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of Ontario
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 16 November 2010

Mardi 16 novembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act, when Bill 172 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet in Toronto on Thursday, November 25, 2010, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of public hearings and in Toronto on Wednesday, December 1, 2010, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and in Toronto on Thursday, December 2, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 5 p.m. on Monday, November 29, 2010. At 9 a.m. on Thursday, December 2, 2010, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, December 2, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the

question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 172. As I've found, especially on this bill, but on a number of bills the government has introduced, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, there's more said than done. Anyway, this bill will probably be the same.

I don't know how long I've got; I want to make sure I don't run out of time.

Yesterday, the member for Peterborough took great pleasure in naming a number of events that my wife and I could visit in Peterborough if we had the opportunity, so I wanted to reciprocate in kind. There are a number of events that any of the Liberal caucus members, but especially the member from Peterborough, could come to if they came down to Bayfest. One of the big events in Sarnia-Lambton is Bayfest, put on by Michele Stokley and her family.

Interjection: Yeah, but he's going to scalp tickets to Bayfest.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yeah, you might be scalping tickets there, the member for Peterborough, to help put that concert on.

But I wanted to mention some of the acts that have performed at Bayfest in the past. In 2010, there was Rush, Keith Urban, Weezer, Alan Jackson, the Black Eyed Peas; and some notable past performances, one from one of our caucus assistants to the House leader. He's in a band called Astronaut, and that's led by Dan Gordon, who supports our caucus and works with the House leader every day. A number of other bands that have performed there also are Aerosmith and Kiss. So if the member for Peterborough had the opportunity, I'd be glad to have him come down to Sarnia-Lambton. He'd

be able to take advantage of our Sarnia–Lambton hospitality.

Interjection: Don't let him go for free.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I didn't say I was going to treat him; I didn't go that far yet. It depends on how he treats me in the debate today. If he's his usual, regular, gregarious self, I'm sure that we'll be able to work out something.

Bill 172 is mislabelled. It should be called, in my opinion, the do-nothing bill. It's a do-nothing, diversion bill. It was brought forward, if you remember, Madam Speaker, at a time when the auditor's report was tabled to allow this government to avoid talking about what the auditor had drawn the public's attention to. This government isn't even serious about what they believe this legislation will do.

It was introduced in April of last year—that's 18 months ago—and it has sat on some bureaucrat's shelf since then and has been reintroduced this week, just recently, to try to fill in time in this Legislature, where we should be debating more substantive issues like, for example, the fall economic statement and the HST. The fall economic statement is late. If I was a teacher—not that I am—passing grades, when you say you're going to bring an assignment in on the 15th and you're not going to bring it in until the 18th, that, to me, would get a failing grade.

0910

I heard a number of government members yesterday. When they were speaking in reply to this bill, they said, "We have to bring this bill in. It's so important that we bring in this so-called scalping bill—Ticketmaster." If it's so important, how many people, in the last 18 months—while the bill has sat somewhere collecting dust in the netherworld of this Legislature, in some bureaucrat's office—have paid exorbitant prices, so-called by the Liberal Party, the government? How many people have paid exorbitant scalpers' fees in the last 18 months? Are we going to give them a rebate? Does anyone take responsibility, on that side of the House, for delaying this bill? If it's so urgent, if it's so important, what about those people? I think rather this Legislature, this government, reminds me of the 1948 election by Harry Truman, when Harry Truman ran against the do-nothing Congress and got re-elected. That's what this government is: It's a do-nothing government. They bring these showcase bills forward to try to fill in time when we could be talking about more important subjects.

Just to reiterate, my colleague the member for Halton clearly stated that this bill will not create one more seat at any venue, and this bill also will not save one thin dime for anyone buying a ticket to any event. We must keep in mind what this bill is all about. It was brought in after a Bruce Springsteen concert in New Jersey that saw ticket prices that were greatly inflated. But rather than spending the required time to look at the problem and find a solution to actually tackle it, this government's reflex was to react to public opinion at that time with a piece of fluff legislation that is not well thought out and won't accomplish those targeted goals.

I understand the consumers' outrage. I support consumer protection, as all members of our side of the House do, and the members of the third party as well. I also support market fairness and consumer choice. But this bill will not improve customer protection. This legislation targets one group of ticket sellers and ignores others, such as brokers and scalpers. It will drive the market underground, where there is less consumer protection. This bill will not create fairness. In fact, the Ticket Speculation Act already prohibits the reselling of tickets above the ticket's value, but the act is not being enforced, like a lot of laws in this province aren't being enforced.

