report *The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada*. This report laid the groundwork for fundamental changes in women's rights, including maternity leave options and the abolishment of gender-based minimum wage. It promoted "equality in practice as well as in principle." And it set out a vision for being a woman in Canada, stating, "Girls and women must be encouraged to seek self-fulfillment as human beings rather than merely as females. Each female should be encouraged to discover her own particular gifts, talents, drives, and to cultivate them for self-expression and for contribution to society."

Clearly, women have made progress since 1929, but we still have a long way to go. Recent media attention to these issues highlights the challenge before us. According to a recent report in the *Globe and Mail*, within Canada's top 500 private and public sector companies, only 17% of corporate officers and 13% of corporate directors are women. Further, women represent only 37% of mid-level managers, yet women represent nearly half of the workforce.

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According to the 2006 census, women working full-time, year-round in Ontario earned 71% of what men employed full-time, year-round earned that year.

Le Mois de l'histoire des femmes nous rappelle qu'il faut continuer de défier le statu quo, pour que nous puissions préparer le terrain pour les femmes aujourd'hui et pour les femmes de demain. Nous devons continuer à battre le rappel pour l'égalité et nous devons continuer à bâtir un avenir meilleur pour les femmes dans notre province.

During Women's History Month, we are reminded that we must continue to challenge the status quo so that we can clear the path for women today and the women of tomorrow. We must continue to lead the march toward equality. We must continue to build a better future for women in our province.

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY WEEK

SEMAINE NATIONALE DE LA SÉCURITÉ SCOLAIRE

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I rise in the House today to mark the beginning of National School Safety Week. There are nearly two million students in Ontario's 4,900 publicly funded schools, and each of them deserves a safe and positive learning environment. In fact, such an environment is essential to their success.

À vrai dire, un tel environnement est essentiel à leur réussite. Peu de choses sont plus importantes que la santé, la sécurité et le bien-être de nos jeunes.

Students must feel safe and welcome at school so they can focus on learning. School staff must also feel safe and welcome so they can focus on supporting student achievement. In fact, everyone—staff, students, parents and the community—should feel safe, welcome and respected in Ontario's schools.

National School Safety Week is an opportunity to raise awareness about cyberbullying, harassment and other school safety issues. We must work together to keep schools positive and safe places to learn.

That is why we encourage students, teachers, parents and principals to use this week as a forum for having a serious discussion about safety in our schools. An open and honest dialogue is the first step toward prevention and awareness.

Since 2004, we have invested over \$230 million into safe schools initiatives that support a positive school climate. We created a safe schools action team and responded to their recommendations. From this year, all boards are expected to have a policy on equity and inclusiveness and a guideline on religious accommodation to ensure all members of the school community are welcomed and respected.

Working with our partners at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, we developed software that teaches safe Internet practices and distributed that information to our schools.

We established strong partnerships with organizations such as the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, Kids Help Phone, and Egale Canada.

The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, which came into effect on February 1 of this year, requires all board employees to report serious student incidents to the principal, and it requires principals to contact parents of all victims. It also requires school staff who are directly involved with students to respond to inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour.

Our safe schools strategy includes strong consequences for students who act inappropriately, but also programs for those students to earn their way back into the classroom and complete their education. Also, in November we will recognize Bullying Awareness Week. But investments, partnerships, policies and legislation do not have the power of an honest conversation. Whether it is a parent with their child, students speaking with other students, a student with their teacher, or a teacher with their principal, I strongly encourage all members of the education community to use National School Safety Week as a platform for an honest exchange about anything that affects safety in our schools.

National School Safety Week may only last seven days, but promoting a safe and supportive learning environment should continue throughout the year. National School Safety Week provides us with an important opportunity to promote safe schools as an essential element to student success.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the education community for their very hard work and their dedication to making our schools safe places to be.

WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Hon. John Wilkinson: Today is the start of Waste Reduction week. Around the world, and here in Ontario, we create a lot of waste. Each of us in this province is responsible for about a tonne of waste each and every year.

Now we all know about the three Rs—reduce, reuse and recycle—but how often do we stop and think about what that really means, particularly when it comes to the first and most important principle: reducing the amount of waste we generate in the first place?

Here, at the beginning of the 21st century, we need to ask ourselves: How do we build a more sustainable way of life in this province? How do we reduce the impact we are having on this earth and make sure we don't leave a mess for our kids and grandkids to deal with?

We have to stop thinking that we can easily dispose of things we no longer need or want without considering the consequences, without thinking about how our actions will ultimately affect our environment—the water we drink, the air we breathe and the land we grow our food upon. Instead, we need to focus on what we can do to reduce our waste, reuse what we can and recycle what is left over. That means truly embracing the concept of sustainability. It means supporting a way of life that is restorative and healthy.

When we look at how to build sustainability into our actions, we can ensure the demands placed upon our environment can be met without reducing the capacity of our planet to provide for future generations. That is just fair. We know people in Ontario want to do the right thing. They want to do the fair thing. So we are helping people to do their part; for example, through the blue box program. This program plan surpassed its 60% overall diversion target in 2006, two years ahead of the required date. Almost one million tonnes of waste is diverted through the blue box program each and every year.

We're also committed to increasing waste diversion by introducing more programs for household hazardous waste like paints and solvents. Ontarians can now divert 44 different electronic items like MP3 players, cameras, phones, computers and radios. We also introduced a program to divert and recycle the nine million used tires we generate each year in this province. Last year we recycled some 91,000 tonnes of tires, creating new products and, in the process, creating green jobs, all reducing the carbon footprint upon our Mother Earth.

We want to provide Ontarians with better information on how to reduce waste. Some of these actions are simple things such as composting as much as we can, buying products we will use up entirely, packing waste-free lunches and carrying our own refillable water bottles and coffee mugs.

I just have come back from St. Michael Catholic School, on The Esplanade, an elementary school here in downtown Toronto. They are celebrating Waste Reduction Week by taking the littlest lunch challenge, where the children are learning how to bring a lunch where there is no waste. And I found quite interesting—

I'm sure the other members would—that if children throw out leftover food and materials that could have been recycled, that actually adds up to 66 pounds—30 kilograms. So every year our children, if they don't learn this new lesson, are throwing out the equivalent of the weight of a grade 2. It didn't take too long for the grade 5s I met with today at the home of the Angels to understand there is a part that they can play to make sure we are reducing the waste that we generate.

We can also use our power as consumers to let producers and manufacturers know that we want fewer hazardous toxic materials, less packaging and more recyclable materials.

We're all committed to waste diversion and reduction here in this province. So, here at the beginning of Waste Reduction Week, let's all take the time to do more at home, at work, at school and at our businesses, including this very place where we work. Working together, we can all make a difference and make our province cleaner and healthier for our kids and our grandkids to enjoy.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND PERSONS DAY

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased to take this opportunity to recognize the leadership, accomplishments and contributions of women past and present who have made a difference in our communities. We congratulate and thank these women who opened doors for all those who followed and who serve as role models for women and girls throughout this province and country.

The theme of this year's Women's History Month is Canadian Women in Business. As women continue to make up a growing majority of university graduates, they are staking out a place for themselves in the world of business; 37% of mid-level managers in Canada's top 500 private and public sector companies are now women.

There is, however, still room for women to make even further progress in business and to achieve greater representation at the senior levels of power. Today, only 17% of corporate officers and 13% of directors at Canada's top 500 companies are women. The laudable successes of women such as Annette Verschuren, president of Home Depot Canada, or Sheelagh Whittaker, director at Imperial Oil and Standard Life, seem to be the exception rather than the rule. This must change.

This month, I encourage Ontarians to reflect on the important contributions of women and to consider the progress that still needs to be made.

WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Mr. Toby Barrett: Welcome again to Waste Reduction Week or, as it's known on this side of the House, Failed Expectations Week. Nowhere has there been so much boasted, so much promised and so little achieved.

Here's the report card: Mr. McGuinty promised 60% waste diversion by 2008—failure. You divert only 22%, and that's two years after your original target date.

Taxpayers paid for Ontario Electronic Stewardship to collect 42,000 tonnes of toxin-laced equipment. You failed again. Taxpayers paid the full fare while the program recycled only a third of its promise.

Government promised a new waste diversion act by the end of the spring session—nothing.

The government's eco fee boondoggle has done irreparable damage to words like “eco” and “sustainability.” It's really unfortunate for those who consider ourselves conservationists and environmentalists.

Ontario needs action, not words. We need action on waste reduction, and this government, regrettably, has failed to deliver.

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY WEEK

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The Canada Safety Council has designated the week of October 17-23 as National School Safety Week. The focus of this year's week is bullying. We must, in our schools, work to deter and prevent it.

Unfortunately, our students do not all feel safe in our schools today. Bullying has long been an issue of great concern to me and our caucus. Last February, I introduced a motion in the House which was unanimously passed to officially and permanently establish the third week of November as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. My motion did state that cyberbullying is never acceptable.

Schoolyard bullying used to conclude at the end of the school day. Now, with the advent and ever-increasing prevalence of online and social media, it has the means to continue unremittingly throughout the 24 hours of any day. Bullies are now capable of always relentlessly tormenting their victims around the clock.

Cyberbullying allows students, many of whom may not be inclined to bully in person, the ability to do so behind the veil of a computer and even anonymity.

This is an extremely serious issue. We know that there are situations now where students actually end up committing suicide because they cannot escape from the Internet, so cyberbullying is driving them to those desperate measures.

It is extremely important that we in the province of Ontario equip our teachers and educate our parents and our students in order that they can respond and deal with cyberbullying.

There is much more that we need to do. National School Safety Week is a time for us to reflect on the status of the measures that have been introduced and to do even more to eliminate and deter bullying. We can and we must protect our children and make our schools safer.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND PERSONS DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm responding regarding Women's History Month and Persons Day.

I always start out, speaking to women's groups, by telling them that I'm the first woman in my family to be considered a human person under law. My mother wasn't. My grandmother wasn't. Then they ask, “Where was your mother born and where was your grandmother born?” and I say, “Right here in Canada.” That's a sad legacy that was luckily overturned by the work of some incredible women in our past, but we can't stop there.

Certainly, we need to do more in this House. I have before the House a motion for an all-women's committee, non-partisan, that will look at issues of things like the fact that women make 71 cents on every dollar that men make; the fact we have no daycare in this province; that only one in 10 children have a space and that it costs over \$1,000 a month, whereas our neighbours, Manitoba and Quebec, on either side have accessible and affordable daycare.

We need to look, all parties together, as an all-women's all-party committee, at issues like violence against women—one in four women will be attacked in their lifetime—and yet, the absolute partisan myopia of the McGuinty government prevents that even from happening. Can you imagine? They will not even allow an all-party, all-women committee to look at issues that have to do with women. Now, how progressive is that?

Sadly, women are the worse for it. Sadly, women will suffer: yet another generation without adequate daycare, without making the same money as men and being violated, unless this government does something rather than just talk about it.

WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to address the matter of Waste Reduction Week, waste diversion week and the bungling of this government with regard to eco fees.

I'll tell you that the performance of the government in putting forward a program that they had not properly analyzed, that they should have understood would simply put the cost of waste on the backs of consumers instead of putting it on the backs of the producers, damaged the whole concept of waste diversion and extended producer responsibility. Today, the minister said he was proud to have cancelled the program. He didn't mention that, in fact, it was his government, Premier McGuinty, who brought that program in in the first place.

The electronic waste reduction program is not doing what people in this province need to have done. According to Jo-Anne St. Godard, executive director of the Recycling Council of Ontario, Ontario has a high concentration of businesses and large institutions but its recycling efforts are aimed at the residential sector. Ms. St. Godard says that huge volumes of toxic e-waste that

isn't collected through government-set-up systems end up in local landfills.

The minister was correct in saying that we have to think about our children and future generations. I say to the Premier that he has to start doing that today.

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Rosario Marchese: "National School Safety Week provides us with an important opportunity to promote safe schools as an essential element to student success." New Democrats agree with that. The goal of our schools is to provide places of learning and growth, to provide environments that nurture creativity and critical thinking and to teach skills and knowledge that equip these young people for future possibilities.

And while the government introduced Bill 157, which is somewhat good because it establishes a protocol for reporting incidents—while that is good, to report the incident is not enough, because it doesn't prevent the problems in the first place and it doesn't help the victim of bullying or any other form of intimidation.

We've got to be able to move quickly on the recommendations that have been made by Mr. Falconer many years ago. Mr. Falconer proposes many things that teachers and boards and principals need. They "should hire 20 ... full-time social workers," he argues, and I agree.

"The panel recommends that the 20 new full-time social workers dedicated to high-priority schools should not be assigned to more than two schools each," and I agree with that.

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The panel recommends that the 20 additional youth counsellors dedicated to high-priority schools should not be—I already said that, and we agree.

We also believe that the government should follow its own recommendations, where they say that every school authority must have contact lists of community agencies and organizations that have professional expertise and knowledge in the areas of gender-based violence, homophobia and sexual harassment. Teachers need that support and that expertise that comes from those organizations.

If only we listened to the report and if only we listened to Mr. Falconer, we would go a long way to solving some of these problems.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition, one of hundreds I've received from my constituents in Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care in its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature should call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to one of the new pages, Bridget.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm reading a petition here to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario's jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations, etc.;

"Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

"Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

"Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo's private member's bill, which calls for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman’s powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act.”

I couldn’t agree more and will affix my signature hereto and give this to Anika to be delivered.

MOBILE HOMES

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I present this petition on behalf of 240 of my constituents in the St. Clair Community Estates mobile home park in Chatham.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas section 165 of the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, permits a landlord to increase the monthly rent fee for a site in a mobile home park by \$50 per month each time a mobile home unit is sold and the mobile home purchaser enters into a tenancy agreement with the landlord;

“We, the undersigned, as concerned citizens of Ontario and owners of mobile homes in an Ontario mobile home park, urge the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act now to amend section 165 of RTA 2006 as follows, by adding,

“Further, where following the sale of a mobile home unit in a mobile home park, the subsequent tenancy agreement with the landlord, inclusive of the application of section 165 of RTA 2006 for the purchaser’s mobile home unit monthly site rent, any resulting monthly site rent increase shall be capped at an amount that does not exceed the average monthly site rent of all mobile home units in that mobile home park.”

I agree with this petition and I sign my name to it as well.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care” at the “Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

“Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

“Whereas the Premier and community safety minister ... refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution

tabled at Queen’s Park ... on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature ... call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services.”

I affix my name in support.

CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

M^{me} France Gélinas: This petition was given to me by Mrs. Rona Ramsey, the most energetic woman in my riding. Her daughter, Laurel Ireland, is in the west members’ gallery right now. It reads as follows:

“Funding and Approval for CCSVI Diagnosis and Treatment

“Whereas, even though health care institutions in Ontario have the equipment and expertise, those MS patients who have been diagnosed with blocked veins in their neck ... cannot receive the necessary treatment in Ontario;

“Whereas many of the MS patients with CCSVI, at great personal expense, have had to seek treatment in other countries such as India, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and”—most recently—“the US, the provincial government still has not authorized the procedure, which is angioplasty, an already approved procedure since the early 1980s;

“Whereas not all people diagnosed with MS” have been found to have CCSVI, “and not all people who have CCSVI will have been diagnosed with MS, CCSVI treatment should be authorized and treated on its own merits, regardless of any MS issues;

“Whereas, [despite] numerous testimonials of exceptional post-treatment improvements in the quality of life for patients, accompanied by detailed presentations by vascular surgeons to the Ontario government, the Ontario province still has not ... approved CCSVI treatment;

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

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health, must immediately approve and fund all diagnosing and treatment of CCSVI by qualified Ontario health institutions.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the clerks with page Jayden.

VETERANS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I’d like to introduce a number of petitions—there are over 1,400, in fact—given to me by

Mrs. Wilma McNeill, a tireless advocate from Sarnia-Lambton for veterans' rights.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"It has often been said: 'If we don't remember the past, we are doomed to repeat it.' With turmoil and fighting around the globe, what better time to remember the price our veterans paid for freedom than the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II?

"We must not forget our Canadian men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice in Afghanistan.

"I urge the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare November 11, Remembrance Day, a statutory holiday in Ontario; lest we forget."

I agree and submit my name as well and send them down with Kieran.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: I am pleased to present a number of petitions from around the province. The petitions are in support of Bill 100: paved shoulders on provincial highways.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

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"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

"That Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

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

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

"Whereas since October 2009, insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and provid-

ing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

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

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I have a petition in support of Bill 100, the paved shoulders on provincial highways.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

"That Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

I agree with this petition, and I'm going to pass it to Nicholas to take to the table.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

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

"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" or lock-out.

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

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Mr. John O'Toole: I present a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas there are up to 40,000 Ontarians living with Parkinson's disease, many of whom require speech-language therapy to retain essential verbal communications skills and life-saving swallowing skills; and

"Whereas speech-language therapy can make the difference between someone with Parkinson's retaining their ability to speak or not, and their ability to swallow or not, yet most Ontarians with Parkinson's are unable to

access these services in a timely fashion, many remaining on waiting lists for years while their speaking and swallowing capacity diminishes; and

“Whereas Ontarians with Parkinson’s who lose their ability to communicate experience unnecessary social isolation and economic loss due to their inability to participate as full members of their communities; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the community care access centres to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to people on the wait-lists, yet people are regularly advised to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment, but many people living with Parkinson’s are already experiencing economic hardship and cannot afford the cost of private therapy;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to intervene immediately to ensure that CCACs across Ontario develop a plan to ensure that all Ontarians living with Parkinson’s who need speech-language therapy and swallowing therapy receive the necessary treatment.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to one of the new pages, Jayden.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

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

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed these laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send to the clerks with page Nicholas.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question concerning community care access centres given by the Acting Premier. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOOD GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SAINTE GESTION PUBLIQUE

Mr. Bentley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir une saine gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I’d indicate that I’ll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Willowdale. If I could, if you’ll just allow me a two-second indulgence to thank the member from Willowdale, my parliamentary assistant, for the very hard work that he has been doing on this and so many other files.

The interesting point about the role of a parliamentary assistant is that they do so much of the important supportive work that enables a minister such as myself to stand up and address the second reading of a piece of legislation. They are able to coordinate stakeholder input. They are able to discern policy direction that should be taken. They’re able to identify issues that arise before they actually become crystallized in legislation. And then, of course, once a bill is actually introduced, they’re really charged with the carriage of the legislation during the debate, during the hearings process, whether that’s a public hearings process in Toronto or across the province, and the continued debate under third reading. It’s an extremely important role, and I just want to thank my parliamentary assistant for his work and all parliamentary assistants for the work that they do.

Applause.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Absolutely.

We’re here to debate the good government bill. It is not unusual that governments have good government bills. We are not the first one and this won’t be the last one ever introduced, but almost every year there is a good government bill. The purpose of a good government bill, among other things, is to bring together those legislative or enabling initiatives that by themselves are not substantive enough to form a piece of legislation—that’s first; second, that are necessary and important for the better functioning of either other acts or society in general; and third, that tend to be—today’s debate may prove the exception—less controversial than some pieces of legislation. So they tend to be that way. As I say, you never know and today may be one of the exceptions that proves the rule.

The members of this House will recall that last fall we brought forward a very hefty good government bill and there was much comment on its heft, its content. The fact of the matter is that those initiatives, whether multi-sectioned or just very specific, come forward from

recommendations made by many. I know some of my colleagues will speak to this in a little while.

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That piece of legislation last year garnered lots of discussion and lots of debate, but now it's out in force and it is being implemented and it is enabling, as I said, the better functioning and working of legislation that benefits all of the people of the province of Ontario.

What we had in the spring, of course, was the Open for Business legislation, which contained many of the sections that might otherwise have gone into a good government bill, because it really is important that Ontario, as a trading province, a trading jurisdiction, where so much of our wealth is generated through interaction with trading partners not just throughout Canada but throughout the world—it is essential that we have an economic foundation that supports job activity, job creation, wealth creation in the province of Ontario. That Open for Business legislation contained many different provisions, initiatives and directions supporting the work that we've done over a number of years to make sure that the legislation we had in place functioned as well as possible and, maybe even more substantially, that the economic activity of the province was able to proceed in these terribly difficult and challenging times as effectively as possible.