There's a good article in the National Post today which I read about a community not too far from here, where people are looking the other way and they're not enforcing laws. But that's a story for another day that someone else will speak to, unless I get back to it before I'm done.

So why should Ontarians believe that these new provisions will be enforced when, like I say, this government has done such a poor job—I didn't want to put another word in there—of enforcing the laws that are already in place? I don't believe that this government will enforce these amendments any more than they enforced the original bill and, in the end, consumers won't get any cheaper tickets. In fact, when I think about the lack of enforcement of the current legislation, I am reminded of this government's track record in regard to contraband tobacco, an issue that was again raised in my riding last week and in a number of ridings by convenience store owners, who are taking it in the neck.

Mr. Randy Hillier: And elsewhere.

Mr. Robert Bailey: And elsewhere.

To the viewers watching this morning—I know my mother is out there watching—and to others out there, this is a shame, that people in small business are being forced to jump through hoops by all these government rules and regulations. I go into these variety stores—I don't buy cigarettes for myself anymore, but I unfortunately have to buy them for others. Anyway, when you go in there and you've got all these panels in front of the cigarettes and you've got to memorize where they are, it's such a bunch of—I won't say what—when you can go just down the street and there's no enforcement; there are people selling cigarettes out of the trunks of cars, out of RVs and out of so-called construction trailers, and nobody is enforcing those. No one knows what's in those contraband cigarettes as far as quality and that. I've got a big problem with that.

This bill is simply being used as a do-nothing diversion tactic by this government. This bill was returned to this chamber in the midst of eHealth 2.0, the scandal, to divert attention away from Liberal waste and misspending. But this bill will not address consumer outrage. This government is instead using this bill to waste this Legislature's valuable time in this House and to avoid talking about the issues that have put Ontario into a have-not position in Confederation for the first time in over 100 years, issues

that have rapidly increased our provincial debt to record heights and issues that have seniors and Ontario families struggling to pay their bills as this government continues to raise their taxes and user fees through a myriad of different issues.

In fact, I'd like to bring attention to a Windsor Star article from Saturday entitled "Managing Money: Ranking the Premiers." I'll touch on that a little later. I have a copy of it here. I'm sure a number of people in this Legislature have read it, and I would recommend it to the viewers who are watching on CPaC, the Canadian parliamentary channel. It was in the Windsor Star, among a number of other articles, and it's called "Managing Money: Ranking the Premiers." The bottom line of that is that they rated all the provinces, and this province, this Premier and this government were rated as the poorest. They're right at the foot of the bed. From the head to the foot, they're at the foot of the bed, to use an old Lambton county axiom.

The article reads, "The Fraser Institute released a study that ranked the 10 Premiers as money managers—each received an overall score out of 100 based on their record on spending, taxes and debt and deficits. And, perhaps not surprisingly, the lowest ranking—29.7 out of 100—went to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty" and the Dalton McGuinty government.

I would like to highlight the comments of Terence Corcoran of the National Post in regard to Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act. Mr. Corcoran's article was entitled "Ontario Panders to Ticket Myths." In this article, he states that this government is simply pandering to public perception. Well, surprise, surprise. Something that a number of people have accused this government of is pandering. They're great at that: pandering to every interest group across this province, from time to time; they're past masters at that stage.

He continued to write, "Attorney General Chris Bentley, answering the call of the blogosphere, last Wednesday introduced Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act. The bill, aimed at Ticketmaster, is designed to fix a perceived problem that doesn't exist based on an analysis that is flawed with a law that doesn't do anything to fix the perception or respond to the flawed analysis. In government and politics, that's called productive work."

That's not what we would call that back in my riding of Sarnia-Lambton, nor in, I'm sure, a lot of the members of the government's ridings. I'm sure if we went to small-town Ontario, anywhere in Ontario, this is what we would see.

"The perception is that Ticketmaster, an agency hired by rock groups, sports teams and others to handle ticket sales, is taking preferential advantage of its position and transferring tickets to its secondary market subsidiary, TicketsNow, where they are marked up to sky-high prices."

The fact is, there's no evidence, according to Mr. Corcoran, "that Ticketmaster favours its TicketsNow subsidiary." This is "more or less acknowledged right in

the government's Bill 172 press release. 'The new provisions respond to public concern that companies may make tickets available for sale to the same events on the primary market and then on the secondary market, at a much higher price.'

"Public concern about something is not a basis for legislation, especially when the legislation does nothing to alleviate the concern and may, in the end, make the local concert/sports event ticket-pricing situation worse. The new law also undermines competition in the ticket selling business. Why would the government want to do that?"

If we go back, and when you just think about it, if public concern about something is a basis for legislation, what about issues like contraband tobacco? What about Caledonia? There's lots of public concern there, but we don't see any legislation there. There are two examples, and there are a myriad of others out there that, if I thought about it long enough, I could probably come up with. There are some obvious opportunities for legislation that we would be prepared to support.

"The bill, in two pages"—two measly pages—"amends existing Ontario law that supposedly bans scalping in event tickets. Specifically, it would prohibit a primary seller (i.e., Ticketmaster) from dealing in the same tickets as a secondary seller (i.e., TicketsNow). The minister doesn't explain what the effect is of this change in the law, except to claim that it will return 'fairness' to the ticket market and 'protect consumers.'

"The government by now knows that the public perception is wrong. Or if it has doubts, it also knows that the federal Competition Bureau is investigating this public perception. The least Mr. Bentley"—the Attorney General—"could do is wait for the Competition Bureau to report."

0920

I was reminded of a number of events when I was researching some of this. Some of the government members have said that this is just a modest bill, that it's not going to do very much. I thought, it's a modest bill with much to be modest about. You might say that about this government: It's a modest government with much to be modest about. It's also like a bait-and-switch routine, because we'd like to be debating the fall economic statement today, but we're not. Why? Because the fall economic statement isn't here. They're late on that assignment. Good thing we're not grading them, right, member from Thornhill?

Are we going to give them time to speak?

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yeah, we're just killing time.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Get rid of the speaking notes.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I don't know what I'd say then. I'd better not; I might get myself in trouble.

This fall economic statement is delayed until Thursday. It's three days late. We could be talking about smart meters, the HST, health care, the Green Energy Act—ad infinitum. There's all kinds of issues out there. As a wag

said one time—I think it was actually Ronald Reagan who said it—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Ronald Reagan?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Ronald Reagan. So you're ready for this; the member from Peterborough is ready for this: "It's not that this government knows so little, but rather that they know so much that isn't true." I think that was true then, when Reagan said it, and I'm sure it's true today, when the member for Sarnia-Lambton says it. It looked like the member from Peterborough was enjoying that.

"The most famous example of alleged ticket manipulation is a Bruce Springsteen concert in New Jersey"—

Mr. Jeff Leal: You were there, weren't you, Bob?

Mr. Robert Bailey: No, no, and I didn't get to Woodstock either—Woodstock, New York. I think the member for Thornhill was there, though. He probably had the beads and the Volkswagen van. The member for Welland—I bet you the member for Welland was there. Peter will tell you, when he gets up. He'll go into that in great detail.

"TicketsNow appeared to have tickets even before they were available at Ticketmaster. Not only is it the most famous example, it is the only example, and one which Ticketmaster says was due to a local computer malfunction. If Ticketmaster had prematurely sold Springsteen tickets via TicketsNow, it would have been in breach of its contract with the Springsteen promoters.

"It is now conventional wisdom in the blog world, on radio call-in shows and in the newsrooms of the Toronto Star"—that famous journalism—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I won't quote the member for Thornhill—"and the CBC that Ticketmaster scalps its own products to TicketsNow. Ticketmaster's legal counsel, Joe Freeman, calls it 'an urban myth.' Still, on CBC Radio's *As It Happens* last week" the famous host "Carol Off belligerently went after Mr. Freeman for having the temerity to deny Ticketmaster's complicity in the ticket-scalping market."

The concert and sport event ticketing business is becoming increasingly complicated and sophisticated thanks to the Internet. Tickets for everything can be found with a simple Google search and a willingness to pay prices way above the official price. I'm sure that if they sold tickets for the show that goes on in here from time to time, there would probably be somebody out on the lawn at Queen's Park trying to market those. I don't know what the uptick would be on those tickets. Do you, member for Thornhill?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Twice as much.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Twice as much? Maybe. He said they'd be worth twice as much as what they're paying now.