Directing my mind, then, to the specifics of this piece of good government legislation, there are a lot of different changes. There are about 70 amendments to legislation. I'm only going to touch on a few of them, and I suspect that my parliamentary assistant will be touching on a few others.

Interjection.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As my friend opposite indicated, yes, he will bat cleanup, it being the baseball season for playoffs, although I can tell you that my Leafs are doing extremely well. I've actually suggested that maybe we should hold the parade now just in case, with the great record that they've got so far.

There are 70 amendments to pieces of legislation, and, as I say, most of these won't be controversial. Most of them would never have come to the attention of members of the Legislature but for the detailed reading of the provisions of the good government piece of legislation that I know every member is conducting right now. They are necessary to enhance, enable or promote the good working of government, the good working of pieces of legislation.

Let me address the Justices of the Peace Act and the approach that we have taken to the appointment of justices of the peace. Now, as all members will know, justices of the peace, as judicial officials, are enormously important participants in our system of justice. They not only are involved in the criminal justice process, dealing, for example, with bail hearings, determinations of whether accused will be released from custody or not—and in that sense they make very important decisions determining the freedom or not, and under what conditions, of people who have been arrested and detained;

they are also involved in the very important function of the case and its movement through the justice system: whether it is going to be set down for trial, whether it's going to be set down for a preliminary hearing, taking the election as to the mode of trial. But beyond the criminal justice system, they are involved in the trial of matters under various provincial statutes, some of which contain relatively modest penalties, some of which contain very, very significant and serious penalties—potentially huge fines or imprisonment.

So a justice of the peace performs an extremely important role, and I want to thank, on behalf of the people of Ontario and this House, the justices of the peace for the very important work that they do—the not always easy work, not always popular work, but very important work that they do every single day.

Several years ago, my predecessor in this post, now Michael Bryant, then the member for St. Paul's—

Applause.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: —yes, absolutely—moved certain reforms to the approach that we take for appointing justices of the peace. It was not a standard approach up to that point in time, and it was not an approach which reflected the approach that this Legislature and the governments of Ontario, of all parties, have taken toward the appointment of judges. This House will recall that then-Attorney General Ian Scott fundamentally changed the approach to the appointment of judges—judicial officials—in this province by setting up an arm's-length process. That arm's-length process has continued. It continued through the then Liberal government of David Peterson, the New Democratic government which followed and the Progressive Conservative government which followed after that, and it continues to this day.

The reforms that my predecessor, Michael Bryant, brought into the justice of the peace appointment process very much standardized the approach and very much created significant, high standards for the appointment and very much created a process which was arm's length from the government. They were important reforms. They were far-reaching reforms, important because the appointments process for judicial officials should be seen, should be a transparent one and should be, as much as possible, an impartial one and an arm's-length one and a non-partisan one, and it is important that those who are appointed to such high office do have at least a certain standard of qualification that will give all confidence in the process.

Elevating the confidence of the people of the province of Ontario in our system of justice, which is the strongest in the world, notwithstanding its challenges, notwithstanding the issues that arise from day to day—we know that our system of justice is the strongest possible system of justice in the world and we know it for many reasons, but we know it for one reason: that people from all over the world come to Canada and Ontario because they know that whatever other reason they come here for, they know that their rights and freedoms will be protected and

respected in Ontario and in Canada in ways they might not be elsewhere.

When those previous justice of the peace reforms were introduced, they established minimum qualifications for the appointment of a justice of the peace, requiring, for example, either a university degree, comparable community college accreditation such as a diploma or its equivalent, life experience and at least 10 years of paid or volunteer work experience. It was important to establish these minimum qualifications.

Those reforms also established a new justices of the peace appointments advisory committee, or JPAAC, to make the appointment process more open and more transparent. That JPAAC has judicial officials on it—judges; justices of the peace; members of the community, both lawyers and non-lawyers—who are appointed. But that appointments process very much runs on its own, according to the statutory or regulatory requirements. I'm going to come back to that in just a moment.

Those previous reforms expanded the power of the Justices of the Peace Review Council to allow the council to conduct hearings and make dispositions, including recommendations for removal. They gave some increased flexibility in the system and improved access to judicial resources by our municipal partners, because of course they are ultimately responsible, according to steps taken by a previous government, for the administration of justice as it pertains to the Provincial Offences Act and various offences thereunder.

You say, "Well, what kind of reforms or approach are necessary and included in this good government bill?" One of the requirements of those previous reforms is that there be annual advertising for those who might like to be justices of the peace. That's good because the ads are all placed. They're public and everybody can apply. They apply to the secretariat. There's a place to apply. It's all transparent and the applications go there.

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The challenge is that people from all over the province would be invited to apply but in some parts of the province we didn't actually have an opening for a justice of the peace, or we had a lot of openings in a particular area for those, for example, who might speak French as a first language or at least as a second language well enough that they can conduct trials in French.

So we had a bit of a disconnect between the application process as it was functioning and the on-the-ground needs from time to time, and this was identified. It would be identified directly by us, but it would be identified by a number of my colleagues from all parties who would hear from individuals who had applied to be a justice of the peace only to find out that there weren't actually any vacancies in the particular area.

Now, that's not good, so we got advice, and the advice really was to make sure that the application process much more closely resembled that that we use for judges; so, again, above reproach. In other words, if you've got a vacancy, advertise then and there. If you don't have a vacancy, you don't advertise. That type of flexibility has been built into this proposed piece of legislation.

It's a time-honoured approach used by governments of all parties the last 20-plus years. It really does enable the judiciary, the government, to make sure there are enough judicial officials in a particular region to meet the needs, and it means that people who might be interested in becoming a justice of the peace, who might get excited over seeing an ad, will not be disappointed later on, on learning not only did they not get the job but there was no job to get. That's not what we want to have happen.

That's one of the changes that we have proposed and we hope will be made if this piece of legislation is approved. We can do it within a region when and where a vacancy occurs. You're targeting the requests.

A second change that we are proposing in this piece of legislation involves the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. Part of the responsibilities of the AGCO, I'll call it, is to hear the various appeals under the Licence Appeal Tribunal. Right now, that function of the Licence Appeal Tribunal is sort of housed within the very broad parameters of the AGCO. The AGCO, therefore, has a very strong and important policy mandate and the Licence Appeal Tribunal has the adjudicative mandate.

It seems to make sense that the adjudicative mandate be moved to a different ministry, to be housed there, enabling the AGCO to concentrate exclusively on the policy mandate. This seems to make sense. The Licence Appeal Tribunal provides expert appeals process for compensation claims and licensing activities under 22 different statutes. What we're proposing is that that adjudicative function under several of those statutes go from the AGCO to the Licence Appeal Tribunal and to a different ministry.

The commission will then be able to focus on its governance and policy-making roles. They include the regulation, for example, of the sales, service and consumption of alcohol in public places, and casinos, commercial lotteries, charitable gaming and electronic gaming.

The Licence Appeal Tribunal takes over the adjudicative functions from the AGCO, as directed under the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, the Gaming Control Act, the Liquor Licence Act and the Vintners Quality Alliance Act, all of which move over to the Licence Appeal Tribunal and out of the AGCO. We want to make sure that these industries are operated in a socially responsible manner through effective regulations that are fair and responsive to the public interest.

There are a few other provisions that I'll just speak to briefly. Having those adjudicative functions taken out of the AGCO and given to the Licence Appeal Tribunal elsewhere I think is a very good step. It makes for a better approach and will, as I say, enable the AGCO to concentrate all of its time and energy on the policy functions. The Licence Appeal Tribunal, in the different place, is where it should be.

Under the Provincial Offences Act, there are just a few little changes and amendments. Sometimes appeals are launched for good reasons when they're launched, but then they sit there and nobody advances them. Somebody

gets convicted of an offence and they say, “Do you know what? I want to preserve my right to appeal”—and you need to take steps; the public should know this. If you get convicted of an offence and you want to appeal, you actually have to get on it. You don’t have an unlimited period of time in which to launch an appeal; you need to go and speak to somebody right away and launch the appeal. Sometimes those appeals are launched and then people might lose interest, decide they don’t want to proceed with it. We don’t want appeals that are never going to be proceeded with or are not being proceeded with just sitting there. So there is a provision here that will strengthen the Provincial Offences Act and expands the ability of the court clerk to seek dismissal of appeals that appear to be abandoned. The dismissal of appeals that appear to be abandoned is something that is pursued at all levels of court, so there’s nothing terribly unusual about this, and all the usual protections would apply, so if an appeal got dismissed as abandoned but it really wasn’t, there’s always the ability to come back before the court and say, “Hey, wait a minute. That shouldn’t have happened.” That is an ability.

I don’t want to address these in great length at this point, but there are changes under the Business Corporations Act. We’re proposing several amendments to the Business Corporations Act that would improve services to businesses by providing greater flexibility and increasing the government’s ability to respond to the needs of businesses when it comes to making changes to regulations and forms. It’s sort of consistent with the approach that we took in the Open for Business Act. Now, one of the proposed changes would clarify that a person who enters into an oral or written contract on behalf of a corporation before the corporation comes into existence may assign, amend or terminate that contract up to the time when the contract is formally adopted by the corporation.

The proposed changes would also address situations where a shareholder holds uncertificated shares, or shares without a certificate. The proposed changes would provide for an exception to the requirement to surrender share certificates to the corporation in circumstances regarding rights of dissenting shareholders; that is, shareholders who do not agree with the majority decision.

There are other proposed amendments that deal with the takeover of a bid situation. Other proposed amendments to the Business Corporations Act would, if passed, transfer seven regulation-making powers from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Minister of Government Services, just so there’s more flexibility, so you can keep up with the needs of business. The fact of the matter is that things are changing very quickly. Things are changing very quickly in the business world, and you don’t want there to be an undue reg-making process that effectively slows down or impedes the competitiveness of Ontario business.

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Similar amendments are proposed for the Business Names Act, the Corporations Information Act, the Extra-Provincial Corporations Act and the Limited Partnerships

Act, again increasing flexibility and allowing the ministry to respond more quickly to administrative needs such as updating forms.

The Ministry of Government Services is also proposing changes to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999. One of these changes would, if passed, delete the current restriction that no more than three members can sit on a panel. It might have been right then, but things change, and you want to give some flexibility. If you need more than three, well, why not?

Before I turn it over to my parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Willowdale, in conclusion, what we’re proposing here is a series of amendments and changes, hopefully relatively innocuous, hopefully that meet with broad support, but effectively to support the better functioning of various statutes and regulations, and that is for better government for all Ontarians and a stronger society.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Willowdale.

Mr. David Zimmer: I’m very happy to speak to this bill, the Good Government Act, 2010. Although, on the face of it, it seems technical, which it is, and dry, which it probably is, these good government bills are really essential to the good governance of Ontario. That’s why it’s called the Good Government Act.

I just want to set a little context here. I expect that we’re going to hear a lot of debate from the official opposition about flaws that they perceive in this Good Government Act.

Interjections.

Mr. David Zimmer: As they’ve said over there, they’re going to be doing their job. They’re going to be criticizing and harping about various things that they think should be better and so on. But let me just lay this context. Albeit this bill is technical and it may be a bit dry, everything in this bill is important to the good governance of Ontario. It’s what we are sent here as legislators to do.

Here’s what has happened recently: The officials at the Ministry of the Attorney General, both on the political side and on the public service side, knowing that there was a lot of detail and a lot of technical stuff in this bill, and that it was all directed toward the good governance of Ontario, those persons, thinking—I think, rightly so—that the opposition parties should be interested in the good governance bill, offered to brief the official opposition and the third party.

I can say that the third party took that offer up responsibly. A detailed briefing was provided to the third party, because the third party was interested in the substance and the details so that they could effectively debate the bill. The same offer was made to the official opposition: “Come and have a briefing on the Good Government Act.” Surely you’re interested in good governance in Ontario. That’s what you’re grinding away in question period about all the time; that’s what you’re grinding away about in all of your speeches.

Do you know that not one opposition member took up the offer to attend that briefing on this very, very

important bill, the Good Government Act, 2010? That tells me something about the sincerity of the official opposition in wanting to participate in the good governance of Ontario. I expect that when the debate shifts to the official opposition, we're going to hear a lot of posturing, we're going to hear a lot of ranting and we're going to hear a lot of criticism. But they did not take the opportunity to avail themselves, as the third party did, of that briefing. I've had those briefings myself. I've sat in on those briefings, and they are quality briefings. Anyone who is interested in governance issues at the level that we all here in this chamber should be interested—I think it's incumbent upon them; they have a duty to attend those briefings.

I'm sorry that the official opposition chose not to participate in that briefing. I think it would have been a better debate had they come properly informed and with a proper appreciation of what the intent of the bill was and what the substance of the bill was.

Good governance acts are something that every government brings forward every couple of years. The Attorney General made reference to one in the last couple of years, and I participated in that one. That was a rather lengthy one, and it addressed and sort of did a house-keeping sweep through years and years of legislation that had been sitting on the books and that really needed some cleanup. This legislation will help us to keep up with the times; it will help us remain current. If passed, the bill would provide a new clarity and a new modernization of a number of provincial laws, regulations and systems. After all, that's what good governance is all about.

I am, I repeat, sorry that the official opposition chose not to participate in that briefing process. They should have participated in that briefing process, because the bill contains about 70 amendments to legislation involving seven different ministries. Most of the provisions are very technical in nature to the existing acts. But, again, if you reflect back on them, if you've had the benefit of the briefing, you will see that they improve the clarity of the law, they make the law more pointed and they make the law more able to achieve its end.

The second thing that this bill does is it fits hand in glove with our government's Open for Business initiative, because one of the criticisms, and in many cases properly so, that we hear from businesses in Ontario, and businesses that want to come to Ontario, is that they need more clarity in the legislation of Ontario. They need to be able to read some of this legislation themselves and quickly grasp it and quickly understand it. I know that this is something that's important to helping Ontario grow its economy, because to the extent that we can make our legislative regime here in Ontario effective and attractive to business, we are going to create new jobs; it's that important.

So I say yet again, for about the fourth or fifth time, that given the importance of this bill, the importance that the provisions of the bill are going to have in terms of attracting business and giving business a greater level of confidence, a greater efficiency, I would have thought

that the official opposition would have participated in that briefing process. It's going to be interesting to see what they say this afternoon coming into it absent that briefing.

One of the big targets, one of the big goals in the Open for Business Ontario is to decrease the regulatory burden and to set up the legislation, the governance of Ontario, so that it is more responsive, so there is a quicker response time to the needs of the economy. One of the things that businesses and people who want to do business here in Ontario look for is a responsive legislative process, so that if there's something that needs fixing, something that needs addressing, there is a mechanism so that it can be quickly spoken to, quickly addressed and quickly remedied. That's what many of the amendments in this good governance bill are designed to do.

The other thing that this bill is designed to do, in addition to helping business navigate our legislative regime here in Ontario, is to help members of the public, because they are interacting with government on a daily basis through all of the 70 pieces of legislation that we're amending. Whether it's a teenager who has to deal with the Ministry of Transportation, a senior citizen who has an issue with the government or a single mother—anybody who has an issue with the government—to the extent that we can make our legislative regime more navigable to them, that's a good thing.

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If passed, we are going to have a more streamlined, effective and responsive system in place for business and for the public. That's the theme. That's the context of the legislation.

Let me just give you an idea of some of the technical things that we have to deal with. For instance, there are a number of proposed changes to the Evidence Act. That's important for the judges, for the crown attorneys, for the lawyers and for the members of the public; for the accused in criminal offences and for people participating in our judicial system in the non-criminal sense. These changes are going to help the courts adjust to new technology in court reporting and transcribing services.

There is an additional proposed change to the Occupational Health And Safety Act that, if passed, would repeal sections that refer to outdated technology such as telegrams. When was the last time anybody dealt with a telegram here in Ontario? And yet in many ways there are various provisions in the legislation where one can telegram this or you have to notify something by telegram. These are simple housekeeping matters, but this is the oil that keeps the wheels of our legislative system turning effectively and efficiently.

Bills like this one have become more important in the Ontario Legislature because it's a process that works. Every other jurisdiction here in Canada has modeled itself on the Ontario approach; that is, at regular intervals a good government bill to tidy up, to rationalize, to deal with the anomalies and the unintended consequences that inevitably develop in the course of a piece of legislation that's been on the books.

Let me just say a word about something you might find interesting in the Ontario Energy Board Act. A proposed amendment to the Ontario Energy Board Act is going to help the province move forward with its commitment to the green economy. How is that going to work? It's going to remove some of the uncertainty in the act that may have discouraged local distribution companies from proceeding with clean, renewable energy projects. That is a very, very important piece of house-keeping because we've had days and days of debate here about energy issues.

Again, I come back now for perhaps the fifth or sixth time: I'm surprised that the official opposition would not take up the offer for a thorough and candid briefing on this act. They purport to be interested in Ontario's economy, they purport to be interested in good governance, but when given the opportunity to participate in the process, they don't participate. But they will grind away, I expect, in the debate this afternoon.

Let me say something about the Education Act. That's something that is of critical importance to the people of Ontario because the quality of the education that we provide our citizens, particularly our young people in high schools, colleges, training and apprenticeships, is really in many ways the future of the Ontario economy. It's the key to the future of a good life here in Ontario because we are going to depend on the engineers, the businesspeople, the carpenters, the electricians, the doctors. Education is of critical importance.

There will be some technical amendments that, if passed, would rescind some of the outdated acts. The Essex County French-language Secondary School Act, 1977, is 33 years old. That act is simply redundant since the province created the French-language school boards servicing the area. That's something that just needs addressing and cleaning up. The act would also clarify the minister's authority to add terms and conditions to the permission given to school boards to offer French immersion programs. That's very important for all our francophone Ontarians. This will clarify the intent of the legislation for both English and French school boards.

Let me say something about some of the amendments that are going to affect the Employment Standards Act. Again, the legislation governing the regime surrounding employment in Ontario is critical because we need protected employees. We need a relationship between the employer and the employee that is harmonious, and we need those things because we want to build an Ontario workforce second to none. Why? To build our economy. Why do we want to build our economy? So that we have people paying taxes; so we have money for health care, schools, education, bridges and roads. This may seem sort of dry and technical, but these issues are important.

The proposed amendment to the Employment Standards Act would replace—and this is how technical it gets—the word “week” with the term “workweek” under the Employment Standards Act. If that's passed, that would ensure consistent wording and interpretation among the provisions of this act and its regulations,

because sometimes there's a disconnect between what we mean by “workweek” and what we mean by “week” and then people get into debates about it, and it creates misunderstandings and difficult employment relationships. So that's why something like this is important.

The amendment would also make the language in the section consistent with the Ministry of Labour's long-standing interpretation, which is that overtime pay entitlements under the act are determined with reference to the employee's established workweek and not to any period of seven days. Now, that's a technical amendment, but it has huge import both to the employee and the employer. Again, that's why this good government legislation is important.

There are a number of amendments dealing with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We've heard a lot in the past months about occupational health and safety acts. These amendments are designed, again, to bring greater clarity and harmony to that relationship. That's good for Ontario; that's good for our economy; that's good for the citizens.

If the opposition is really interested in good governance in Ontario, participate in the briefings and come to the debate informed.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to the parliamentary assistant, as I did to the minister. Ah, jeez, I hate doing this. This is one of those days where I wish I hadn't come to work, because I like the parliamentary assistant—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I know, but what was that all about?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, no, the parliamentary assistant delivers a fine speech. There was a US senator back during the Vietnam War years who was at Maple Leaf Gardens. It was a big, highly announced event. He was a potential presidential candidate. He was going to announce his seven-point plan to end the war in Vietnam. But he was also known by his staff as not being as thorough as he should be. He was a busy guy, apparently. He stayed up late at night but wasn't doing the things he ought to have been doing. So his staff gave him his script with his seven-point plan, and he went into Maple Leaf Gardens—it was full of anti-war people; the sentiment was strong—and he read page 1 and point 1, and the crowd cheered; then point 2, and the crowd cheered; point 3, and he turned the page again and it said, “Now you're on your own, you lazy SOB.”

My dear friend, you're not lazy; you're a smart man. You're a capable parliamentary assistant. You're a good lawyer, but what you said about the Evidence Act just isn't so. Check the act. Read it. The only amendment it makes to the Evidence Act is to change the regulation-making power in the Evidence Act from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Attorney General. There are no other amendments to the Evidence Act. There are no changes whatsoever in the evidentiary standard to be

applied at the provincial application of the provincial Evidence Act.

So, dear parliamentary assistant—not you. You, the minions who fed him those lines, shame on you. Shame on every one of you. You set him up, and that's not fair. He's too decent a guy to be treated like that. Whether the Premier's office did it, I don't know, but the parliamentary assistant got set up. He was pretty darn close on a whole lot of the other stuff, and I'm going to compliment him for that when I get my hour in due course, but you set him up on the portion of the comments about the Evidence Act, darn it.

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm particularly pleased that the member from Welland is such a huge fan of the member from Willowdale, as am I and many of us in this place.

I think he did a fine job during his time speaking to this Good Government Act, 2010. He served admirably as the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General during his time here, and stayed there because of the expertise that he brings to this place, and provides advice to stakeholders, in part, in that role.

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As to the legislation itself, these are important pieces of legislation. As he said, other jurisdictions are modelling what Ontario is doing in looking at legislation and strategies and structures so that dated pieces of legislation that either need to have some updating, need some tweaking, some fine-tuning so they work effectively when there are pieces of them that don't work as well as they should—that there's a means to get those forward. It doesn't mean that we have to use the debate time of this place for single pieces of legislation to make minor changes to them; we can capture those. Often they are technical. We can capture those under one piece of legislation, in this particular case being the Good Government Act, 2010.

He referenced, in his speaking, as well as the minister, that the bill includes approximately 70 amendments to legislation for seven different ministries. This seems to be not only an effective use of debate time here, but an opportunity, obviously, to get the necessary changes to make sure that legislation that is in place—70 different pieces in this case, in multiple ministries—are as effective as they can be. That doesn't mean that they're necessarily going to be perfect at the end of the day, but it does mean there will be pieces of them that will work better than they have in the past.

As I say, most of this is technical in nature. Some of it could be considered housekeeping activities. But it's important legislation, and I believe the parliamentary assistant and the minister have done a fine job in introducing this legislation to us.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I did listen to the Attorney General and, more recently, to the member from Willowdale, the parliamentary assistant. Three things come to mind in

this bill. First of all, it's an omnibus bill. There are very few pages, 36 pages; there are seven ministries that are impacted. When you're dealing with a government in their last year, I feel that I'm somewhat suspicious. I like to think of the last few changes they've made here, whether it's on energy or the eco tax, as sort of a frame of backtracking on a number of important government initiatives.

The people of Ontario should be somewhat cautious in terms of thinking this is just a housekeeping bill. I would say that in my own case, most of us over here—I'm waiting for our member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to speak, because there are sections here, although administrative types of amendments, they do download most of the decision-making to civil servants, basically, in a regulatory environment, where it will never come to the House. Whether it's the labour bill changes, the Ministry of Health, the community care access centres, long-term care—these are areas of great upheaval and change. They're not adequately funded in children's aid, they're not adequately funded in long-term care, yet they're providing these oversights and they're weakening them. They are really weakening them, because they're taking them out of the public forum, where there is accountability, into a forum where the registrar may make certain types of changes. Even in the judiciary system they're making changes that leave me questioning.

Now, these questions are at a time when Premier McGuinty's government is on the slide a bit, and they would say anything to get off the hook. So I am very concerned that this bill, although administrative in nature, can open the door for weakening the function of government itself.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I just wanted to comment briefly on process, in terms of the parliamentary assistant lamenting that none of the opposition had requested a briefing on this bill. I might want to remind the parliamentary assistant that this bill was only introduced on October 5, two weeks ago. As you know, Madam Speaker, last week members were off on a constituency week. I was in Ottawa taking care of my constituents at that time, so while the bill was introduced on the 5th, we were out of here on the 7th or 8th and there was really no opportunity for us to set up a meeting, to have a briefing on this bill.

I might say as well to the parliamentary assistant that when that evil Harris government was in power back in the late 1990s and early 2000s, what we did on omnibus bills like this of a housekeeping nature was that before we introduced them, we offered the opposition the opportunity to be briefed on what we intended to bring forward to the Legislature. We asked the opposition if they objected to various different sections of the bill, and they were removed if the opposition had significant objections to any part of those omnibus bills. To me, that's the way to do a good government omnibus bill: to

give the opposition a real opportunity to complain and remove what is objectionable. Then, in having unanimous consent in the Legislature, very little debate was necessary in here because most of it was of a technical nature and was agreed to by the opposition.

So I think it's a little disingenuous for the parliamentary assistant to claim that we did not request the opportunity for a briefing when in fact there has been no chance for that to occur.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I do want to respond to the member for Durham's comments, because I had my pen out and I just jotted down some of the things that the member for Durham said—whom I can't name, but he's the member for Durham in the light tan suit there with a happy smile on his face.

He used expressions in his two-minuter like this: He said he'd studied the bill. He had the bill in his hand there, and he said he had some important criticisms. He went on to say that there were in the bill—and I'm quoting him here—"areas of great upheaval and change." He went on to say, I think, that the changes are important in their very nature. He sort of concluded his remarks by saying that he was very concerned that this bill will weaken government.

Mr. John O'Toole: Concerned and suspicious.

Mr. David Zimmer: The member has corrected me. I guess he did say that he was concerned and suspicious.

So I take that expression of real concern and, again, I balance that against the member for Durham, who would not take up the Attorney General's offer for a briefing on this bill. I mean, you can't have it both ways. You feign great interest and great concern about various aspects of this bill. The Attorney General says, "Come and we'll have a comprehensive briefing on it." Take up the offer, as did the third party. Come to the debate informed.

So when I see that sort of disconnect between action, in not coming to the briefing, and comment or hectoring in the chamber, I think it raises issues of credibility.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 110. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that I seek unanimous consent that our leadoff be deferred until a later date, as our critic is unable to speak at this time. So if I could ask—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has asked for unanimous consent to defer their lead. Is that the pleasure of the House? Agreed. Thank you.

Continue.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. I appreciate the reminder, but I might have done it at some point.

Interjection: At some point.

Mr. John Yakabuski: At some point, yes, I say to my friend from Welland, Mr. Kormos.

Let me just start by speaking to the address not from the Attorney General so much, because he was getting into the minutiae, but my friend from Willowdale. I hope he stays around for this, because I think it would be helpful to him. My friend from Willowdale went on ad infinitum; do you know how often—

Interjection: Ad nauseam.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, thank you very much—ad nauseam about the opposition not declining or being unable to schedule, but "refusing" a briefing on the bill. As my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills said, the bill was introduced on October 5, which was a Tuesday. The Legislature sat on Wednesday and Thursday and then did not sit again until today. This is the first time, as my colleague said—there was a constituency break so that members had the opportunity to travel back and spend a little extra time, a little extended time, in their constituencies following the Thanksgiving weekend to perhaps make a little more significant contact than we tend to make just being home on weekends while the House is in session.

1450

I want to talk a little bit about those briefings. My history of the briefings being done by this government—and again, my colleague from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, Mr. Sterling, talked about how we had a different approach in government in offering significant pre-briefing to members of the then opposition so that they had at least a sense and perhaps an impact or input into some contentious portions of a bill that we could have maybe improved upon before it even came to this House. Good thinking.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Actually, that's committee.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no. My friend from Prince Edward-Hastings has got it wrong. She has to start listening right from the start.

To my friend from Willowdale—the member from Willowdale talked about the briefings that were refused by the members of the opposition. Let me tell you, you go back a little bit when George Smitherman—do you remember George Smitherman?

Mr. Robert Bailey: George who?

Mr. John Yakabuski: George Smitherman. He was the energy minister who wants to be mayor of Toronto and who claimed that his Green Energy Act—now let me remind you about the Green Energy Act. You want to talk about an omnibus bill, this bill, Bill 110, which is a tongue-in-cheek called the good government bill—the Green Energy Act amended, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly I say to my friend from Willowdale, 21 separate acts, and affected, I believe, 15 different ministries. George Smitherman introduced the act one day and the next day debate began before we had any opportunity to be briefed on the bill at all.

It gets better than that. Then, I was able to schedule a briefing as the critic. The briefings from these guys over

here—the member from Willowdale wants to talk about how wonderful and important and informative they are. This was the act: It was 100 and some pages; 15 ministries and 21 acts were being affected by it. The briefing was a grand total of an hour, which they shrunk to about 45 minutes. The bureaucrats came in with a little slide deck. The paper copies of a slide deck; you could do it on an overhead or on a computer. You know, the programmes on the computer, I can't think of the name now—

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: PowerPoint.

Mr. John Yakabuski: PowerPoint. Thank you very much, I say to the member from Pickering–Ajax or Scarborough–Pickering, or something like that. It's tougher now; I do know his name but I can't say it.

So anyway, a PowerPoint presentation on paper. They come in with this little fan deck or slide deck. They give us the spiel; that took about 20 to 25 minutes. Then you've got a few more minutes to ask some questions. I had other members of my caucus there because this was a substantial piece of legislation. The minister had already spoken on it. He talked about how the Green Energy Act was going to add 1% per year.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Willowdale has a point of order.

I'm sorry; the Clerk has just alerted me that the member from Willowdale is not in his seat, so we will continue with debate.

Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I know he wants to move up in those seats and that's why he's being obedient to his Premier, you see?

Mr. David Zimmer: Madam Speaker, on a point of order: I know that in these debates the Speaker allows a certain indulgence to wander off topic, but we're here to discuss the Good Government Act, not an energy act in a previous administration.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you very much. I'm quite capable of doing my job as Speaker, thank you.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, continue with the debate.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member for Willowdale, as I've heard from my colleague from Welland, Peter Kormos, is a lawyer. Mr. Kormos has indicated that he is a good lawyer. I can't comment on whether he's a good lawyer or not, but I accept that he's a good lawyer.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I just want to refer to, if I can, the Speaker's ruling this morning in respect to using both the riding and members' names. I think he clarified that it was only the one that should be referenced, not both.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Absolutely. You're correct on that. Thank you.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm sure that when Speaker Peters is in the chair, he's going to honour that. I think that's more about question period—the cut and the thrust,

as the Speaker said—where we have to make sure that we don't cross too many lines.

Anyway, the member for Willowdale is a fine lawyer, according to my friend from Welland, PK. He should know. I'm not a lawyer; therefore, I'm not tainted.

Mr. Peter Kormos: To your credit.

Mr. John Yakabuski: To my credit, absolutely. I have—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would actually ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to withdraw that comment of “tainted.” Would you withdraw?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I could be just a can of tuna then, maybe.

I say to the member for Willowdale—I have watched a few episodes of Law & Order; it's my favourite show. Now they took it off the air. I miss Sam Waterston as Jack McCoy so much.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Try Judge Judy, though.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's not the same. Anyway, I remember in some of his talks—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I will ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to get back to the bill that's under discussion in debate right now. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I am, Madam Speaker—Bill 110. The point I'm making is that, in law, you cannot close a door that you yourself opened. I heard Jack say that so many times. So I say to the member from Willowdale: You opened the door. We're coming through. You can't close it.

I want to talk about these briefings, because he's chastising our members and our good critic for not participating at this point. We're more than prepared to participate in the briefing—hell, I think we could do a better job of running them than those people across on the other side.

Anyway, here is the briefing on the Green Energy Act—15 ministries, 21 acts. We're now into the second half hour of a one-hour briefing. We start to ask some questions, and the response is, “I'm sorry, we can't answer that. It's in the deck.” The deck is about 17 pages, spaced big enough that I could read it even without my glasses. The act is a hundred and some pages, small enough that I can't read it without my glasses, and every time we ask a question, we get, “Oh, I'm sorry. We can't answer that.”

This member, under instructions from the Premier's office to come in here and chastise people on the opposition side for not being able to take part in a briefing at this point and spend that kind of time in debate—how many times did he mention it? So often that I am really quite disappointed that there would be that kind of emphasis, when what we should be talking about is the premise behind Bill 110.

What is interesting is that it speaks to what is going on on the other side. We saw it this weekend at their con-

vention. At the Liberal convention or mini-convention or whatever you want to call it this weekend, the name most mentioned wasn't Dalton McGuinty; it was Tim Hudak and Mike Harris. Those were the names that were being mentioned at their convention, so it speaks to where their mentality is and where their fear is. They're more concerned about what other people are doing than what they're doing themselves.

Let's talk about good government. The Attorney General talked about—Madam Speaker, it was interesting. You listened to it yourself, and I think I saw a smile on your face.

Maybe I could get some more water, if I could, and if you have anything else to put in it, that would be all right, too.

The Attorney General talked about—it seems every year we have a bill that has something like “good government” in the title.

You know, the people in Ontario are not starving and thirsting for another bill that has “good government” in the title. What they're starving and thirsting for is good government. We don't need it in a title; we need it to be delivered. And this bill, oh, it's another housekeeping bill which we're going to spend all kinds of time and debate on.

1500

There are a couple parts of it that should cause us to have some worry. My friend from Welland, PK, mentions how in one particular section of the bill, “Subsection 5(3) of the” Evidence “Act is amended to shift the regulation-making authority under that subsection from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Attorney General.”

If you look at schedule 5, Ministry of Government Services: “The act is amended to transfer seven regulation-making powers from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the minister.”

Are we going to have a situation where the cabinet—for those out in television land who don't understand what the Lieutenant Governor in Council is, that is the cabinet. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is the cabinet.

I just want to remind folks about the G20 summit this summer. When the cabinet, behind closed doors, and while this Legislature was sitting, gave powers to the police in Toronto, where was the briefing then? Where was the briefing then? Where was the briefing in this Legislature? Where was the ability for this Legislature to comment or to participate in that debate? But now, could we see a situation where those powers to delegate something to another party, whether it be police or otherwise—and let's get one thing straight: I think the police did a tremendous job here in Toronto. They were saddled with a difficult situation, but this government did everything it could do to hide from the public what rules and regulations they had enacted for the purpose of that summit. Could we now see a situation where the minister, on his own, without even the rest of the cabinet having input, could allow things like that to happen?

Now, I know that particular ministry is not involved. But a flag might need to be raised when you start to pass on those kinds of powers to the minister, as opposed to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

It's interesting that after seven years in power, you would like to think that if they had one good government bill in year one, and another one in year two, and another one in year three, they would have gotten around to actually having some good government. But here we are, getting near the end of their legislated term, and we're still sitting here debating legislation, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts.

It was interesting: This weekend, the Liberal Party faithful that gathered in Toronto—that was part of one of their overriding messages, good government. They came out with a slogan, something to the effect of “Ontario is worth fighting for.” Ontario deserves good government. Ontario is worth fighting for; there's no question about that. Many people went to war in 1914-18, 1939-45. They went to war in Korea in 1950-53 to defend democracy and freedoms throughout this world.

Is Ontario worth fighting for? Absolutely. Democracy is worth fighting for. Good government is worth fighting for. But it's also the responsibility of the party that has the honour of being chosen by the largest number of voters or, in our system, winning the largest number of seats, and in most cases it would also be the largest number of voters—they have a responsibility to deliver good government, not just talk about it. Good government is also about responding and being reflective of the needs and desires of the citizenry and also being cognizant of the ability of that citizenry to pay the bills.

So I ask the member for Willowdale, the Attorney General and all members on the other side of the House, is it good government when, against the will of the people, you raise electricity rates, both in the cost of the electricity itself, the delivery, and the additional charges, now including the HST? Is it good government when you raise those rates to the point that we have people in this province who simply can't make it anymore, when we have senior citizens in this province who are writing me every day—and I know they're writing my friend from Welland, PK, as well, because I see those issues raised in the House. My friend from Beaches—East York, MP, MPP—

Mr. Peter Kormos: His wife calls him Michael Prue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Do you know what? What his wife calls him is entirely between them, but in this House I can only call him the member for Beaches—East York, and I do this through you, Madam Speaker, of course. But if she calls him Michael Prue, that's her business.

My colleagues here, my friend from Parry Sound—Muskoka, who I believe will be speaking to this bill as well, we're hearing these issues raised every day. I talk to seniors who built a house in the 1970s. Ontario was full of hope. They were being told, “The best way to heat that home is electrically. It's clean, no messing with any kind of oil, gas or anything like that.” Where that electricity came from was not the issue. At the time, “It's cheap, it's

clean and it's instant." Boom, boom. So they built those homes in those periods. They were the backbone of our society, working hard so they could build a home. They put electric heat in. Most of those people who built at that time were raising families, and they're now retired. They may even be aged. But they still have that electric heat because that home is their home. Now they're finding that they may not be able to stay there anymore. Why? It's because of the McGuinty government's callousness with regard to how it enforces their politics on the people of this province.

I see you're standing. I'm not—

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have comments to make about this member's speech. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has hit the ball out of the park once again. He's filling in for his party's critic, doing the quasi lead, if you will. I'm pleased to be able to hear this member analyze this type of legislation, this omnibus bill, in which inevitably, as you approach it as one would a pilgarlic pate, and you discover more and more and more—a pilgarlic pate—the obviousness of the subtleties come to mind and emerge and rise to the surface.

So here the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—

Mr. John Yakabuski: JY.

1510

Mr. Peter Kormos: —JY has discovered one of the more sinister elements of this legislation, and that is the abandonment of the cabinet scrutiny of any number of arbitrary powers. We've got concerns, and I'm going to have a chance to speak in a few minutes' time. I spent a lot of time thinking about this bill over the last weekend. I want to tell you about that too as I get into it. Good government: I spent a lot of time on the title, good government.

Good government doesn't mean that you eliminate the various controls that there are, however and notwithstanding how weak they can become at certain times. The Lieutenant Governor in Council has a control about it because it has other cabinet ministers involved in the decision-making. Ministerial regulation-setting power doesn't.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Obviously on this particular day—it must have been a very good weekend because he clearly didn't read the bill, hence the reason why he wanted to talk about everything except what's in the bill. So let's just talk about the bill.

What is a good government bill? It's a housecleaning. It's something that you do at home. It's called a fix-up. These are routine revisions, minor amendments, technical changes modernizing legislation and regulations while keeping intact their intent. That's what this bill is about. This bill takes a whole number of acts, dozens and dozens of them, and changes minor things while keeping intact the intent of the legislation.

Now, good government bills are done by governments of all levels and all political stripes at all times. In fact, they're normally done about twice, sometimes even three times a year, and they're always called good government bills. In fact, in the corporate sector, if you're reviewing your policies, you would call it housekeeping revisions.

Speaker, as you cut the member a little bit of latitude in some of his comments, I think I can take similar latitude and talk about some of the things that he said that weren't covered by this particular bill, about energy. He admitted that his party is taking us back to the 1970s—his own words.

It appears that good government, to the Progressive Conservative, consists of four principles: Principle 1, blame the Liberals; principle 2, do nothing and run it into the ground; principle 3, burn coal and then burn more coal; and principle 4, buy electricity on the US spot market. So there you are. There's the other party's policy.

Even the normally informed and eloquent member from Welland obviously didn't read the bill and dipped into his own deep well of rhetorical flourish.

Thank you; we'll pick it up here next time.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to comment on the remarks from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke; obviously well-researched and well-delivered.

I spent a total of eight days consulting. I didn't need any polling firm for myself. I spent four days at the plowing match and I also spent another four days at a regional fair in my area, Brigden Fair. It's the largest fair in southwestern Ontario. Over 50,000 people attend it. I spent many hours there and spoke to most of those 50,000 who came, and to a person—and that's all income groups, all strata, from lower-income to middle-income to seniors to the more affluent—they all said that they were very upset, very concerned with this government. They don't need any polling firms, Ipsos Reid, Harris/Decima, any of them. They're concerned about the lack of good government in this province. They've told me that. They've signed petitions to the same effect.

As the member said, at this recent lovefest that they had in Toronto our leader's name was mentioned more than anyone else. Maybe there will be a Tim Hudak bill introduced by this government, because they mentioned his name so much. So that's good for us, that they mentioned his name.