In Toronto, the primary sellers include Ticketmaster, the Toronto Blue Jays, the Mirvish theatre group and other secondary players including StubHub, TicketsNorth—you have to be careful saying this one early in the morning: Ticket Liquidator, Ticket Express,

GoTickets and others. Ticket Liquidator reminds me of the guy who had the itchy Twitter finger.

Ticketmaster is the only primary seller that owns a secondary seller. The Ontario legislation effectively singles out Ticketmaster and would prevent it from operating in the secondary market, where it essentially acts as an Internet-based broker between buyers and sellers. The real money is made by the scalpers and traders. TicketsNow collects a fee on transactions but does not own or control any tickets.

The Attorney General, Mr. Bentley, "apparently doesn't believe Ticketmaster. Otherwise, why would he bring in a law that effectively bars Ticketmaster from competing in the secondary market? No doubt the owners of StubHub and scores of other Internet-based scalping agencies are going to be happy.

"All of this is taking place under an existing law that makes scalping illegal. The amendment, in other words, will prevent Ticketmaster from engaging in an activity that the law already officially prohibits but does not stop. It's tough to explain, but it's what people want, the minister says." Great. This is the minister speaking: "Ontarians have spoken out clearly, resoundingly and unequivocally against companies benefiting from the primary and secondary markets." So says the Attorney General.

There are a number of companies that sell or resell tickets. The ones that are controversial are obviously the tickets that are sold above face value—I heard when the member for Timmins-James Bay talked about buying tickets under the market with his father to attend a hockey game a number of years ago in Toronto—while many tickets in Ontario are sold at reduced prices because the venues aren't full. It's supply and demand. But for tickets that sell for greatly inflated prices, they are already breaking the law as it now stands in Ontario. You can't sell tickets above face value—it's called scalping—and the laws in Ontario prevent scalping, or are supposed to, if it takes place.

If the government is actually serious about this problem, why don't they just enforce some of the anti-scalping laws that already exist in this province, like a lot of other laws that should be enforced in this province, like I said, about contraband tobacco or legal occupations that are ongoing for four years-plus? Maybe it's just because they don't know how or they don't have the political will, or maybe it's just because there's no will to do it at the end of the day.

Today, some statistics suggest that almost 50%—I think it's higher than that—of the cigarettes sold in Ontario are sold without taxes. They are illegal cigarettes and yet this government can't find these smoke shacks that they are sold from or don't seem to be able to find the tractor-trailer trucks, RVs and trunks of cars where they are sold from on construction sites and other sites around this province. This government simply doesn't enforce the current law in the same way that they don't enforce the scalping laws in the province of Ontario.

I see my time coming to an end. I know there's something else I wanted to say, but I don't have it right

here in front of me. At this point, I'm going to relinquish the rest of my time to the member for Thornhill.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Another time allocation motion from this government that has so little regard for process here in this Parliament—a government House leader who has an addiction to the guillotine motion; a government that stifles debate at every single opportunity, using every tool available to them and available to them only because of the brute force of their majority; a government that should be very respectful of its majority because it may well not be long-lasting.

The sartorial parliamentary assistant arrives, looking rather dapper. Relax. He's here to work, not to model for Harry Rosen.

While this government has available to it the time allocation motion that it can force through because of its majority—as a matter of fact, this perhaps is the reason for this government's zeal, its passion, its absolute enamourment with time allocation: because they know that you can only make them work when you have a majority, and the majority over here, on this government side, is rather short-lived.

When 76% of Ontarians say they would like to see another party in power, that's pretty potent electoral stuff, isn't it? When 86% of Ontarians say that it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago, there's a whole lot of government backbenchers who should be focusing on preparing resumés rather than revelling in their short-lived majority.

0930

This is remarkable. I've never seen these numbers before—ever. Even when Mr. Rae was tanking, the numbers weren't this bad. And there are margins of error. Let's assume for a moment that on the 76% of respondents who say they would like to see another party in power, there's a four-point margin of error.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It could be 80%.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It could be 72%, or, yes, as the member from Trinity-Spadina said—because he's a teacher, he understands these things and the mathematics of them—it could be 80%. At 80%, you folks will make the federal Tory of—who was that two-person team that was the Tory rump? The wonderful Elsie—

Interjection: Elsie Wayne.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Elsie Wayne—

Interjection: Jean Charest.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —and Jean Charest. Of course, that's before he became a Liberal. But then again, one of the nice things about being a Liberal is that you don't always have to be a Liberal. We see that frequently when it comes to policy and positioning on the part of this government.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You can get a job with two parties.