I also noticed that, as the member said, there was the potential for a lack of cabinet scrutiny. Already a number of members of cabinet have said they had no idea about some of the things that happened with the G20 because they weren't made aware, they weren't in the loop. So what's to say, if this bill is improved and they make these changes to it, that any of those ministers will be better informed? As the member has covered, 21 acts and 15 ministries are going to be affected by this.

Like I said, those people who spoke to me at those two venues, in Elgin county and again in Lambton county, expressed their dissatisfaction with hydro rates, with

government in general, with this government and with the Premier's actions and lack of actions.

I look forward to the rest of the debate, and hopefully the member for Nipissing-Pembroke will be a cleanup hitter.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently, as I always do, to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. He has little pearls and gems of wisdom interspaced with good stories and humorous anecdotes. He made much of the whole procedure of briefings around here, and I know why he did it. He was responding in great part to the member from Willowdale. The member from Willowdale, of course, took great stock in the briefings that are made available to members of this House. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke quite rightly pointed out that they are of very limited value, especially to opposition members.

I have on occasion availed myself of those briefings. Generally what happens is, you go into a room. There is a slide presentation or sometimes a slide presentation on paper delivered by several earnest bureaucrats. But it is not the bureaucrats who answer or control the briefing. It is members of the minister's office who handle and control what happens in the briefing. When a member such as myself or any member in the opposition starts to ask questions, it is the bureaucrat or the worker from the minister's office who says, "We're not going to answer that. We can't answer that. That's not a question you can ask here. That's not a question you can ask of the bureaucrats."

Even when the bureaucrats want to answer the question, they are told they can't. Even when they say, "We have an answer and it is not controversial," they are told they can't.

So in the end, if members opposite want to know why opposition members do not avail themselves of this opportunity, it is because it is practically useless. We can read the bill ourselves. If all we're going to get is a slide show and someone from the minister's office saying that we can't ask the questions we want to ask, what is the sense of going to it at all?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Twenty minutes goes by so fast. I never even got into my notes; I was just into my preamble. Anyway, I certainly will respond to a couple of things. But while I'm here, I must say hello to some folks up in the gallery who are constituents of the Speaker in Elgin-Middlesex-London: Heiko Oegema, and I presume that's your wife with you, Heiko. I don't know her name. I've met Heiko but I don't know his wife. I know they're in the turkey business down there, so good to see you here.

Anyway, let's get back to the matter at hand here. Good Lord, the member for Mississauga-Streetsville—and I thank the members for Mississauga-Streetsville,

Welland, Sarnia-Lambton and, of course, my friend from Beaches-East York for their comments.

But boy, the member for Mississauga-Streetsville—it just shows where the mindset of the Liberal Party is today. He didn't want to talk about the bill; he wanted to talk about the Conservative Party, because these guys at their convention on the weekend—they don't want to talk about the Liberal record any more; they want to try to chase a ghost. This is how they're going to try to run the election. This is a party that used to say they run on hope. They use the Barack Obama philosophy: We have hope for the future in Ontario.

They don't want to talk about their own record because people in this province have lost hope under them. They've lost hope when they can't afford their hydro bills. They've lost hope when they see their gas bills and HST added to it, and they pull into a gas station and pay 8% more just because of the taxes being levied by this government. They've lost hope and they wonder who is going to deliver them hope.

I can tell you this, folks: It is the responsibility of all of us here to bring good government to Ontario. The people of Ontario are more and more every day believing that the only way to bring good government to Ontario is to change the government of Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased to be able to deliver the lead in response to the Attorney General and his parliamentary assistant on this bill. I want to tell you, I've thought about this bill for a good chunk of time and I'm going to speak about my reflection on this bill over the course of the next hour, and I wish I had more time, but unfortunately the rules don't allow that. The rules aren't always fair or just.

1520

I do want to welcome Ffion Hughes to the Legislature. She's our page from Thorold. She's a delightful young woman whose family I know well. They're going to be joining us on October 25, as I believe it, as I understand it.

Of course I've read the bill. I read the title of the bill, and this is an integral part of the debate because when the bill goes to committee—and this bill will go to committee. New Democrats will ensure that, because we're going to use our power under the standing orders to ensure that it goes to committee. As you know, one of the final acts of the committee is to have to approve the title of the bill. Why I raise that with you, Speaker, is because that makes it entirely appropriate as a subject matter of the debate on second reading, doesn't it? If one can debate the title of the bill in committee, as one can debate each and every section and subsection and sentence of the bill, one can also debate it here, I propose to you, on second reading. "An Act to promote good government"—good God, coming from these guys? "Good grief," maybe. I've already invoked the name of the deity, my goodness—

Interjection: Good riddance.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Good riddance, and then a whole bunch of other “goods” that are entirely unparliamentary and one can only think them, and I know that some of you can read my mind right now.

I was thinking about this bill—I had to be here on Friday morning—on Friday afternoon, when I went back down to Welland to pick up my truck over at David Chev-Olds on Niagara Street, a unionized dealership—my 1994 Chev pickup. They had to do the e-test, the emissions test. My 1994 Chevy pickup, S-10, is still passing the test well within the guidelines—the original engine; the whole nine yards; remarkable stuff. It’s a Chevy S-10. I suppose it’s because I buy it from a union dealership, David Chev-Olds, and have it serviced there, that it has done as well as it has, because it has several hundred thousand miles on it.

I was thinking about the bill, An Act to promote good government. I was thinking about the bill. I was with Malcolm Allen and his wife, Peggy Allen, over at the Moose Lodge on Riverside Drive on Friday evening for their weekly supper; good folks at the Moose Lodge in Welland. They had a turkey dinner on Friday night past: \$7.50 for turkey and the trimmings. If you were inclined, a shot of whisky or a beer would cost you an extra \$2. I commend the Moose Lodge, especially its branch in Welland, to anybody who wants to meet good folks and good people.

I was thinking about this bill while I was sitting with them and eating, while I’m talking to them. I was thinking about An Act to promote good government as the people at the Moose Lodge are telling me about the difficulties they’re having—a whole lot of seniors there at the Moose Lodge in Welland; good folks who worked hard all their lives. Ms. Tellier was there; her maiden name was Johancsik. I know her well. I knew her brother well. Her brother was a sign painter, Al Johancsik, an artist who came from out in Saskatchewan. A beautiful wife—she’s still alive in Welland. Al was a bohemian; he was from the Beat era; a very clever guy. He made my silkscreens by hand. We used to silkscreen our own signs. We didn’t pay Howard Moscoe or anybody like that to paint them for us.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, you didn’t. Al Johancsik was a brilliant artist. He taught me a whole lot about signage and colours. He did Mel Swart before me for a million years; Robert Wright; so many others. I was at Al’s funeral. It was at the Lutheran church, St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church. It was very sad, because I loved him a great deal. But his sister was there, Ms. Tellier. As a matter of fact, she mentioned—we were at the Moose Lodge—I’m talking to her, and Ms. Tellier is of a progressive ilk, a progressive mind. She and Johancsik came from Saskatchewan. They grow progressive people out there. Her daughter was having a party at Trappers the next night because she was going off to Australia to work for a year or so. I’ll tell you about Trappers in just a minute. That was Saturday night.

I wake up Saturday morning and I’ve still got this bill on my mind—good government—because I’m headed

over to the market square. Once again, yes, I know, you’re tired of hearing me talk about the Welland Market Square; I’m not, okay? I’m not. I’m talking to folks at the market square.

What do those folks tell me about? They tell me about electricity rates that are just skyrocketing, blowing the roof off. And I say to them, “Hey, sister,” brother, friend, “think about it”—because I don’t know about you but I haven’t turned my heat on yet. It got down to 55 in my old house on Bald Street; then my neighbours finally said, “Why don’t you close the windows?” I went, “Okay, good idea.” So I managed to get it up to 61 with just the ambient heat by last night, because down where I come from, you don’t turn your heat on in October. You just don’t.

Now, mind you, if you’re elderly—if you are 90, 94, 95 years old, and we’ve got a whole lot of folks like that—it’s a little tough. When they were youngsters, they had no problem waking up in 51 degree Fahrenheit temperatures or colder, but they’re elderly now; the circulation isn’t quite what it should be. These folks that I’m talking to at the market square, along with Malcolm Allen, our federal member, and Peggy Allen, his wonderful wife, are saying, “What is the McGuinty government doing with electricity rates?” It’s the HST to begin with, and then the rates are climbing even further beyond the application of the HST.

I read today to you the memo from the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant community care access centre, which has frozen support for people who need more than 60 hours a month. I don’t mean it has frozen the support at 60 hours; I mean it’s going to deny support if you need 60 hours or more. These people, then, are stuck in the hospital. Good government? Good grief. Folks, a whole lot of them seniors, stuck in hospital wards that are understaffed, disoriented, outside of their own homes, when for two hours a day of community support they could be in their own homes.

We know what happens in hospitals. People do get sick in hospitals. Hospitals are full of diseases and germs, notwithstanding how hard the staff work, whether it’s the nursing staff, the nurses’ aides, the personal care workers or people like my dear friend Ray Romano. He’s a cleaner at the Welland hospital; he’s been there a good chunk of time. He’s not a big guy; he’s a little guy, as dedicated as you could be to the hospital, and still, after 15 or 16 years at least, I’m sure, part-time staff. Some weeks he gets 30 hours, and some weeks he gets 25. His wonderful wife works at the Tim Hortons over on Prince Charles Drive, on her feet all day. They’ve raised two pretty good kids. They’ve worked hard doing it. Ray, you see, has to pay his own electricity bills. He’s a tenant. He’s a good man. He has to pay his own electricity; he’s going to have to pay his own heating bills.

And people ain’t seen nothing yet. You see, most families can turn down or turn off their air conditioner. Down where I come from, some folks have those big central air conditioning units. Most people, like me—I have a unit in the bedroom and one downstairs in what I

call a den. The one downstairs, I almost never turn on. In the bedroom, you turn it on for a few hours, cool the bedroom down before you go to bed, and then you turn it off. That's how folks live where I come from. I don't know about you, Speaker, but where I come from, folks already know how to conserve electricity. It's about the money. It's about affordability. I don't know how you grew up, but down where I grew up, it was, "What's the matter with you? Are you going to heat the whole outdoors?" and a crack against the back of the head: "Turn the light off when you leave a room."

I don't think that's unique to Niagara region or folks down in Welland. People do that. People have already cut all the fat. Now I've got people like Ray struggling to keep the house heated. And he works; he works hard. His wife works hard. They don't make a whole lot of money. You don't make a whole lot of money slinging coffee in a Tim Hortons, and you don't make a whole lot of money with a Niagara Health System hospital operation that has a labour relations policy that dates back to not the last century, but now the century before that.

Good government? This is a government that is forcing people who are recovering from illnesses or surgery to stay in—what is it?—\$400-, \$500-, or \$600-a-day hospital beds, and becoming bed blockers in the course of doing that rather than allowing them two hours a day of home care. That could be anything from a personal support worker to help with bathing, to help with a little bit of food preparation, to a nurse preparing—what do they call it?—a dressing after surgery or looking at a wound and making sure that it's healing properly, or clipping toenails. Do you know how important that is for seniors, especially diabetic seniors? This is serious stuff. As I understand it, if you're clipping toenails and you're diabetic, and you cut into yourself and get an infection, you run the risk of being an amputee.

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Good government, when it's denying home care—modest levels of home care; even two hours a day—to folks in this province? It's disgusting. It's revolting. It's shameful. It's sad. There's nothing to be proud of. Let me tell you, Ontarians know, because if you're not one of these folks who need that home care, you're their son or daughter or their grandson or granddaughter, or a neighbour—who cares. Good government: It has been a long time since we've seen good government here in the province of Ontario.

At the market, people are talking about electricity prices; HST; lineups, still, in health care. People are starting to tune in to the fact that this government, the McGuinty government, delisted chiropractic. People didn't think about it when it happened, but now when somebody wrenches a back, they go to the chiropractor, which is a nice, good, effective, non-intrusive therapy if that's what's recommended.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Keeps some people working, the chiropractor.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It keeps folks working; it keeps folk mobile. It keeps grandmas being able to hold the

grandkids or moms or dads being able to play ball with the kids. Then they find out that the chiropractic isn't funded; they've got to pay.

Eye examinations: I talked to a woman the other day who had delayed going to the optometrist, and then was shocked and awed and horrified to discover that she had to pay for it because she hadn't brought the means with her to do it.

This government has delisted medical procedures that are essential to the welfare, livelihood and well-being of Ontarians, young and old, and it talks about good government.

Friday night, we went over to the Croatian National Home, Hrvatski Dom, where the Canadian Slovak League, Branch 23, was having its 70th anniversary dinner. Branislav Galat, a dear friend whom I love dearly and who is the president of Branch 23, and his wife, Margita Galat, were there. Branislav was in his tuxedo; if he'd only told me, I would have found one somewhere, I'm sure. If I had to rent one out, I would have found it.

It was a delight. I'm talking to folks there. There's several hundred people in the room, and of course, Malcolm Allen and I made sure we talked to every single person in that room. It's the way we do things, down where I come from. I saw hard-working folks; I saw folks—as I said, there were folks there—there were young people that I—well, they're my age. There were people whom I grew up with as a youngster and there were people there who literally far more insisted they had changed my diapers when I was a baby than they actually had, but God bless. There were people there who, as adults, knew me as a little kid. There were babas and didos and hard-working people. Most of them think that this government has a lot of apologizing to do before it can talk about good government.

I've got to tell you, the folks I was with at the Croatian National Home, at the 70th anniversary of Branch 23 of the Canadian Slovak League in Welland—Slovaks have been coming to North America since the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s. My great-grandfather was one of them. But they didn't come to Canada; they went to Pennsylvania, where the coal mines were, and the refineries and the steel mills. In Welland, the first Slovaks apparently came around 1923. My grandparents came there five or six years later, just in time for the Depression, lucky guys.

But I know these people. They're like so many of the immigrant communities; I can call them "new Canadian" communities. They're as patriotic a Canadian, more patriotic a Canadian, as you're going to tend to find. They've worked hard all of their lives, they've sacrificed so much and they've built things. I've told you this before: They built things. They built schools, hospitals and churches. I'm going to talk about some of those churches, because I was in those churches on Sunday. They built churches and they built community halls, and they made sure that their kids had a better life than they did. By the time you got to, if not the second then surely the third generation, those kids had university and college educations, professional degrees and Ph.D.s. They were

professors in university and engineers and doctors and, yes, some of them lawyers.

This is what they get? This is what those folks get from Mr. McGuinty and his Liberal government? They get unaffordable electricity rates and home heating costs that are going to blow the roof off. They get an HST, a new tax, after the Premier, when he was campaigning, promised—I recall him promising—no new taxes.

This government has succumbed to outright grantism. Grantism permeates every single issue that this government promotes and advocates, and that's nothing for this grantist government to be proud of. Grantism, Speaker, grantism. It's not a proud day in the province of Ontario when a government that's overwhelmed by its own grantism can introduce a bill called An Act to promote good government.

Folks I'm talking to are part of that 86% of Ontarians who say that it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago. Those are the folks I was talking to this weekend. I don't know what folks you were talking to.

Because, you see, on Sunday, after we were at the Slovak Hall, we went over to Trappers with that young woman I told you about. Ms. Tellier's granddaughter was headed off to Australia, so Malcolm Allen gave her a Canadian flag and I gave her an Ontario flag. Malcolm Allen, the federal member of Parliament, gave her some Canada pins, and we said hi to the folks, and the young woman seemed rather pleased. On Sunday morning, we went to mass over at St. John the Baptist Hungarian Greek Catholic Church. That's over on Second Avenue. That's a historic church; that's the Byzantine church. It's my church, although I belong to the Ukrainian-Greek Catholic church. But this is the Hungarian-Greek Catholic church of the Hungarian community in Welland, who are of the Byzantine Catholic faith. It was a beautiful mass by Father Nick Deak, Father Deacon Laszlo Marozsan and Monsignor John Girhiny from Burlington, again, all of these long-time friends—and young Father Deacon Tibor Turi from Brampton, with his wonderful wife and two great kids.

Of course, you don't go to a two-hour mass with the Hungarian-Greek Catholics without being fed for at least two hours afterwards. So we went downstairs in the small hall underneath this great church, and there were a few hundred people there. Again, Malcolm Allen and I made sure we said hello to every one of them and spent some time listening to what they had to say.

There was a whole big contingent from St Michael's Hungarian Greek-Catholic Church in Hamilton. They came just to see Father Nicholas Deak, and the great thing about Father Deak and Father Marozsan is that they were worker-priests, which is a great tradition, especially in the Greek Catholic, Byzantine Catholic rite. They both worked at General Motors and became priests—and, of course, these are married priests. They have children and families, but they became priests while they were workers. Father—Monsignor Girhiny now, as well, is a worker-priest. And again, they had a little different

perspective because they worked in the factories, in the mills, and they've worked side by side with working women and working men and they saw the tragedies that these same working people endured and underwent and just survived.

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It was a great lunch. I stopped into the kitchen, of course, to say hello to, inevitably, the ladies. There was one man there, but it was the ladies. Many of them were mature, a few with the kerchiefs on. We had pork garlic sausage, homemade Hungarian, and the rice sausage—rice and a little bit of innards; nothing wrong with that—and of course some roasted chicken and salad. I did decline the dessert.

That was an opportunity for me to reflect on this piece of legislation, An Act to promote good government. You know, although I'm not sure I speak for every one of them, I've got a feeling that a whole lot of them don't believe that they've been served by good government to date, not under this Liberal regime consumed by grantism.

Sunday night we went over to the St. Kevin's parish church, the Roman Catholic church, because of course Sunday was a great day for all Catholics because Brother André of Montreal was canonized. He achieved sainthood. St. Kevin's parish is served by the Holy Cross fathers. I attended that mass as well, along with Malcolm. Peggy is very good at making sure that we attend the mass. She's a very good Catholic. That mass was conducted by Father James Mulligan, whom I've known for many, many years—the pastor at St. Kevin's—and by his assistant pastor, Father Norm Bordage.

That parish is very strongly committed to social justice. Young Paul Turner is a teacher at Notre Dame and is very strong in the anti-poverty movement and the churches, and Joe Barkovich is there. He's an editor at the Tribune, but he's very active in the church and in the anti-poverty movement. But of course, after we had the mass and we knelt and prayed and knelt and prayed—you may not understand, Speaker; these are Catholics. There's an awful lot of kneeling in the Catholic church. You've got those little things you flip over, the kneelers, and you're grateful for them. Of course, as you get older, you cheat. You put your knees down and rest your butt on the edge of the pew. That's true, isn't it?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I've seen it.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He says.

Unless somebody is looking at you on a direct profile like this, they can't tell you're doing it. You look as devoted as anybody else.

I went downstairs and talked to a lot of folks there. Again, it was a wonderful mixture, because there were a lot of mature folks, but then a huge contingent of Notre Dame High School students who were serving. Of course we had lasagne—the Catholic Women's League prepared the supper—and pork cutlets and potatoes and a chickpea and bean salad. It was tremendous. And desserts, but again I declined those for the obvious reasons. But I talked to folks there, and I talked to many folks whom I

have known, heck, for 20, 30, 40, 50 years. Again, I don't speak for all of them; I'm sure of it. Do you know what folks talked to me about? I don't think they believe they're being served by good government either.

You see, it would be a different thing if I could come here and say "Well, this bill solves it." We'd say, "Well, finally, finally, finally the bill is going to address the problems." But it doesn't. This doesn't have anything to do with good government. Please. Before anybody stands up and starts to get snarly about, "Oh, read the bill," I've read the bill, and I've read it over and over again, looking for the little kernel of something that makes for better government. Does the bill correct some oversights in various pieces of legislation? Well, sure it does. The amendments to the Travel Industry Act, we support. What does it do? I'll tell you what it does. The reason this is important is because this is what's covered by the insurance that you buy when you buy your travel—because it's very important. If you buy an airline ticket, as I understand it, off the Internet, you're at risk if that airline folds, and they do from time to time. But if you buy it through a travel agent, that travel agent—remember, we had the scandal here in Ontario a few years ago when one of the largest, longest-standing agencies that sells packages went under, leaving people stranded. Ontarians—their government, the McGuinty government, had done nothing to protect them. The McGuinty government knew that that particular package retailer was in trouble but kept silent. Sometimes silence can be akin to a crime. Families, little kids, people in Mexico, people stranded; they didn't have money, they didn't have cash, they'd run out of American—travellers' cheques; not necessarily American Express.

Here, the current provision in terms of defining "travel services" says, "transportation or sleeping accommodation for the use of a traveller, tourist or sightseer." The amendment expands it to say, "or other services combined with that transportation or sleeping accommodation."

I don't know. I suppose that could mean guide services, when you pay in advance for a guide to take you through Rome or wherever it is you happen to be going; a guide service wherever it is you're inclined to go.

So, fine. Heck, if the minister had brought forward a bill like that, we would have passed it on the nod, I'm sure. Give us a couple of days to make sure there's nothing sneaky in there, because this grantist government can sure be sneaky sometimes. But no big deal; not offensive.

Why, I heard the Attorney General talk about the amendments to the Justices of the Peace Act. The existing provisions in the Justices of the Peace Act say that there will be an annual advertisement for JPs in each region and that it shall accept applications for JPs on an ongoing basis, and now the amendment says that advertising shall happen on the request of the Attorney General. That seems, in and of itself, innocuous enough, but why at the request of the Attorney General? Why doesn't the advisory committee that performs this

function have the power to determine when there's a vacancy and the power to determine when there will be advertising? Think about it.

Do we risk restoring some patronage, some nepotism to the JP appointment process by giving the Attorney General the exclusive authority to decide when there will be advertising for a JP with respect to a vacancy? What this also does—let's be careful, and I say this to the parliamentary assistant as well. We know that in this province we still run with a shortage of qualified, competent and professional justices of the peace. This provision will allow the Attorney General to strangle the supply—parliamentary assistant, please. This provision will allow the Attorney General to artificially strangle the supply of JPs should his or her budget not allow it.

Does it give you pause? Does it give you some concern? Does it make you think that maybe this provision isn't as benign as the amendment to the Travel Industry Act? You can't hire JPs without an ad, and the Attorney General could simply, even with a vacancy, say, "Too bad, so sad. I'm glad"—all quotes attributed to the Attorney General—"and you won't advertise until I say so" or, more realistically, until the Premier's office says so, "or until one of our political friends becomes available for a patronage soft landing." It's like Red Rose tea: "Only in Canada, you say?" Well, only in Ontario.

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I don't agree with that amendment. I agree that there should only be advertisements when there's a vacancy, but it's my position that the advisory committee should be in the position to determine when there's a vacancy and when that advertising should proceed; otherwise the Attorney General will have political control over the supply of justices of the peace—and that's wrong. That's not right; it's wrong. And it doesn't address the ongoing concern about shortages of JPs, a concern that the Attorney General has attempted to address. Look, I give him credit for trying, but I know what he's up against. He has to go cap in hand to Management Board—cap in hand—begging for a few bucks. And you've got a government now that's in a panic, that's in a tailspin.

Let me show you how panicky they are. They had their little confab this weekend, down at the posh Sheraton Centre, and one of the keynote speakers was a fellow called Kerwin Swint, unknown to many. Kerwin Swint: a fascinating name in and of itself. He's a professor of political science at Kennesaw State University and he wrote this book called *Mudslingers: The Twenty-Five Dirtiest Political Campaigns of All Time*. I suspect he was a delightful speaker. Indeed, I read the book the other night. I commend it to people: *Mudslingers: The Twenty-Five Dirtiest Political Campaigns of All Time*, being featured at the Liberal confab this weekend past down at the Sheraton Centre.

I read the book. There's nothing in the book that tells you how to protect yourself from a mudslinging campaign. There's nothing in this book that tells you how to defend yourself or deflect a mudslinging campaign. This is a primer. The preface could have been written by

George Smitherman; in fact, the text could have been written by George Smitherman. Talk about mudslinging, the 25 dirtiest political campaigns of all time.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That would be the king of mudslinging.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: That's why he's doing so well.

Mr. Peter Kormos: These gentlemen interject, both of them, to their credit.

I found it remarkable and telling that this Liberal confab down at the Sheraton Centre—it's always been in that hotel, often. They have a little Shopsy's there. It's as close to Shopsy's as you're going to get.

Let's talk about the provisions of this bill, Bill 110. It has several provisions that relieve the Lieutenant Governor in Council of responsibility—I almost said liability, because responsibility means liability—for making regulations and extends them to the minister. Very dangerous stuff. We don't have to go far to reflect on the notorious—the now internationally notorious—G20 McGuinty regulation; the one that was misrepresented to the police, the public and, I say, to his own caucus. And that's a regulation that was passed by cabinet. We still haven't heard the whole story; we probably never will hear the whole story until there is a public inquiry. But I suspect, I just suspect, that Ontario Ombudsman André Marin, who I know has many fans in the government benches—

Mr. Michael Prue: Particularly the House leader.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Prue interjects.

I know that Ombudsman André Marin, who is a pretty smart guy—I'm impressed by his intellect, I tell you; I always have been. He's a very capable lawyer. I suspect, although he recognizes that his jurisdiction is relatively modest, that he will do whatever he can to find out how the G20 regulation could have happened.

This is from the sublime to the ridiculous, when I read in this morning's paper that a Constable Adam Josephs, known colloquially as "Officer Bubbles," is suing somebody for libel and slander, \$1.2-million defamation lawsuit against the website that had cartoons of him, along with the YouTube of him. I watched the YouTube. I hadn't seen the YouTube before. Here's a very young, thin, casually dressed, nouveau hippie blowing bubbles as the cops are standing there in this line outside, I presume, the detention centre. This guy—I don't know if he's all steroided up or not, but he's got the arms crossed—you know how you cross your arms so you get the guns big, right? At least as teenagers, it was important that you put both hands underneath the biceps and you pound them out. So here's this guy, Officer Bubbles, with the guns up and he's standing there, and this sweet young woman is blowing bubbles. It was so reminiscent—you and I will remember; well, I don't remember the 1960s that well, but I've seen photos. But it was that whole era of peace and love and flowers.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Yakabuski has the same problem I have about recalling the 1960s.

Go ahead, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I'd just remind the member from Welland to occasionally at least come back to the title of the bill, "good government."

Mr. Peter Kormos: Speaker, I appreciate the direction and guidance. I've been speaking about the absence of good government for 40 minutes now.

Was it good government that gave us the G20 regulation that caused—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The parliamentary assistant interjects.

Was it good government that created that wacky, weird regulation, and was it good government—and I'm being very careful about language; I'm not accusing any given person of doing this—to mislead the police, the public and the members of this Legislature about the effect of that legislation? Was it good government to introduce that regulation secretly, resulting in the arrests of at least hundreds, if not thousands, of people, most of whom have had charges withdrawn and most of whom weren't even charged in the first place? Is that good government?

Officer Bubbles: Jeez, shame on you. Man it up a little bit, will you? Jeez. Suing for defamation. I saw that YouTube, and trust me, it's not defamation. He looks like a damn fool, and he's taken on by a skinny young woman, a young teenaged woman, and he looks like a dupa. That's what he looks like.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Dupa." We know that one.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Good God. And the guy thinks he's helping his career by having that stuff publicized, when the photos are being broadcast? Is he really helping his manly image? He's a real Irish Spring kind of guy, I suppose, huh? Jeez.

I met a whole lot of the cops who were out there during the G20 weekend, a whole bunch of women and men from Niagara region who recognized me and talked to me. The cops followed orders. We know that. The cops followed what they were told was the law, but from time to time, you get one who's just a head-shaker. I can just imagine the stuff that's being posted on Officer Bubbles's locker, right? The mockery—this guy's going to be off on—what do they call it?—harassment leave or stress leave. You could write "steroid" across his forehead. He'll be off on stress leave because he can't take the ribbing he's taking from his colleagues for being taken on and challenged by a petite young woman blowing bubbles.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: They're buying him panties, and they're not even the right size.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member notes.

That's not good government. This Liberal confab wasn't an exercise in good government. It was an exercise in flight. It was an exercise in circling the wagons. It was an exercise in fear. You could smell it outside the Sheraton Centre. It was an exercise in, "If you can't fight fair and win, well then fight dirty and still lose."

We've seen that agenda being played out in the Legislature already this morning. We see ministers like the Minister of Energy reading his script—and it's so transparent. I mean, be a little more subtle. You're paying big bucks for this stuff.

Quite frankly, you're beginning the negative stuff far too early; you're beginning at the wrong point. Read the book, for Pete's sake. Don't just pay the guy 20 Gs or however much he earned to come here and deliver his speech. Read the book and the admonition that "Attacking one's opponent usually comes later in a campaign, after a candidate has had a chance to establish his image with the voters first." Your image, the Liberal image, is already beyond tarnished; it's blackened. All of those curly copper scouring pads and all the elbow grease in the world ain't going to take the tarnish away from this government. Here's the author saying, "Attacking one's opponent usually comes later in a campaign, after a candidate has had a chance to establish his image with the voters first."

Let's suppose the Premier wants to do things his own way. Now, that's what got them into the trouble in the first place. I just find it bizarre, though, because when you try to pull those stunts, the public doesn't find it particularly tasteful.

Again, it's the snarl of a dog who's blind and limp and who can't control its bladder, who can't hunt anymore.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's just making noise.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's the snarl of a dog who's just making noise, because the dog knows that its time is near and it might as well get one more good growl out of life because, Lord knows, there ain't any other pleasures it's going to have. That's what the noise is coming from this government.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Seems that way.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I don't know. I suppose in their caucus meetings, the Premier speaks to the caucus and reassures them that the poll saying that 76% of respondents would like to see another party in power is just a snapshot. All of a sudden, these kinds of polls—when they're the other way around become telltale directions and winners—"This is just a snapshot, folks. Don't get spooked by it." I don't know. I haven't been there, but I suspect the Premier is saying something like that in caucus: "Don't be spooked by it."

The other thing the Premier and the mandarins are saying is "Here's the script; stick to it." The mandarins are writing the scripts. We see cabinet ministers using those scripts. The mandarins are saying, "Don't worry."

Don't worry? Please. The Liberal backbenchers are growing really worried. "Trust me; I'm worried," is what Liberal backbenchers are saying. I've got a feeling—I don't know for a fact—that some of them don't particularly like going home on the weekend. I've got a feeling that when they go home, they roll a boulder in front of the door and say, "Honey, if that phone rings, don't answer it." I've got that feeling. I'm not sure; I don't know this for a fact.

I've got a feeling that they're being told, "Look, governments after their second term always have trouble. This is cyclical stuff." I've got a feeling they're being told that. "But don't worry. Look, we're going to have to work really hard, and we're going to have to do some good stuff, but we can win back the voters."

With this? With Bill 110? Give me a break. You couldn't win a kewpie doll at a fixed carnival game with this bill. This is pathetic stuff. You deliver this as good government? If you called it an omnibus bill to clean up certain pieces of legislation, we'd live with it.

You know what I also find distasteful? That as a result of this weekend's confab, which I presume was about the Liberals trying, amongst other things, to rebrand themselves, to polish up the image, to get a facelift—"We'll give you a new suit of clothes"—and what comes out of that? What's the biggest news that comes out of that? The quiet leadership race.

The front-runner: the Attorney General.

The transportation minister, Kath—you know who she is. I have a great deal of respect for her. She'd be a formidable leader. Far more useful to have her into the next election than as leader of a third party after the election. She may not want to be the leader after the next election.

Dwight Duncan—oh, sorry; the Minister of Finance—heir apparent? I don't think so. Maybe in his mind. Certainly not in his colleague the Minister of Economic Development's mind. She'll have something to say about that.

The health minister: a powerful person in the Liberal Party, well-connected.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: popular with the party's youth wing, at the age of 49. You guys have got problems if that's your youth guy. Think about it, come on.

A more viable contender is the environmental minister, who perceives himself as a pretty slick guy. He doesn't hesitate to let his colleagues know it, I'm sure of that.

Liberal backbenchers laugh. Sh; stop that. You're not being helpful to your own careers.

And then the former health minister, the Don Valley East MPP: wishful thinking. I don't know what mama did to get that into this article, but—and then, of course, the former Attorney General, who is still youthful and who has undergone a conversion. I read the Toronto Life article about him.

I don't for the life of me know or understand why the member for Ottawa Centre was omitted. There's a young, bright member of the caucus. I have no idea why he wouldn't be on this short list of potential leadership people, but I do know this: that caucus is just a cauldron a-boiling. There's rumours and there's suggestions and there's innuendo and there's gossip and whispering in the hallways, and everybody there knows something from a trusted source. "I know for a fact that a, b or c."

It's like the buzz that hovers before a cabinet shuffle, and there is one more shuffle coming, because, you see, a

government in crisis like this needs a safe cabinet. It needs cabinet ministers who will toe the line. It can't risk a cabinet minister who goes rogue, who dares to think for himself or herself, or a cabinet minister who, for instance, would say at cabinet, "Are you guys crazy with this G20 regulation? It's a disgrace, and it's not going to achieve any good result."

The other interesting opportunity the government had here was to breathe some life, some backbone into its Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. That sad, pathetic shell of a ministry, a ministry in name only—does it have any staff, or is it all the automatic voice telephone machinery? Because there's not a whole lot of consumer protection that's coming out of this government. People are getting ripped off left and right. People are getting ripped off by unscrupulous roofers, for instance: guys like Ed Parent down in Welland, who should be in jail for what he does to his customers. One customer, around eight years ago, paid to have his roof removed on an old house. The customer believed that you strip a roof down and re-roof it. You don't put shingles on top of shingles. Again, that's the way we do things down in Welland. He was assured that that was going to be done. Eight years later the roof started to rot. He paid a good price. Ed Parent comes around again and says, "Your roof needs re-roofing." The guy says, "Yes, I know; look at it. But you only roofed it eight years ago." "Well, no, but you've got the trees and the sun and"—okay. The fellow said, "Okay, strip it off again." "No, no, I don't want to strip it off. Just roof over it." The fellow became suspicious, Ed Parent saying he doesn't want to strip it off.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: Too much to strip off.

Mr. Peter Kormos: So he hired another roofer. Well, this fellow darn near swallowed his bubble gum when they do roofer stripping and in the first three feet, he's stripping down to bare wood but then from three feet on up, he's hitting two previous layers of asphalt, plus cedar from when the house was built 100 years ago. No wonder Eddie Parent didn't want to strip the roof: because it would have revealed that he didn't strip the roof in the first place.

This government doesn't regulate people like roofers. When you hire a plumber, for instance, for a new furnace, you've got a plumber who's a tradesperson, and if you live in Welland, we have master plumbers, right? They are city-licensed. Not all municipalities have that. I use the Pietzes, Bob and Rob Pietz from down on Niagara Street. I'd trust them with my life. They've served me well. They've never ripped anybody off.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Water still running downhill?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, no, they do my heating and water tank. I use young Marc Krizon for my plumber. I've known Marc since he was just a kid, but he's not a kid any more. He's been doing my plumbing for a good number of years.

So where's the regulation of high-priced services like roofing?

Let me tell you about the Bussi family.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Eddie Parent send you a Christmas card?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Eddie Parent should be in jail. At least he'd get free franking privileges if he was in jail.

Let me tell you what happened to the Bussi family. The bill purports to amend the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services Act. It is called the bill to create good government, so one would think, then, that there would be some protection for new home buyers. The Bussi family—Dino and Jen Bussi; three kids: Eric, six; and twin girls, Megan and Kaitlyn, both three—went to a homebuilder called Randy Gill, Heritage Homes. This guy should be doing pen time. It's on Maple Street in St. Catharines, Randy Gill, Heritage Homes. They contracted with him to build a house. What happened is that, in building a house, Gill had asked for advances as the house was progressing in terms of the stages; first \$50,000, then another \$50,000. But what the Bussis learned is that they didn't own the property. Gill purports to have gone bankrupt, and the bank owns the property to the tune of a \$200,000 mortgage. Where I come from, that's called fraud. It's like Madoff and those other people running Ponzi schemes. Gill obviously is milking the money that's being paid to him by new home buyers. They're not getting the best legal advice in the world, if they sought any, by virtue of not making sure they had title to the property before they were paying somebody to build a home on it. This homebuilder, this Randy Gill, held himself out as a person of great reputation. These people are probably SOL.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, these guys hold themselves out as a great government.

Mr. Peter Kormos: This bill is as close as they get to saying they're going to create good government, and there's nothing in here that protects the Bussi family from unscrupulous builders, outright fraud artists. If the police can—who knows what they'll do with an investigation. Police services are so stressed and short of officers that doing a fraud investigation, because it's so time-consuming, gets put on the backburner. They've got crimes against persons that they have to deal with as higher priorities.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, they're busy preventing a bubble attack.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Ha, the member notes. There's only one "Officer Bubbles." I can just see it: "Oh, the bubble! Oh, another bubble! Oh, no! A bubble in the groin! That hurt."

Mr. Paul Miller: That was two bubbles.

Mr. Peter Kormos: What's the matter with this guy? What's his name, Officer Bubbles? What is his name? Constable Adam Josephs. "Oh, you got me right in the heart with a bubble." He's a silly guy. That he takes himself seriously, that he exposes himself to this much more mockery—the guy is a laughingstock now. He will be—think about it, Speaker. YouTube has just compounded its distribution, like a hundredfold. So if folks want to see it: youtube.ca. Type in "Officer Bubbles," that's all—maybe "Officer Bubbles, G20"—and watch

Officer Bubbles ducking and dodging. It's like one of those cowboy movies. The guy's down below the desk, shooting, and it's bubbles coming over at him.

Member for Renfrew, do you have anything to say about this?

Mr. John Yakabuski: To the member from Welland: You have me speechless. My eyes are tearing up. My tear ducts are working.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He responds. So we near the end.
Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You never can tell. Look, he may be off on a claim now: "Honest to God, Chief, the bubble hit me right in the thigh and I can't walk anymore. I can't move that leg."

Mr. Paul Miller: He's been bubble-ized.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yeah.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member only has a few minutes left. I'd ask him to come back to Bill 110, good government. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I tried to talk about good government, but the sadness and the tragedy is so overwhelming that all we can do is perhaps but laugh. This bill doesn't create good government. It doesn't restore it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It doesn't even encourage it.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The bill doesn't even encourage it. It doesn't facilitate it. It doesn't pretend to create it. In fact, it can propose some very dangerous propositions.

I don't blame the parliamentary assistant. I don't blame him. He's doing what he's got to do, and I understand that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He does what he's told.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, he does.

I know that—look, the AG's going to skedaddle, and the PA is going to be left with all the heavy lifting. He's going to have to do all the apologizing.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The explaining.

Mr. Peter Kormos: All the explaining. And for the life of me—

Mr. Michael Prue: He just has to get elected a few more times and he might even be in cabinet.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Oh, no. Mr. Zimmer may well find—I'm sorry. The member for Willowdale may well find himself elected and he will be a critic of some ministry. I would commend him as an AG critic or a justice critic. It'll be a small caucus, though.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'll certainly find out what he thinks about good government bills and briefings after that.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It'll be a small caucus.

Let's talk about briefings—yes, briefings—because that was raised. What has been spoken to with respect to briefings is true. The bureaucrats come, and they're great people, because I've known them—most of us have—for a long, long time now, so we know each other. We've got relationships. But along comes some little bag-holder, bag-carrier—

Interjection: From the ministry.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes. Let's see: a ministry burp-catcher. Along comes a minister's burp-catcher, and she

sits there. I say, "Can I ask questions?" She says, "Don't answer that." She thinks she's Perry Mason or something. She's been watching too much—"Don't answer that."

And finally, this is how—sorry, folks. You say, "Look, sorry, sir or miss. If you keep doing that, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. This is my briefing, not yours." "But you can't do that." "Yes, I can. It's my briefing, not yours." We've already had that dealt with by a Speaker in this chamber, haven't we? It's been made very, very clear.