Mr. Peter Kormos: That's right. Jean Charest became a Liberal after being a Tory, including, remem-

ber, that he was a candidate for leadership. Tory, Liberal; Liberal, Tory—it's the same old story.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The same old story.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He notes.

To those government members who are defeated in the upcoming election, I wish them well. This has nothing to do with arrogance. It has to do with being around here a few rounds and seeing governments get defeated. I've watched it at a very intimate level. I've smelled the fear permeating the caucus room. I've seen the anxiety. I've seen and heard the party leader, the Premier, who says, "There's still a year; it's a long time to go," and who says, "Look, we've got to have a united, consistent voice. Folks, you can't appear to be feuding with each other or to be divided. We can't have anybody breaking rank. We've got to stick to message, stick to message, stick to message. As a matter of fact, we've got the message written down for you. Here it is; it's a three-parter. This is what you say about the Liberals, this is what you say about the Conservatives and this is what you say about the New Democrats." Whether it's true or not is irrelevant, because it's called spin. You guys have got more spin cycles than a Maytag, and the problem is, you're not particularly opaque about it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Transparent?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Exactly.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Or opaque?

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, they're not opaque; they're transparent.

Interjection: Translucent.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I almost heard the heckle from the Liberal as "lucid." Far from it, because lucidity takes a backseat to raw emotion when you've got 76% of Ontarians saying that they would like to see another party in power.

I've heard a government backbencher interject that it's only 76%. Well, how much more would you like it to be? What kind of numbers are you aiming for? Are you going for 99.9%, like 99.9% pure Ivory Snow, the marketers' sort of spin? Are you going for the full monty? Good grief. Surely there are a couple of members over there who will refuse to lemming themselves.

The problem is, when people learn about the use of these time allocation bills, it's my suspicion—time will tell, but it's my suspicion—that you entrench that 76% of people who say they would like to see another party in power, because the government displays itself to be arrogant and aloof and disdainful of process and to have no regard, for instance, for the opportunity of members of the public to participate in the process at committee hearings. One of the sad things that I note about this assembly over the course of the last 22 or 23 years that I've been fortunate enough to be here is that the committee, an incredibly valuable tool for engaging the public—it is—has become less and less relevant.

Take a look at what your bill does. Take a look at what your time allocation motion does. You restrict committee hearings to Thursday, November 25, and Wednesday, December 1, and then you return on Decem-

ber 2 for clause-by-clause. So you've got a few hours on Thursday and you've got a few hours on Wednesday, December 1, and then it's over. You slam the door in the face of members of the public who want to participate in this discussion.

Now, I've got a feeling, because it seems to me just from reflecting on the debate that's taken place here, that there's at least one member here who is a Ticketmaster-TicketsNow spokesperson, and I'm drawing inferences based on what that member has said. As I told you folks last time I was speaking to this bill during second reading, I got calls from at least one lobbyist on this matter, and I declined to answer those calls because I do not want to be in the back pocket of any particular lobbyist or interest, although I find myself as critical of this legislation as any of the other critics of the legislation here in the chamber, because it very much appears there's only one player that this bill is directed at, and that's Ticketmaster and their—it's not a partner—owned operation, TicketsNow.

This bill will not end scalping. This bill will not end reselling by sophisticated computer-driven resellers. This bill will not end the outrageous prices being charged for tickets by resalers; even those prices at the onset are incredibly high. You heard me note that, because I had a chance to, I actually went to Ticketmaster's website; I think it was Ticketmaster, yes. It's amazing what people are paying for tickets to these events. For U2 at the Rogers Centre, they're paying up to \$265, and that's face value. That's not face value plus commission; it's not scalping price. The Toronto Raptors versus the Golden State Warriors at the Air Canada Centre, courtside: \$1,120. That's the face value; it's not the scalped value.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How much, again?

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's \$1,120, and it's per ticket, per seat. Mind you, there are cheaper seats. As a matter of fact, I've not been to the Air Canada Centre, but there's what they call the gondola seating. That's \$38. Just the image of a gondola: You're up somewhere way, way high up in the rafters, swinging off some beams with wires. I don't know how they—they use a cherry-picker to get you up there. It's pretty hard to see that basketball from the gondola seating.

Well, Lady Gaga—I thought my colleague from Trinity-Spadina would be interested.

0940

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I've seen her, yeah.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He has.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I mean, you know, pictures and stuff.

Mr. Peter Kormos: They're \$191, and that's face value.

And Justin Bieber trails the pack at \$71. But I'll tell you, if you've got three teenage daughters and you've got to cough up \$71 apiece plus all of the other stuff, it's a heck of a night.

So there you go. It's remarkable how much people are prepared to pay, because those are the face values. As I told you before, I haven't been to one of these. The last

big concert I went to, I told you, was Bob Dylan and Jerry Garcia down at Rich Stadium. It was a Sunday afternoon. I remember very little of it except I know it was a great concert. I was much younger then, but that's the last time I went to a large concert like that. I've been to Massey Hall from time to time.

Gosh, I remember when the Royal York Hotel had its Imperial Room and people like Ella Fitzgerald would go there: a very small venue, very traditional night club venue—great stuff. But nobody ever paid prices like this. What it seems is that this is what the market will bear. If you want to put scalpers out of business, I say to consumers, don't buy their tickets. Don't pay for them.

There's a debate coming up, I think at Roy Thomson Hall, between Christopher Hitchens and Tony Blair on the existence of God or the role of faith or religion. Hitchens, of course, is the strongly opinionated atheist and Blair is a new convert to Catholicism. The face value of those tickets, I'm told, was up around \$80, but they're being scalped now for up to \$300—to listen to two old men argue about whether or not God exists.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: As my friend from Trinity-Spadina says, you can go down to Cafe Diplomatico on College Street and listen to two old men argue that any day of the week, for free.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Have a good coffee cheap—

Mr. Peter Kormos: For the price of an espresso. If you want to hear two old men argue about the existence of God, go down to Little Italy on College Street and drop in at any of the coffee houses, or for that matter, go to Dooney's new place.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes. My brother is no longer there—Annex Live.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, Annex Live, and you can hear two old men argue about whether or not God exists.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Actually more professor types.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Perhaps more professor types.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You're not turning on the Liberals; they're not listening, Peter. What's going on?

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's your job to turn them on. I'm going to cede the floor to you in relatively short order.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I don't get it. Look at that; they're talking.

Mr. Peter Kormos: They're lifeless this morning. I would be too. They seem depressed.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Flaccid.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But he's perpetually happy. He's never had a grumpy day in his life. I've been here to witness it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He's got a little bowtie. It's the bowtie that makes him happy, I think.

Mr. Peter Kormos: When 76% of Ontarians say they want somebody else in power, that's depressing stuff. It could lead to all sorts of bizarre behaviours.

Hope I got this story right. It's the story about the newly elected Premier, and when he goes into the Premier's office, he finds three envelopes on the desk.

Hon. John Milloy: Oh, please, Peter. We've heard that one so many times.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you know that one?

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's a good story. Stick around. There are people listening who haven't.

The predecessor says, "Pick envelope 1, 2 and 3. As your first crisis comes about, open envelope number 1, and then envelope number 2 and then envelope number 3." So the first crisis came about and envelope number 1 said, "Blame the previous government." The second crisis came about, and what did it say?

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: "Blame Ottawa"; that's right. And then the third crisis came about, and you open the envelope and the little message says, "Prepare three envelopes for your successor"—you see.

You laughed the first time you heard it. That's before you had 76% of Ontarians saying they wanted another party to govern the province. You enjoyed—if there is such a thing as enjoying as compared to enduring your suffering—hubris, because you can only enjoy hubris for a short while, then you suffer it.

The bill is not going to end scalping. It will jam up Ticketmaster and—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: StubHub, TicketsNow.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —TicketsNow. It'll jam them up.

I'm interested in seeing them in committee. For the life of me, I don't know why their lobbyists haven't been working harder or more successfully with the government. It's clear that whoever the operators of Ticketmaster are—I don't even know if that's a publicly traded company or a closely held company, I don't know whether it's family owned, but we'll see what they've done to have earned the ire of Mr. McGuinty's office, because this stuff doesn't happen without Mr. McGuinty's office approving it. So I hope there's time for them to appear at committee. As a matter of fact, they'll be the only person that will have to be there, because it's all about them. Scalpers are not scared by this bill one iota.