I let ministerial staff stay. I have no qualms about them knowing what my concerns are. The minister's going to find out about it sooner or later. Let the minister know. As a matter of fact, one ministry here was very co-operative when we were talking about an issue in a bill the other day around the reporting by pharmacists and doctors. The parliamentary assistant, the member for Guelph, heard my concerns during second reading debate. She very thoroughly and properly went and got information from the ministry staff and spoke to the concerns that I had raised. Again, we're going to wait for committee now, but that was the responsible thing. I have no secrets.

But, no, you tell those little ministry staffers, the little burp-catchers, to either be quiet and pay attention—"you might learn something"—or you're going to be asked to leave, and you will leave, and the bureaucracy will stay here.

So there we are. I so regret having to—not fold my tent, because I'll be back, but end this. I look forward, of course, with great eagerness and delight, to the questions and comments that I'm sure will be profound and incisive.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: Here are some observations, having listened to the comments from both opposition parties. I had to note, Speaker, that you made, by my count, six—I might have missed one; it might have been seven—interventions to the opposition, admonishing them to stay on topic, to start talking about the bill, not about whatever they were chatting about.

Why did you have to intervene, I asked myself. Why did the Speaker have to intervene? That's because the opposition parties in this debate on good governance were winging it. Why were they winging it? Because they hadn't gone to the briefings. They weren't informed. They did not take the issues raised in this good government bill seriously. That's from opposition parties that are debating in this chamber. They're hoping to form the next government. They're not going to form the next government—just in their mind—until they start thinking seriously about governance issues. Their comments this afternoon lacked in depth, they lacked in substance, but they were, I concede, mildly and wittily entertaining. We passed an hour with a few laughs and a few giggles and so on, but where did they advance any good governance

arguments? Where's the evidence that they've studied this bill? Where's the evidence that they're interested in the good governance issues? Surely, as members of the loyal opposition, that's their primary duty: to be interested in good governance.

Did I see any evidence of that this afternoon in this debate from the opposition parties? No. What it suggests to me is that at the end of the day they're not serious about good government, they're not capable of good government and they're not going to form the next government.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak about the bill to some extent.

We're supposed to be commenting on the previous speaker's debate. Effectively, just as a reminder, he started off talking about his 1994 Chev S10. I recall him speaking about it quite a few years ago; I think about 14 years ago. I think he used to have a dog Snoopy or a beagle that used to ride in it, that ended up at his parents' place because he was just too much time in Toronto, it wasn't fair to the poor dog.

But to go on, the PA went on and on and on. In his comments he focused on the briefing again. I can tell you that when I was given the honour and privilege to serve as a minister, I held briefings before legislation was introduced in the House. At that time—correct me if I'm wrong because I don't remember if there was a change—it was Mr. Parsons and Ms. Martel who attended. Now, as a minister, I attended the briefing with those individuals and answered questions on behalf of the bill.

I would ask, was the PA there during the briefing for the other caucus members? Probably not. But each of us has to stand on our own. I can effectively see what's happening now as we're setting a tone here so that in the Legislature—and I know the member from Hamilton East will be brought to order at some point by the current government members, who will say, "How can you do that? Because you voted against good government," because of the name of the bill.

There are some components in here, but I would like to get to the real issue that I wanted to talk about on the member's debate, which was the expansion of the Attorney General's ability regarding the JP appointments and those aspects. Individuals in the province of Ontario elect governments to make decisions. As we move forward, appointments are brought forward because they represent a certain perspective, and that's change in government. That's how you change the ship. I'm not so sure—and I'd like to hear from the member some more comments regarding that particular aspect.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It's always a pleasure to sit here for an hour and be entertained by the member from Welland. But not only are you being entertained; you are actually learning a great many things. He has an uncanny way of using conventional wisdom, of talking about the

ordinary people and events in his riding that brings life to whatever we are debating. However arcane as this bill is, however ethereal it might be, however non-productive it is to the ordinary people of this province, he can still bring something back of those little town hall meetings, those people with whom he grew up and all of the things.

He is a member who obviously listens to his constituents. He is a member who obviously cares a great deal about what they have to say about the current issues at hand. And I would bet that there aren't 10 people in all of Ontario who give too much darn about this bill, because it doesn't really affect all that much.

He is also a member who is extremely well read. I was reading this newspaper on the weekend—

Interjection: Who is?

Mr. Michael Prue:—this member here—he's extremely well read. I was reading the newspaper on the weekend and I was marvelling at this book or at this speaker that the Liberals had at their convention about the 25 dirtiest campaigns in the history of North America. I was thinking, "What a great book. I'm going to have to get a copy that of that book. I want to read that book." Then I discover, when I get here today, that not only does the member from Welland have that book; he's already read it. If you look at it, it's well thumbed; it's already underlined and notated. I think that he really knows of what he speaks, he uses conventional wisdom, and I think the government members opposite ought to listen a great deal more than they do.

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I, too, enjoy the member from Welland when he has a full hour to expand on any number of issues during his speech. I did hear an interjection somewhere in the vicinity—it's kind of a nice way to spend an hour if you have nothing better to do, so that's always a nice thing in this place. While I was sitting, for most of the hour, listening, at least with one ear, and doing some work on the side—and I had to slip out for a minute or so to take a constituent's call, but I caught him on the TV, so I didn't miss any of the hour.

I enjoyed the opening of his comments, in particular his 1994 Chevy pickup—the member from Oshawa referenced it. I just transferred over my 1998 Buick with a little over 300,000 kilometres—I'm hoping that my son gets another 150,000 off it. It is well serviced, as a six-cylinder, by a GM dealer as well.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can have that on a 2008.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: That's what happens when you drive to Renfrew and all the environs; you'll put that on in a matter of weeks rather than a matter of years.

I enjoyed his comments about roofing. I know the experiences of roofing and finding that you have double layers of shingles. When we did a property that we have in the country, a summer place, we began stripping shingles and found we had two layers of 40-year-old shingles on there. It was a real testament to my son and I and some helpers to redo all those things. So I know the type of experience of which he speaks.

The good government bill that we have before us, as the parliamentary assistant indicated in his earliest remarks, as well as the minister, is an opportunity to clean up legislation. It's a process that goes on in many jurisdictions. It brings together information from some seven ministries, I believe, and some 70 amendments to legislation that will make for better governance in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I'm so pleased that so many people paid such close attention to what I was saying. Unfortunately, they didn't understand all of the references and the metaphors and the imagery that was being painted. We're very interested in good government; we are, just like 76% of the people in Ontario are. Seventy-six per cent of Ontarians say that they would like to see another party in power. Do you want good government in Ontario? It's not going to be this silly bill that's worth nothing but a few jokes; it's going to be to throw these people, the Liberals, Dalton McGuinty and his gang, out of office, put them where the rump is now, and elect politicians who are committed to their constituents; elect politicians who don't believe in imposing HST on electricity costs; elect politicians who believe that pensions should be stable and secure and that the government has a role to play in doing that; elect people who believe that seniors deserve to be cared for in their own homes rather than being left in hospital beds, as reported by the LHIN from Haldimand, Norfolk, Brantford and Niagara. I tell you, the people of Ontario want good government, and they know that it's not about Bill 110, An Act to promote good government.

I told you, Speaker, that I spent a weekend and a half dwelling on this, pondering it, thinking about it and reflecting on it. Indeed, the government would like to say that I didn't read it. It's the parliamentary assistant who screwed up the reference to the Evidence Act and failed to understand that the only amendments to the Evidence Act were with respect to changing the regulation-making power, whereas his earlier speech—check the Hansard—would have you believe that there were some fundamental changes being made to the Evidence Act that were going to affect courts and lawyers and trials and trial processes. And it's not his fault, because it's a script. The script that is contained in ministerial responses is part of the scripting that's derived from Mudslingers: The Twenty-Five Dirtiest Political Campaigns of All Time. These people hired a \$25,000 guy. They could have bought the book for \$14.95 and been further ahead; they would have got all of the facts.

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm really pleased that I have an opportunity to speak to Bill 110. I am going to talk about some of the things that are contained in the bill. Probably I'm going to touch on about three, although

there are roughly 70 items in the bill and it does touch some seven ministries.

The first thing I'm going to talk about is the changes with respect to the Justices of the Peace Act. Now, regularly I have people contact me, contact my office. They have seen advertising in the local media inviting people to put their name forward to be considered as a justice of the peace. Of course, people are busy, but they're interested, and I'm always delighted when I hear that there are people in my riding who are eager to serve. They take a lot of time to put together meaningful applications, and then they submit their applications and they find that in the area where they live there are no vacancies. So they would say that it has been advertised locally and they in good faith put their application in, thinking that if it's advertised, in my case, for example, in the Belleville paper, there must be a vacancy in our region, only to find out that they have applied and that would not be the case.

In the good government bill, Bill 110, the change that is being proposed would remove the requirement for the Attorney General to put advertising in all of the media across Ontario. The Attorney General, he or she, can determine where the advertising should take place. I think this makes a tremendous amount of sense. For my constituents as well, it will be very reassuring to know that when there is advertising for a position of justice of the peace in a local paper, that would indicate there would be a vacancy locally.

You know, when we bring forward good government bills, very often it is because constituents have come to us as members, and I would offer that members from all sides of the House have identified where in legislation there are problems, where there are areas that need to be tidied up, that need to be corrected, that need some attention. That is why we bring forward a good government bill.

I do want to say as well to all of the people in Ontario, who I think are very responsible—they understand the role of government and they understand that from time to time they, too, can have an impact very directly in having us understand how we can ensure that the business of government runs smoothly, that it serves the people of the province. They bring ideas forward about what makes sense to them or doesn't make sense to them. We, in turn, bring that forward to ministers. As a result of the information flowing in that way, we have before us Bill 110, a good government bill, where there are some 70 items that in many cases are the result of this kind of activity that has gone on, where people from our constituency offices have identified how we can make legislation better, stronger and clearer. That is what Bill 110 is doing. I offer as one example the changes to the Justices of the Peace Act, and it makes tremendous sense to me.

I'm also going to move to schedule 3. This is the part of Bill 110 that deals with the Education Act. Really, there are a couple of pieces here that I'm delighted are here. I think that they're very important. Again, I thank

the stakeholders who have us understand how we can continue to work with them, where they may have concerns with legislation that is in place or may not yet be in place and how we can, for their purposes—for our purposes as well—make legislation better and more clear.

I'm going to that part of the act on page iii; it's schedule 3. There are two things that are addressed in this part of the act with respect to the Education Act. There is a very dated part of the act, and it is that part of the act that creates the Essex County French-language Secondary School Act. It's an act that was brought in in 1977. Of course, in the province of Ontario, we have had French-language school boards, I think, since 1998; French-language school boards were established in the province of Ontario. Prior that, and I had the privilege of serving on an elected school board, there were French-language representatives on English-language boards. I do think that it was very important that French-language people gained total responsibility with respect to the governance of their school system, both the French Catholic and French public. In 1998, French-language boards were established in the province of Ontario. There have been wonderful things happening even before 1998 but most definitely since 1998 under the auspices of the French-language boards.

However, when you look at the Education Act, there is a particular part that does reference the Essex County French-language Secondary School Act. It's redundant. It's outdated. That is why we have taken the opportunity in Bill 110 to say it is no longer necessary, and it is removed.

There is another part of the Education Act that is amended in this bill, and it is also with respect to the French language. It is to amend the definition of the French-language instructional unit. It will correct a previous drafting—there was an oversight in the previous drafting of the Education Act—and it will clarify the minister's authority to add terms and conditions to the permission given to school boards to offer French immersion and clarify the intent of the legislation for both English- and French-language school boards. Right now, in the Education Act, a school board that intends to provide French immersion for the students in its board receives that permission from the minister.

You would know, Speaker, that the Education Act has been amended to enable boards to provide full-day kindergarten and extended day programs for children in their boards. This is an initiative that has been very, very positively received by parents, by people in our communities and by school boards. I have to say, I believe that it confirms our government's commitment to do everything that we can to enable students, our youngest learners, to be successful. We know that when they have a good start before they get to grade 1, they are more likely to be successful when they get to school. That is why our government is committed to establishing full-day kindergarten in all schools in Ontario by 2015.

With the introduction of the legislation that will require that, we also introduced in the legislation the ability for boards, where there are enough parents who think they want extended day services—we have included that in the Education Act as well. And, of course, all the programs that I have talked about are available in both the English language and the French language.

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The French-language community thought it was very important to clarify with respect to the extended day programs that English-language boards may provide, if there are sufficient numbers. What our French-language partners reminded us was that it was very important to clarify that the programs that would be offered in extended day—that maybe the extension of a French immersion program would not be the French-language program.

For those who meet with our French-language partners, this is a very important issue and did require attention. I thank them very much. I've had many occasions to meet with the representatives of the French-language community with respect to the French-language schools in Ontario. Also, I must say that I hear very regularly from our minister responsible for francophone affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, who is always making sure that I, as minister, and we, as government, are doing all that we can to pay attention to the important issues that are raised by our colleagues in the French-language community.

I think it's important that we have taken this opportunity in Bill 110 to address the very valid concerns that have come to our attention. It is for that reason that we are providing this clarification, that for those English-language boards that would choose to offer French immersion programs for their English-language families—and by the way, I want to say to the boards that do provide that, they obviously have listened to the parent community. I also want to say that, as minister, I hear from many parents whose children have participated and they are so appreciative of the quality of the program that they receive. I think it's appropriate to say today that we thank and congratulate the teachers who have been working so very well to ensure the quality of the program that the children and their families receive.

I think that it's important, though, that we have a very clear understanding in extended day, when families would say that they would look for some French-language instruction or some French-language exposure for children in extended day, it's not part of the French program. The French immersion program and the French-language program are quite distinct, as they should be, and that's what our French-language partners have very effectively reminded us. They've also, in my view, put an excellent case why we need to make this correction and that this is an appropriate time to have that addressed in a good government bill.

Those are two changes that are contained in the bill that will impact the Education Act. It will amend the act. These changes have come to us because the people who

are impacted by what we do have said it is important that we pay attention to these issues. I do want to again thank our French-language stakeholders for the great job that they do both in our schools and in assisting and supporting those in education.

Another part of the good government bill that I think is important to touch on today—I have been listening to the debate over the course of the afternoon and I know that there has been some debate about when members of the opposition and/or the public would have had some input into this document. What I can say to the people in this assembly and the people who are watching is that our government, when we introduce legislation, always takes it to committee. All of our bills go to committee, and it is at committee that we are very eager to hear from opposition members about how bills can be improved. We are also very eager to hear from members of the public, to understand from the average Ontarian how the legislation will impact them and how it can be improved. That continues to be our commitment to the people, which is really, if you consider the history of this place and how it runs, the way we make laws. We don't get together before a bill is introduced and say, "Okay, what do you think should be in it and what do you think should be in it?" and bring it into the House. If that were the case, what purpose would there be for debate? We bring legislation in. It is debated in this very special place. It then leaves this House. It can go to committee. And when I say it can go to committee, our government has a very clear practice of making sure that the people of Ontario have an opportunity to have their say about legislation that is proposed.

There have, however, been governments in this place that have not done that. There have been governments that have brought in bills, brought in bills, brought in bills, with no committee hearings—none. I witnessed that myself. I say that I think the laws we've brought forward since being in government have followed a very time-honoured and traditional pattern, one that works and one that gives what's most important to the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario have had an opportunity to have a say on any proposed piece of legislation.

There's one more point that I want to make with respect to something that I think is very important that people understand is in this bill, another one of the 70-some items that are being addressed in the good government bill. It has to do with the proposed changes with respect to labour and employment. There's one change to the Employment Standards Act that would ensure consistency in the language that's used throughout the document. I know some people would say, "Well, that language, that doesn't really matter to people in my riding." But I would say that, actually, I come to understand that the language in these documents does indeed matter to people in our ridings, particularly when they might be impacted by employment standards. Then the words in the act and their accuracy matter to them a great deal.

I'm looking at page 34 of the act. It's schedule 7, and it is designed—when we talk about good government,

good government relies on good legislation, and good legislation is legislation that is consistent: When people in Ontario read a bill, read a law, it is consistent and makes sense to them.

Another thing with respect to the labour and employment piece of this: Proposed amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act would allow those who receive payments under the act to have greater choice in terms of how those payments would be delivered to them. I can say, with respect to my constituents and those who have had the occasion to speak with me or made the occasion to speak with me about the workplace safety insurance payments that they received, it has from time to time been the case that the legislation that directs payments has not always met their own personal and/or family needs. Here we have, in this bill, taken the time. We've listened, and I'm sure not just in my riding. I'm sure there have been constituents in other ridings who have brought their stories forward, who have identified that the way the legislation is written right now is problematic. It does not enable them to meet their needs. These are benefits that they are entitled to, and yet they're not getting to them in a way that really does benefit them. We thank them very much for bringing this to our attention. We have brought forward our idea as a government on how this can work for them better.

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Now, we have debate under way, and I would certainly encourage and invite my colleagues on the other side of the House to pay some close attention to some of these changes. We think that we're doing the right thing here, but if there is a way that we can make the legislation better and stronger, I think that would be important to hear about in this room. Failing in this room, committees are always an excellent place as well to identify how we can ensure that the laws in place for the people of Ontario are working for those people, serving those people and meeting their needs.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on the comments made by the Minister of Education. One thing I will give her credit for is that she did speak to the bill, because I didn't hear the parliamentary assistant speak to the bill at all. He just continued to criticize the opposition for missing a briefing at some point. I do want to point out that this is an opportunity for the government, as they talk about their good government bill, to actually—obviously it affects a lot of legislation, there's a lot of people that will be impacted by some of these changes. They may be minor changes, but it's a good opportunity to have decent committee hearings, not something like the Far North Act, where the committee meetings were cancelled in the north. Let's travel the bill and let's show this bill to the people of the province of Ontario, what these changes really mean.

That's the challenge I would ask the minister: Is in fact this bill going to committee and will the bill have an opportunity to be travelled to other parts of the province?

Going back to the Far North Act for a moment, Bill 191, many, many people in northern Ontario are very upset with what happened with that legislation. It was rammed through very, very quickly, and of course the committee hearings in northern Ontario were actually cancelled, and we've had demonstrations on the lawn of Queen's Park since. The member brags about their record on listening to the public. Well, this is a good opportunity. Let's see this bill travel, as we would expect it to, and not have this disastrous example of what happened with the Far North Act, about which, as I said earlier, I've had a number of concerns from aboriginals in my community. I've been in touch with aboriginal communities in northern Ontario. As well, business people in northern Ontario are very, very disappointed in the performance of this government and its actions in northern Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Housekeeping perhaps, and from time to time some pretty dangerous stuff to boot, but for the life of me, I don't understand what any of this has to do with good government.

Is online gambling the right thing or wrong thing to do? Seventy-one per cent: Wrong. Was the HST the right thing or the wrong thing to do? Eighty-one per cent: Wrong. Were eco fees the right thing or wrong thing to do? Seventy-three per cent: Wrong.

You see, people define good government as government that doesn't expose their kids with mommy or daddy's credit card to Internet gambling, the most addictive form of gambling possible. People see good government as government that doesn't impose new taxes—by virtue of an HST—on goods and services that were never taxed before, especially when the leader of the government promised no new taxes in an almost “read my lips” scenario. People in Ontario don't see good government as a government that sneaks up on them from behind and just bites them on the butt with eco fees. The good people of Ontario don't see good government as government that won't listen to seniors when it comes to their concerns, that won't listen to people who are languishing in hospitals ready to be discharged but who can't be because this minister and this government won't fund even two hours a day of home care for them. People don't see it as good government when their heating costs are escalating through the roof. People don't see it as good government when the government is delisting medical health care services. People don't see it as good government when a government creates secret laws in the dark of the night and then misleads the people of Ontario, including police officers and its own backbenchers in the Parliament of Ontario, about the contents of that legislation. People don't see it as good government when you have a government that takes its power for granted, when you've got a government that abuses its power and when you've got a government that treats the people of Ontario with disdain.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: The good people of this province see it as good government when you reform their tax system, when you cut their personal taxes, when you make their employers more cost-competitive, when you get rid of an archaic, expensive, obsolete and, by today's standard, stupid method of taxing consumption and replace it with the way the rest of the world does the tax on consumption. People see that as good government.

People see it as good government when you look at your seniors and say, “How can we make your lives better? We can increase your property tax credits. We can give you a tax credit to help you overcome the fact that energy prices are rising everywhere in the world.”

We look at the prices of energy in Ontario, and we say, “Our energy prices in Ontario: How do they compare with Europe—anywhere in Europe?” Ours are way lower. How do they compare with all of the other Great Lakes states, all of the other Midwestern states? Our prices are lower. So we say to ourselves, “Are we spending billions of dollars to renew one of the most essential things that serves Ontario, which is our electricity generating and transmission system?” The answer is no, because we're spending tens of billions of dollars doing it, and we're doing it because it has to be done.

The good people of Ontario look at us and say, “That's good government. That's the kind of thing we're looking for to make sure that in the years 2030, 2040 and 2050 our children and our grandchildren will know that when they plug something into the socket, the lights are going to come on. They'll know that as we renew that system, they'll be good jobs. They know that the construction industry will have something to work on. They know that this is going to be clean energy.

What a good-government bill comes down to is a whole lot of housekeeping and, in this case, a whole lot of good sense.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I wanted to mention that I appreciate the minister's comments. She was very direct and to the point and she answered some of the questions that came forward, which means she paid attention to the bill, which is important, and that's how to move forward. When she talked about the Justices of the Peace Act and the changes that came forward, it gave a better understanding for the Legislature on how that works. That's how the chamber should work, in my opinion—that it came forward.

We all take everybody as an honourable member. At least they came forward; one, she paid attention to know that those are the questions I had, and two, she answered them. Quite frankly, that was good to hear, and I think we need a little bit more of that. Also, it stuck to the topic. It was good to see that the content of the bill was there. It answered a lot of questions for a lot of members. So I appreciate that coming forward, and I think a lot more of that debate would be a lot more functional in our House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of Education has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I do appreciate the comments that have been made on all sides of the House. Yes, I think that it is an important piece of legislation, and when I say “an important piece,” any time that we can look at the laws of Ontario and understand that they need to be updated and sometimes they need to be corrected, I think that’s a good thing. I think it’s a worthwhile exercise.

I know that there is something being made of the title “good government,” and I do want to offer some comments on that as well, because I was at home on the weekend speaking with my constituents, and my constituents are really happy that their children are doing well in school. They’re doing better. They’re happy that their children are in smaller class sizes.

As a government, I think we’re doing a good job because more students are graduating, and parents are happy to hear that. Parents understand how well their schools are doing because each year they receive a report from the Education Quality and Accountability Office. I think that that’s accountability and that’s part of good government.

In my own community as well, for many years we were advocating for better access to primary care services. We now have a number of family health teams, in the city of Belleville and in the Prince Edward counties centre in north Hastings. People think that is good government when they can access primary care in their community.

1700

So, with respect to good government, I believe that the McGuinty government has been a good government. With respect to the good government bill, I think it is addressing a number of things that need to be changed, amended or corrected, and many of these changes are happening because our constituents—all constituents—have identified where it can be better.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I’m pleased to rise this afternoon and spend some time speaking to Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. I’ll just read the explanatory note out of it and then get into some of the reasons why I think the government should explain themselves and why I feel they’re not a good government.

“The bill is part of the government initiative to promote good government.

“The bill amends or repeals a number of acts and revokes a number of regulations. For convenience, the amendments, repeals and revocations are set out in separate schedules. The schedules for each ministry include amendments to and repeals of acts that are administered by the ministry or that affect the ministry. The commencement provisions for each of the schedules are set out in the schedules.”

I always try to read the explanatory note to the best of my ability when I speak to a bill.

It’s amazing that a government that is not very popular right now—this is an apology kind of a bill. There are

people, and there have been some group studies, and websites that consider this to be the worst government in our country. So it’s a good-government bill by Canada’s worst government.

I want to start out on some of the comments—I’m going back to the parliamentary assistant again and how insulting his remarks were to the members of the opposition because we didn’t attend a briefing. I want to point out that one of my colleagues’ executive assistants has already approached me and said that she never went to the briefing because she understood the briefing. She’s trained in the legal field. She understood it, and she was insulted by your remarks that she should have to be at that meeting. She thought it was bad governance to drag a bunch of bureaucrats in to tell her something she already knew. She understood that section of the bill. And I think it’s important that we realize that there are people in the opposition who do clearly understand some of the changes; there are other people who want to take advantage. But the fact of the matter is, in this case, the bill was introduced late.

Because it was constituency week last week, our caucus hasn’t had an opportunity even to caucus this bill yet. We have caucus on Tuesday, so we haven’t even had that chance. We’re very concerned about the fact that in his 20 minutes, or whatever amount of time the parliamentary assistant spoke, he said at least eight or 10 times, even in some of the comments at the end, that we don’t understand the legislation and that we’re too ignorant to learn the legislation because we won’t attend a briefing. I was very offended by that, and I think a number of people in this hall would be as well.

I want to just talk for a second about some of the things the government has done that would indicate that maybe there hasn’t been some good governance. I look back at the last election. It came to my mind today when the member from Sarnia–Lambton read a petition with thousands and thousands of signatures that had been drafted or put forward by a lady, Mrs. Wilma McNeil, in Sarnia–Lambton. Wilma, for 25 years, has been trying to work towards getting Remembrance Day made a statutory holiday because she is so passionate about the fact that we in this country, particularly now with our armed forces around the world and in Afghanistan, have to have pay more attention to the special work they do. And I sort of agree with that.

What I didn’t agree with was the fact that in the last election, because it sounded good, the government brought out something in the middle of winter called Family Day. It has been botched in many, many areas, as you know, because not everybody gets Family Day. It has been good for some businesses, like some of the ski resorts, for example, but other businesses that have to come up with that money each year—as we all know, the winter months are some of the worst months we have for business—have to find that extra money for that Family Day in February. I would have far rather seen the government join in with Mrs. McNeil, make Remembrance Day a statutory holiday and forget about the winter holiday,

which comes at a bad time. I can tell you, I think a lot of people would agree with me.

I want to compliment my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton for bringing this to the floor today and for bringing Wilma's concerns forward as well, because it's all part of the package of statutory holidays and what's good government and what's bad government, that sort of thing.

I wanted to go over for a second and again compliment Wilma. I send her our congratulations for her fine work on that, because Remembrance Day is coming up in a few weeks' time. It's a very, very important date in many of our communities. Just this morning, I wanted to point out that Mr. Aaron Williams from my riding, who is stationed in Afghanistan—just on the weekend, Aaron was promoted to a major position with the Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan. I sent him an email and he sent me one back. I just congratulate him for being a great young man and serving our country well in Afghanistan.

It brings us to other things we want to talk about, on the government bragging about good governance. I go back to this G20 stuff. It's unbelievable, the secret legislation that was passed while this House was sitting. This House was sitting. It was a regulatory change. At the same time in my riding, we had a tornado in Midland. You wouldn't believe the press releases that came out from this government on the tornado. The Minister of Municipal Affairs was up there doing an event—I don't know what he looked at. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services made it up. But at the same time this G20 stuff was happening, no one knew anything about it. No one knew they changed the laws for the security; even the police didn't know it. Many of the police officers didn't know it. Certainly, the people who wanted to demonstrate in peace did not know they were breaking the rules. This regulation was passed by this cabinet in a very, very secret manner, and they did not tell the general public about it. I think that's one of the reasons you've seen the two cabinet ministers change positions. The former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I think, was wearing that, and he had to be replaced because there are so many concerns about that.

Then we go over to the government bragging about the consultation process. They talk about the harmonized sales tax. Wow. Nothing worse could have happened to this province this year than the harmonized sales tax taking effect; absolutely. I talked to a golf course owner on Saturday. He owns the Brooklea Golf and Country Club in Midland. He said that this has absolutely been the worst year they have ever had. They've been hit over and over and over again: the pesticides act, the minimum wage bills etc., and now the harmonized sales tax. It is having a very, very negative impact on their operation. They can't attract the same kinds of tournaments, they can't pay the kind of money and they just are not making money.

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Do you know what? They can heckle me all they want, but the reality is, we're having a very difficult time in rural Ontario.

I can say, I have attended the plowing match and I've attended four other rural fairs; our leader of our party, Mr. Hudak, came up to one of our fairs. I can tell you, if the government thinks they've got good government right now, you'd better talk to the public. You'd better talk to the people out there, because your popularity is sliding so fast, it's not even funny. It has just absolutely been a disaster, this harmonized sales tax. The reality is, I'm quite sure that there's going to be a change in government next October. I'm quite sure of that.

I know that they want to demonize the opposition leaders. We've seen that with some of the media reports this weekend. That was the intent. Our leader got more media out of the government's Liberal conference—or convention, whatever you want to call it—than the Premier got, because it was nothing more than, "How can we demonize Tim Hudak?" That's what it was all about.

If you're talking about good governance, I'd like to talk a little bit about private members' time. So many good private members' bills come forward here. We spend Thursday afternoons in here, and you just wonder why they never get moved forward.

1710

Take, for example, Norm Miller's bill—and, Madam Speaker, I believe you have also had a bill similar to this in the past—creating spaces for bike lanes or walking lanes etc. But I can tell you that is a very, very positive bill. It's good for tourism, biking industry tourism; it's good for public safety, people saving lives; and it's good for health promotion. I'm hearing it—I'm going to tell you: Mr. Miller, he's just arrived here now. He's my neighbouring MPP—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would remind the member to refer to the member's riding, not to his name.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I just can't remember the name of his riding. I'm sorry.

Interjection: Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Parry Sound-Muskoka; okay. I should have known that. Parry Sound-Muskoka.

I can tell you, if you talk about good government that is a winning bill, because it's not saying to the government, "You must spend all this money at one time." You phase in these roads over a period of time, over a period of years. I give my colleague so much credit for bringing that forward. I'm sure that is a bill that the government should call. And if they want to take the bill, fine; steal his bill and make it a government bill. Let the Minister of Transportation or the Minister of Community Safety bring it in, but I can tell you right now, it's so positive for the citizens of Ontario and right now, it'll probably go nowhere in this session of government. But as far as I'm concerned, it's one of many private member's bills that should be considered.

I would rather be debating Bill 100 today than this Bill 110, this good governance bill, because I think it'll do

more for the citizens of the province of Ontario. Again, I want to compliment my colleague for bringing it forward. I know he's getting tremendous support throughout the province. I know my local medical officer of health, Dr. Charles Gardner, who does Simcoe-Muskoka, absolutely loves the bill. He met with me and he says that he wants to really work on that as well. I've encouraged him to talk to his colleagues as well and other medical officers of health across the province.

Let's go back for a second to the energy policies, which I find to be absolutely amazing. I'm just curious if anybody's had any problems with the solar and wind farms and the agreements the government has actually made, through the Ontario Power Authority, with some of these companies.

I've got to tell you this: We don't have, in my particular area, a wind atlas that would require a lot of wind generation in north Simcoe; however, there are a lot of opportunities for solar farms and solar generation. What's happened is that the Ontario Power Authority made these agreements with certain farmers through these companies. In this one case, it's called Recurrent Energy. I think there are eight farms in my riding that have made agreements with the farmers. The farmers were supposed to keep their mouths shut and sign these deals. They're going to get X number of dollars over 25 years and Recurrent Energy will get the contracts for 80 or 100 acres of these solar panels at a time.

The municipality knows nothing about it. The municipal councillors, as they're running for election right now, are finding out and saying, "Well, what do you mean there's no agreement? We've got nothing to say." People are writing their municipal councillor and they have had absolutely no input into this. We had one public meeting. The guy came from Recurrent Energy and he was basically a snake oil salesman. He said, "You know what? We've reached a deal. We're going to do this. We're going to be wonderful. We're going to do all this," but they weren't answering the questions about property values that have been declining and that sort of thing.

Then I find out now that Recurrent Energy, which, by the way, is based out of California, has been sold to Sharp Corp. out of the Far East. Sharp Corp. bought Recurrent Energy for \$350 million, so basically many of our solar projects in the province of Ontario that are going to be getting 80 cents a kilowatt hour for these huge solar farms are going to be controlled by the Far East, not even our local farmers. Our local farmers are nothing more than landlords.

The question I have for the government is: If you're talking about good government, what's going to happen when these things wear out? Is that going to go back to the municipalities? All they want, all I want to do is—I think the leader of the official opposition is right in saying that there has to be a municipal responsibility in there. There's no way on God's green earth that should have ever been left out.

That's just part of good government: How would a government make a piece of legislation, ram through that

Green Energy Act and then leave these open-ended types of problems out there for the people to absorb—in this case, a lot of people in rural Ontario? I think a lot of people agree with having solar farms. They like the idea. But we do have to have some responsibility for the residents. They have a right to know where these things go. They have a right to know what their obligations and commitments are.

Then we go into things I mentioned earlier in my other comments: Bill 191, the northern Ontario act, the planning act for northern Ontario. We talk about transparency and openness and public hearings, and yet we all know, when we go back to that, what happened there. That's been a disaster with our aboriginal communities across the province. I think the government likes to spin the story that the Minister of Natural Resources visited eight communities and they love her and everything's fine up north. That's what I keep hearing her say in the answers, and I'm not hearing that at all in my community, where I've got two First Nations communities, Beausoleil and the Chippewas of Rama. Both of those communities have approached me and said, "What is happening with this Far North Act? All of our brothers and sisters in northern Ontario are furious about how this has occurred." So again, good governance. I didn't see anything about that in there, and I don't see it in any comments.

Then I go back to my ministry, and I know we talked a little bit today about the JPs; that's part of Bill 110. But I'm still trying to get the government oversight on Bill 115, on the Coroners Act. That still has not been passed, two years later. The date passed. I have a family that I've been working with, the Farlow family, who lost their little girl at Sick Kids. We've had them in the House here. They've been trying for years to find out what happened to their daughter. The government put an oversight council clause in the legislation that we were supposed to have passed so we would see what was happening. It's still not passed, over two years since the bill was proclaimed. It's still not passed and people are wondering why. I'm curious why the Attorney General wouldn't make sure that was done when he's bringing out something like a good governance bill.

We can go on and on and on. The eco tax: Was that good planning?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It's gone. It's gone.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: They're yelling now, "It's gone," as though they've done some wonderful thing. Who brought it in in the first place, and now you make it sound—in typical Liberal fashion, they think they've done a real favour by dumping something that's been just a tragedy from day one. It was a tragedy.

This eco tax was the sneakiest tax that anyone has ever heard of. It cost another minister his job. I don't know what he's doing now, but they've got another Minister of the Environment. But I'm going to tell you, it's been a complete disaster. They thought they were going to put it off for 90 days and re-evaluate it, and then—you know, they know it's a disaster. My God.

They're grabbing at any kind of a straw they can to try to say they are a good government, but the more they

drop—like fooling around with the sex education curriculum, chocolate milk in the schools, the Oakville power plant—my God. I couldn't believe the minister saying today that there may be no cost to the Oakville power plant. You know what? It's likely going to be \$1 billion, likely around \$1 billion.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Peterborough.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: He's only got 11 months left here. Give him some patience. He won't be here much longer, and we're going to have a lot of fun with our new member up there. He's a great guy, that new person we'll bring to Queen's Park.

The reality is, this bill is nothing more than an apology. It's kind of an attempt at apologizing to the citizens of Ontario: "We have been a really bad, bad, bad government and now, you know what? We're going to try to apologize by coming out with a good government bill."

The best thing that could happen to this bill right now is for it to die quickly so that we can get it to committee, because they don't have much more to debate here. They want to get out of here as quickly as possible, and you know what? The reality is that we want to keep debating this. We'll see, on a good government bill, if they time-allocate it, because we'll probably bring lots of people out. All of our members want to speak to this bill. I'm sure all the government members want to speak, but we'll see. It's likely going to be time-allocated. We'll see if that happens.

With that, I know I've brought a lot to the floor today, a lot of positive things for the taxpayers of Ontario, because they realize this is the furthest thing from a good government. This is a bad government bringing forward a bill called a good governance bill.

1720

I appreciate the opportunity to make my comments today. I'll look forward to the comments coming from my colleagues around the room. I can't imagine supporting a bill, personally, although we haven't caucused this, that Canada's worst government has brought forward, calling it a good government bill.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the member from Simcoe North and what he had to say. I think he has taken some considerable umbrage, and probably rightly so, at the title of this bill. I think if the government was wise and wiser than I hope, they would simply look at this bill and recognize it for what it is: It is a house-keeping bill. If it went under any other name, then we probably would not be raising all the spectres and the things that this government has done wrong and continues to do wrong over the last year or year and a half. The member from Simcoe North is absolutely right. To call this the Good Government Act, 2010, is a misnomer of the highest error.

He is raising a whole bunch other spectres that are happening around Ontario. The people of Ontario really

want to talk about those things. They want to talk about hospitals. They want to talk about the HST. They want to talk about taxation. In some corners, they want to talk about windmills. They want to talk about everything else other than this.

I think what was said earlier was absolutely right. The reason the government gives it this kind of moniker is in the hope that the members, as the member from Simcoe North just said, would vote against the bill so that you can stand up and taunt and you can go on radio shows and everything else and say, "The official opposition is voting against good government." That's why it's called this, and that's what this is all about. This is a bill that is incredibly minor in scope and has been given a title that takes it out of all proportion to what it really is.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I agree with my colleague opposite that this is a technical bill. There's no doubt about it. It changes a number of bills and make 70 amendments to legislation from seven different ministries, so it is technical. It is removing those things that are archaic and moving our province forward. Every once in a while, I suspect that every government has needed to look back at legislation, upgrade it and perhaps delete items that are no longer relevant in the modern world. So, yes, that's exactly what this bill is: a very technical bill.

To the member opposite who just completed his comments, I agree with you on private members' bills. We do have a lot of very good private members' bills. I think he's been here long enough to know the nature of this place and how that system works. I had a very good private member's bill, and I was eight years asking your government of the day to consider it. Five different Ministers of Transportation said no. When we became government, I went to our Premier and said, "What do you think about this bill?" He incorporated it into a government bill, and, oddly enough, two of the former ministers voted in favour of it once they were in opposition. That's how this place operates from time to time. The other three ministers couldn't vote because they were not any longer in this House. Two favoured it after they were out of government.

The member opposite also mentioned clean energy. I know you were talking about solar. We have a lot of wind farms in Chatham-Kent—many, many towers around. The farmers and/or landowners—they don't have to be farmers to have a tower on their property—enjoy the revenue, as mentioned, the same as solar only to a different degree. It brings green energy to the community and also assists our municipality on their tax base.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Simcoe North on his remarks as he took us through Bill 110. I agree, also, with a number of his remarks.

I found it passing strange that the government was for this bill before they were against it. It sounds like some legislation over in the United States that they supported before they found out they were against it.

But anyway, as far as a government bill, this has been a bit of a charade, as he said. It's kind of like a bait-and-switch when we talk about the different aspects of whether it's energy, green energy, this green energy bill.

I spent four days at the plowing match. I also spent four days recently at a local fair in my riding. I would advise the government members that they should get out of Queen's Park, perhaps, and go back to their ridings, or come down to Sarnia-Lambton and see what the people have got to say down there. I spoke to upwards of 20,000 or 30,000 people at that fair, over four days, and those people are not happy with government; they're not happy with the good government bill. They're concerned about issues over green energy. They're concerned over the HST. We had no hearings across the province on the HST. We battled for that; the government said no. The Far North Act, as the member from Simcoe also said—nope, we didn't have any hearings on those. People are unhappy.

How they can stand up in this House and say now that they're going to make recommendations to 15-some ministries and a number of acts as well—why would anyone in this province think that at the end of the day they're going to get good government?

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The Liberals, apparently, were at what they call an annual general meeting over this past weekend. They're back here in Queen's Park. You'd swear they'd been to one of those Maoist rehabilitation camps, like a year in the countryside, so that they would have to be forced to read the little red book—and it is, as it happens, a little red book—over and over and over again. They walk in and their eyes are glazed. I saw one backbencher blinking “SOS” at me. It's like he's writing me notes saying, “I'm being held captive. Help me.” It's just a remarkable thing to witness.