We were told by the capable parliamentary assistant that it's the system of buying tickets on computers that allows resellers to buy huge blocks. I suspect more so that it's like in the travel industry, where travel packagers buy blocks of hotel rooms and buy blocks of airline seats. The airline is more than happy to sell them to them, because at least they've got the cash up front, I presume, and they're guaranteed of having those seats sold. Hoteliers are more than pleased to deal with these people because they know that those hotel rooms are going to be paid for, have been paid for, and they could care less what the reseller sells them for—other than the fact that they might learn that they've been undercharging.

By the way, we're going to vote against this time allocation motion. I've never supported one in this Legislature ever, ever, ever. My colleague from Trinity—

Spadina will be using the rest of the time when it comes time for him to speak to this.

It's not just a modest bill; there's modest and then there's pathetic. This falls more under the "Ps" for pathetic.

Nobody purposely misled, do you understand that, Speaker? Because if I were to say that anybody misled, that would be unparliamentary and I would have to withdraw it. If I say the public has been misled, I withdraw that, but there's certainly been a misimpression created that this is going to end high-end, sophisticated ticket scalping, like what happens on computer websites all over Ontario, Canada and North America, and it simply won't. It deals only with when there is a direct relationship between a reseller and a primary seller. We're told that there's only one company—there could be more; we could learn about this—that has that type of relationship between themselves as a primary seller and a reseller, and that's Ticketmaster.

So there we go. The bill may not even get proclaimed, because in any event, it's just a little bit of spin. It has been around over a year and a half. It hasn't had much traction, as I say, in that time. It's not even worthy of a time allocation motion, so this government's obviously got time on its hands.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: It looks to me like the Liberals don't want to debate their own time allocation motion, but that's fine.

I want to begin today by thanking the government House leader for introducing the time allocation motion because, unlike my esteemed friend from Welland, I think it's high time that we put this bill out of its misery. This is a bill that has been debated for the last couple of days, but has been around for the last many, many months. For what reason? No one in this House seems to know.

Even more curious is the fact that it doesn't seem to be large in the public interest, in the minds of people out there. I get a lot of mail and email, interventions of one sort or another, in my constituency office in Thornhill, as do every one of you seated in this House, and I haven't had any intervention whatsoever on the part of the people who sent me here to this place to represent them about this particular bill. I came to Queen's Park to debate real issues.

0950

As everyone knows in this House, there already is a Ticket Speculation Act in existence, and that act prohibits the reselling of tickets above the ticket's value. The act is not being enforced and these new provisions will not be enforced either, and that's what's so ridiculous about debating this bill.

What does this tell us? It tells us that we're in the waning weeks of the period leading up to the holiday break and that the government of the day is devoid of legislation that has any real meaning so it's falling back on spending literally millions of dollars keeping this

palace open so that we can talk about something that doesn't really benefit anyone. It reminds me of other kinds of legislation that we've debated here.

Let's suppose that when—because it is a “when”—this legislation passes, we actually want to protect people from the illicit sale of tickets at a greater price than what their market value is. You have to enforce that. That's the problem with legislation so often brought by this Liberal government of Premier McGuinty: You pass legislation which purports to protect me.

I want to start by saying that my caucus has nothing to say in negative terms about protecting consumers. Consumer protection is a great idea. But in this particular case, what are you protecting me from with this bill, (a) if you are not going to enforce it, and (b) if it's an entirely voluntary act on my part?

I remember when Barbra Streisand was going to perform at the Air Canada Centre. There was a question in my family, as my wife is a big Barbra Streisand fan—me, not so much—and she seemed to really want to go. At that point, the tickets were sold out. The issue was, “Do you really want to go to Barbra Streisand? Because if you do, we'll go down there to the Air Canada Centre and there will be some guy in a leather jacket out in front of the Air Canada Centre and he'll be saying ‘Got tickets? You got tickets?’”

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A thousand bucks.