When the McGuinty Liberal government tells us that we're going to have Internet gambling so that gambling addicts can get addicted at an earlier age, including kids gambling away mom or dad's credit card limit in their bedrooms on the Internet, and so that people who are susceptible to gambling addictions can be exposed to the most addictive form of gambling, that's not good government. When the McGuinty Liberals install not-so-smart—quite frankly, stupid—meters on people's homes across the province, running up a tab of almost \$1.5 billion that those same electricity consumers have to pay for, only to find that those not-so-start stupid meters have driven up the price of their electricity, that's not good government. When this government tells working women and men in this province that it won't support anti-scab legislation, so that we could avoid the dreadful scenarios like up in Sudbury and Nickel Belt of lengthy, lengthy, lengthy labour disputes while management drives scabs over the picket lines, that's not good government. Far from it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want to thank the members from Beaches-East York, Chatham-Kent-Essex, Sarnia-Lambton and Welland for their comments. I'm pleased to respond very briefly to a couple of comments.

I want to first of all thank our member. I didn't get a chance in my comments to thank him for his private member's bill—because I'm really passionate about these private members' bills and how good they are. But Bill 78, the surplus food for the food banks, is just an amazing bill. It's getting all kinds of—I think we had petitions at the plowing match. It was just mind-boggling, the number of people who support this. Again, I wish him all the best, and hopefully at some point that will make a lot of sense and will become a bill that will help our agricultural community as well.

But you know what? I'm someone who really likes to keep my bills paid. I don't like debt and all that kind of thing. One of the things that has really been a problem for me is this \$21-billion deficit. If we're talking about good government, let's really talk about just what kind of shape this province is in. Right now, I know through the budget, through their own calculations that we're—I think it took all the Premiers up until Dalton McGuinty, from 1867 to when Dalton McGuinty came in in 2003, all those Premiers and all those governments together, to get the accumulated debt to \$120 billion. Dalton McGuinty will now double it in his term in office. In his eight years, that's what will happen. It may even be beyond that. That's not good government. That's not the kind of government, that's not the kind of management, the transparency we want to hand down to our children and our grandchildren. That's what I find is the worst thing about this government: their inability to manage this economy and this province in a proper manner.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Beaches-East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to speak to the Good Government Act, 2010. I have to state at the outset that, having read the act and having looked through the act and trying to see what was contained within it, there was at least one good provision. There is one good provision, and I think that all members of the House will probably agree with it, and that is the only substantive part of the entire act dealing with the section on the Justices of the Peace Act. What is being done within the body of this legislation is the right thing to do. The amendments to the Justices of the Peace Act are designed to change the recruitment process from constant recruitment to one based on current vacancies. In turn, we know that hopefully this will allow for better representation of communities in the end. I am in agreement with that, and I imagine that every single member in this House is in agreement with that section.

But then you look at the rest of the act—and this is where I have to ask what all the debate is about and the rancour that is taking place here and people upset. It's mostly about the title, because nothing else in the act is of any real importance. There are a couple of schedules.

Schedule 6 is amendments to a number of acts administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, but it doesn't really change anything within the ministry at all other than the authority of the minister to administer things that, in the past, had to be taken to cabinet. There are nine other amended acts, but not one contains a substantial policy change.

So here we have a debate about changing the Justices of the Peace Act. In effect, that's the only thing that is in this act that should cause the public, this Parliament or anyone else any concern. It certainly is the right thing to do as far as we can tell. All the rest of it is incredible fluff. There is nothing here that warrants the moniker, the title, the Good Government Act, 2010. Now, I suggested, in what we call around here our two-minute hit, that this is designed so that if members of the opposition come forward in the end and vote against the bill, this will be the subject of radio ads, election ads, taunts in the House and everything else, that members of the opposition have voted against good government.

I'm not going to fall for that trap. I don't think anyone needs to fall for that trap. Certainly, I know my colleagues in the NDP won't be seduced by voting against a bill with this title. But I am asking the government to change the title of the bill. Call it the much ado about nothing act.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: No.

Mr. Michael Prue: Call it the Shakespearean act, then. Call it anything else you want, but don't call it the Good Government Act, because it's not producing good government and it's not producing anything that the people of Ontario care very much about.

The people of this province, if you talk to them and you ask them, "What do you think should be contained in a good government act?", will tell you a whole bunch of things that perhaps the members opposite do not want to hear. They'll talk about the number of people who are jobless and who have very few prospects in this province. People in Ontario know that we have lost 350,000 jobs. Some of them know that this government, in instituting the HST, promised that we were going to get 600,000 new jobs come back. They quoted an obscure economist from Alberta, who suddenly became their very best friend, that this in fact was going to happen.

But many more of them know that this is not happening at all. Many more of them can tell you that last month alone this province lost 27,000 new jobs. We didn't gain 600,000 jobs or a percentage of 600,000 jobs because of the HST; we lost 27,000 new jobs. When you ask economists across the country why Ontario is faring worse than some of the other provinces when it comes to job loss—that was the first thing that I saw in a televised debate and in television scrums with economists talking about why Ontario is doing so poorly at this time.

They raised a number of things, but one of the key factors was the imposition of the HST. That's what people want to talk about in the province. They want to talk about, when they talk about good government, things like that. They want to talk about the fact that almost the

entire manufacturing sector in Ontario has cratered. It is hollowed out. The jobs are falling away. The good money that came with those jobs that sustained families is no longer there. When you lose a manufacturing job that pays 20-plus dollars an hour in Ontario and you go out to look for work, you may be lucky to find something at minimum wage. You may end up with a job—a part-time job at that—at McDonald's or Walmart or some other place that pays minimum wage. But when you lose a manufacturing job, you lose a livelihood, and when you lose it in some communities around Ontario, you lose a great deal.

Go to those towns that have lost manufacturing in a big way. Take a look at smaller-town Ontario or smaller-city Ontario where the jobs have gone and they may never come back, and you see the despair in people's eyes and you see what those towns are going through. Go to northern Ontario and see how bad it is when the mill or the mine shuts down and there's no work left and people are forced to move away, sometimes not even in Ontario itself, not to the neighbouring community, but sometimes out of the province altogether. That's what people want to talk about when they talk about good government.

We believe that this whole idea this government keeps talking about again and again and again in terms of the HST being good for business is a sop to business. It's a whole neo-Liberal idea that is failing not only in this province but in this country and, in fact, around the world. There was a semi-revolution there for a little while in the United States with the election of President Obama, but it appears that the neo-Liberalists are starting to make a comeback with the Tea Party and the right-wing Republicans saying, "Just cut the costs of everything. Cut the costs of government and everything will be fine again." This government here in Ontario unfortunately has bought into some of that argument.

Instead, the people of Ontario are asking for good government. They are asking Liberals and this government here, if you want to put a bill forward saying "the Good Government Act," include some of the following: Why don't you include a buy-in-Ontario policy so that people know that when you buy a car manufactured in Ontario, you are helping your neighbours and promoting the economy of this province. When you buy a car manufactured in some other place, there are only a limited number of jobs that go with it. Buy Ontario is a smart thing to do. Or how about legislation, if you want a good government act, that will make sure that when there are plant closures, as inevitably and always there are, people who worked there, some of them their entire lives, are protected? When a plant closes, the first people who should be protected are the workers, but in fact in Ontario the first people who are protected are the banks. I think we've got something wrong here. We've got something terribly wrong. So that people know if they are about to lose their job, the plant is to close, the town is to go into turmoil, and all those things that are happening—that the first people who should be protected are those who work,

those who have put in the time and the money and their pensions, those who are still owed outstanding severance and other wages when a plant closes down, and not the banks who go in there and seize it all first and the poor people are left with nothing. I think if you wanted a good government bill or a good government act, then it would contain some of that.

1740

How about the whole thing about severance eligibility? People aren't entitled to that because too often banks and loan companies and others are there first. How about the whole issue of pensions? People are crying out for some kind of pension reform. I understand that the Minister of Finance has put in a motion, and he filed it today. He's asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to acknowledge that two thirds of Ontarians don't have a workplace pension and then is asking that the Legislature endorse a modest and gradual expansion of the Canada pension plan, CPP.

Is this great government? Is this good governance to ask this Legislature to ask the Parliament of Canada to do something because we feel so unempowered that we can't do anything ourselves? That's the answer of this government. If you want a Good Government Act, then you have to be prepared to provide good government, not to put forward a non-binding resolution that doesn't do anything except perhaps make the Minister of Finance feel that he is finally doing something on this file. This is not good government, and it's certainly what the people of Ontario have been asking all of us to do.

They've also been asking us to eliminate the HST, particularly on hydro. Those bills are starting to become excessive and troublesome to a great many people. I hear every day in this House ministers, the Premier and others stand here and say, "Oh, we've done amazing things. We've helped some people who are pensioners by giving a few little grants around the issue and that's going to solve it all."

The reality is, it's not going to solve it all because most of the people who are hurting are not pensioners. They're ordinary people, and they're squeezed. They're squeezed because times are tough. Some of them have lost one or two jobs within a single family. They're squeezed because they haven't had a decent increase in their wages in years because of the economy. They're squeezed because other prices, including the costs of education for their children, have gone up. All of a sudden they're finding that what they were hoping to do with their lives is becoming very problematic.

Every day in this Legislature, the leader of the NDP stands in her place and reads letters from ordinary people—these are sent with great conviction by them—about the effects of putting HST on their hydro bills, the effects of putting HST on their home heating bills, the effects of putting HST on their gasoline and oil for their motor car, and how it is affecting them.

We also have seniors who I think want to talk about good government. We know that what people are looking for in this province is a health system that works.

Canadians across the entire country had an opportunity a number of years ago to vote for the Canadian they most admired. They picked somebody who was elected, but was never in federal government. They picked Tommy Douglas. They picked him because he had a vision and a dream that is almost universally upheld, and that is a health system that is universal, that anyone and everyone has equal access to and that I, as a politician, have no more right than a person who is homeless to the kind of service that you can get in a hospital or public care unit.

I had the opportunity to go to a hospital last week. It was an emergency room, kind of crowded, Toronto East General Hospital, one of the places in my community of which we are very proud. The people in Beaches—East York are very proud of that hospital, as are the people in Toronto—Danforth, as are the people in Scarborough Southwest because that is their community hospital. That's where we go.

I was going on the diet. I asked some questions in this House about the diet. I had to eat the food that was provided in a basket from the Daily Bread Food Bank, but I didn't want to take any food from the Daily Bread Food Bank. So I asked them exactly what it is they handed out, and they told me exactly what it was that they put in that basket. I went to the supermarket to buy that food, to No Frills because that's the cheapest place to buy it, and I bought precisely what was put in that basket, including a cup of rice, a can of vegetables and two cans of soup. Unfortunately, as I was reaching for one of the cans of soup off the supermarket shelf, the other one fell on my foot, and I had to go and have it X-rayed because it swelled up so badly I could hardly walk.

I sat there in the emergency room, and I heard people. There were some complaints, yes. There were some complaints because people didn't understand the triage system. But I will tell you, after being there for about 45 minutes and waiting my turn and being triaged, I was taken in, my foot was X-rayed, I saw a doctor, and they assured me it wasn't broken, although it was very badly bruised. They gave me some pills to take down the swelling and told me to stay off my feet—which was a sensible thing—for a couple of days. In fact, I'm back to normal again, at least as normal as I can be.

I was proud of the service that I saw there, not only for me but for everyone else who was sitting there, some with minor aches and pains, some in fairly serious condition. They acted professionally, and I think every Canadian would be proud of what was happening there.

If you're looking for good government and if you want a good government act, do something about the seniors. We are getting old at a pretty rapid rate. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of seniors aged 85-plus has increased by 36%. We are living longer, and with that living longer, we're needing more and more hospital service. The government, if they want a good government act, should include that.

The alternate level of care has gone up two times between 2005 and 2008: Do something about that. Long-term-care wait times are exploding exponentially. The

wait times are, on average, 103 days; if you're in crisis, 79 days; if you are in acute care, 55 days. But one in 10 Ontarians waits more than 600 days for long-term care. Canadians and Ontarians want a good government to do something about that.

They also want us to do something about the electricity rates and the not-so-smart meters. I remember standing in this Legislature many months ago when this was debated, and I told of my experience sitting on the electricity commission in the former borough of East York, about the smart meters that we put in several houses to see how much benefit it would be and whether people would, indeed, use less electricity if we made them or encouraged them to do things in the evening. The average saving was—in those days, one was 25 cents, another one was 75 cents, and in the third one, actually, the cost went up because the woman had young children and had to use the electricity all day. I warned that this is exactly what was going to happen. There would be very limited savings, and for some, it would cause a great deal of difficulty. That, in fact, is what has happened.

If you want to have a good government act, start talking about retirement homes. The Toronto Star did a series in the last week or two showing what it was like in retirement homes. We need to do something about that. Just yesterday, I had a phone call from a former constituent who has gone to a retirement home. She is not poor. She lives in a fairly decent place. As a matter of fact, I think it is a luxurious place by all standards when you walk into it, but she complained to me bitterly about what was happening. The retirement home got rid of the dietitian, who was supposed to provide safe meals for people like her because she's a diabetic. When she complains that the food is not conducive to her handling her diabetes and asks for such things as diabetic ice cream, they bring her diet ice cream instead because they don't understand it. There's no dietitian around and it's just simply not working.

1750

This government will pass this bill, but please don't insult the people of Ontario by calling it a good government act. If you're truly serious about providing good government, you'll do all the other things that should be in this act and not just something to change the process for hiring justices of the peace.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the member from Beaches–East York speaking for almost 20 minutes about his opinion of the Good Government Act, 2010. I know the whole act is talking about it being a housekeeping act. It cleans up many different acts and makes amendments to many different provisions and many different ministries: almost seven ministries and 70 amendments to legislation that has been around for many years, to update them to be fit and be able to be used in this modern day.

I listened to the member from Beaches–East York talk about many different elements. I listened to him carefully talk about job losses, pensions, the HST, seniors, our

health care. I wish you well after that can of vegetables fell on your foot. Hopefully you'll be fine.

Mr. Michael Prue: Oh, I'm fine. I'm fine already.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's very important to talk about all of these elements, to talk about our health care. I agree with you: Our health care is second to none, not just in Canada but around the planet. We have a good health care system. We have good nurses, good doctors, good people working in those hospitals and in our health care system in the province of Ontario.

I also agree with the member talking about job losses. It's important for all of us as Ontarians, as Canadians—as a matter of fact, it's important for all the people around this planet after what happened last year in terms of the whole economy collapsing worldwide. Our duty and obligation is to search for every possibility to maintain our ability to attract more jobs and create more jobs for the people of Ontario.

He talked about the HST. It's an important topic. I don't like it, not many people like it, but it's something we have to do in order to attract more business, in order to modernize our tax system in the province of Ontario. The member opposite mentioned that many people don't like it, but I talked to many different business people across the province of Ontario. Everybody praised it. Everybody said it's a good initiative. It's more important for them than anything else, because when you combine the taxes it gives them a chance—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's a pleasure to be able to comment on the speech from the member from Beaches–East York who's renamed this bill the much ado about nothing act. As he commented in his speech, he said the name of this bill, Bill 110, is An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain acts. The bill was just introduced. We haven't had an opportunity to have a briefing yet. We'll be talking about it in caucus tomorrow, but it does, on the surface, appear to be more of a housekeeping bill than anything else. It's not really about good government, as the title of the act leads us to believe. I think, as the member pointed out, it's probably more about the government wanting the opposition to vote against this bill so then we're voting against good government.

I think we need to look at this government's actions, and its actions have been questionable. For example, if you're going to have good government, do you handle the Far North Act, Bill 191, the way this government handled that? And that is, they scheduled public consultations for the past summer and yet ended up cancelling those consultations and ramming the bill through. I'd say that's because they're looking after some environmental special interest groups that support the government. So with this Bill 191, they're shutting down economic development in the north. They're not listening to communities in the north. They're not listening to First Nations in the north, which are very much opposed to this bill.

I'd say, if you want to look at good government, you should look at having more select committees. We had a very successful Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which has made 23 very useful recommendations. We had a select committee a couple years ago on alternative fuels that made a lot of good recommendations, and all three parties worked together. That would be a way of having this place be more productive. I think the government should look at that if they're truly interested in good government.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to talk about the impact of this good government bill on ordinary Ontarians. Ordinary Ontarians need jobs, and the Open Ontario plan, which is an integral part of this particular bill, is delivering them. More than three quarters of our recessionary job losses have all been recovered.

Our income taxes are lower. Our benefits are higher. And here's something that's really important: The single most regressive, expensive, duplicative, inefficient tax in Ontario is done, gone, repealed, finished, over, gone forever. Goodbye, PST, and no one is sorry to see you go.

All of the ads—and we've heard them—that say “We pay the HST” mean that the retail savings are flowing through to the purchaser. Let me give you an example. Let's use one in the Parkdale–High Park area. Pollock's carpets and tiles on Roncesvalles in Toronto will pay the HST. So what does that mean? It means that in the world of retail pricing they're flowing through their lower income taxes, the elimination of their small business surtax, their lower costs of doing business, and now their customers are seeing the savings in lower retail prices in the store.

Ontarians are not nostalgic over a Cold War era sales tax that cost them more than \$3 billion more than the HST does. In fact, by the time 93% of Ontarians have bought all the things that they normally buy, paid all the bills that they normally pay, filed their taxes and claimed their credits and their refunds, 93% of Ontarians will have more money in their wallets. That's all about good government.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I just hope that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville gives that same speech on the stump next year at every stop and every all-candidates meeting that he can. In that way, I think we can be assured that we will have a new member of provincial Parliament from Mississauga–Streetsville.

I think his rationale is just perfect. I think you should spread that not only to Streetsville and Mississauga but to all of the Liberal ridings around the province of Ontario. I think it makes eminent good sense.

May I make a suggestion with regard to this kind of a bill? Many of the sections are housekeeping and, quite frankly, I don't think it has anything to do with good government. It just has to do with changing a few of our legislative structures and our regulations around.

I don't know why the government, when it does this kind of thing, doesn't go back to one of the practices we had here some time ago. I'm sure they could get opposition parties to co-operate with them. The best way to handle this bill—and I'm just saying this for the future, if you do this again before the next election, and perhaps we will do it when we get into government. What they should do is pass second reading of this very quickly and put it into committee of the whole, have each of the sections discussed by a parliamentary assistant or one minister or whatever, go through what that section means and ask members around the Legislature if they'd like to ask questions and make comment. That way, it would be a much more fruitful exercise for this Legislature. We would all know what we're talking about with regard to this. We wouldn't need a briefing because the briefing would be taking place here, and it would be very fruitful for all of us to learn what this bill is all about.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Beaches–East York has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Michael Prue: I thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Mississauga–Streetsville and Carleton–Mississippi Mills for their kind comments.

To deal with a couple of the things that were said by the member from London–Fanshawe, I thank him because he did reiterate many of the socially progressive things that I would think a good government should be doing in difficult times. Although he did not agree with the final conclusion, he did not state that that was the wrong thing to do. I honestly believe that having a good government is doing things that are progressive, that will help people in the end, and that people want and deserve.

Quite frankly, what they are telling me they want and deserve is a whole lot of things around better health care. What they want is a whole lot of things around retirement homes, help for our seniors and some relief from the taxation or over-taxation of the HST.

I have to deal with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, because time won't let me talk about—but I think what he had to say today is straight. I think that's what the government actually believes. I don't think he'll to have say that on the hustings. When copies of Hansard are prepared for tomorrow, I'm sure that they will be widely distributed throughout the province. So I thank him for his honesty, although I don't think it was politically the smartest thing that could have been said here in this House today. But having said it, thank you for your remarks, because that is where I believe the majority of this government is coming from and, in fact, what the cabinet is ordering its backbenchers to deliver.

Again, Madam Speaker, thank you for the full opportunity of debating here today.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It being almost 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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

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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
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) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River 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 civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex 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) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge 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) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan 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) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans 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) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill 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) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS 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
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**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, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Leeanna Pendergast, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Steve Clark, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**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: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
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
Wayne Arthurs, M. Aileen Carroll
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**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
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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