Mr. Peter Shurman: A thousand bucks. And if I really wanted her to go to Barbra Streisand, I would have taken 10 \$100 bills out of my pocket—given that I actually had 10 \$100 bills in my pocket—and I would have bought her the ticket. Let the buyer beware. If I want to pay \$1,000 for Barbra Streisand, okay, and if I don't want to go, I don't go. That's my consumer protection.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Shurman: My Liberal friends, although you can't hear it on the microphone, people watching at home, are taunting me because they think I'm a cheapskate for not having come up with \$1,000 for my wife. The bottom line is, that's the silliness of the debate that we're in: that we're actually looking at passing legislation that's going to protect nobody, because those people in front of the Air Canada Centre, which is where the real movement of tickets goes on, are not going anywhere. They're not controlled now, they never have been and they never will be.

This reminds me of a number of other things that have gone through this House over the last little while. I began by saying that people in Thornhill had sent me here to debate their business and that nobody had made any representation to me whatsoever on the issue of whether or not they supported or didn't support this bill.

I look at the time allocation motion that was read in the House this morning by the government House leader, “That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet in Toronto on Thursday, November 25, 2010, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of public hearings and in Toronto on Wednesday,

December 1, 2010, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and in Toronto on Thursday, December 2, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.”—public hearings on a bill that really isn't of very much interest to anybody, with the exception, perhaps, of Ticketmaster. I recall, not so many months ago in this chamber, how much noise we had to make to get a modicum of public hearings on a subject like the HST, a subject on which every single member in this House had plenty of interventions in their office. So what interests this government and what doesn't?

Later this week, I'm speaking to a group that has a great interest in contraband tobacco: the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. These are people—and I'm not digressing from the bill, because there's a great parallel here. This is exactly like the contraband tobacco issue. This government has gone to great lengths to continually modify and add to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act over a period of time, something with which, in principle, we don't disagree, but it doesn't enforce very much of it, with the exception of that small unit of legal tobacco sales. So the tobacco enforcement group, the officers who enforce the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, constantly visit convenience stores to enforce the Smoke-Free Ontario Act there, but they have orders—and we know they have orders. We've seen articles in the paper even lately that say, “You don't go into the smoke shacks; you don't go on to the native reserves.” You don't even apparently go into the parking lots across from high schools, where there's some guy who's just as sleazy as those people selling tickets outside of the Air Canada Centre selling tobacco out of his trunk to kids who would otherwise be carded by the convenience store associations.

What's the parallel here? That you've got strong legislation that protects people from illicit tobacco use and protects our children? Nonsense. We don't have that. We don't have that because we don't have enforcement in the precise areas where we need it, and the result is 50%—maybe even more by now—of tobacco sales in the province of Ontario are illegal tobacco sales, way larger than any other province in Canada.

So now we're going to have legislation that protects us from the unscrupulous people who want to sell us tickets to events at elevated prices when you have no enforcement whatsoever. What's the difference? There's no requirement for that at all.

It's amazing when I think of—I've been here just a little over three years now.

Mr. John O'Toole: It seems longer.

Mr. Peter Shurman: It seems longer, my friend from Durham says. You're right: It does some days, and today is one of them.

Another issue that's surfacing right now that illustrates what this government has done in terms of enacting legislation that, at the end of the day, is really of no force and effect, other than perhaps negative—and this is starting to scare me. Not many months ago, we dealt with a change that resulted in the denial of a particular mode of payment to pharmacists all across Ontario for the sale

of generic drugs. The generic drug manufacturers paid pharmacists 20%. Some people called it a kickback, a pejorative word; other people called it a commission. It didn't matter; it seemed to work for the industry. But the government denied that opportunity and said, "That can't happen anymore," because it looked like, and the government sold it as, a benefit to the people of Ontario.

Guess what's happening now? There are a number of molecules, drug formulations, that are not available, period. They're not available in any pharmacy because generic drug manufacturers, on the non-profitable items, have stopped manufacturing them. What are people discovering? Are drugs cheaper? No. They're getting the brand name prescribed by the doctor and the drug insurers are reimbursing at the value of the generic. In many cases, people aren't getting the drugs they need at all.

That's how this government legislates. It legislates first and it looks at the results afterwards, and the results are negative. If you think that's negative on the drug issue, I've been told by people who are much more in the know than me—I'm talking about medical people—that over the course of the coming winter—and it's just around the corner; let's face it—when people's resistance is down, these strains of bacteria that are highly drug-resistant will elevate in the population by a dramatic amount because of the fact that the correct antibiotics or any antibiotics will not be effective against these things. So we'll be hurting, indeed, we may be killing, more Ontarians because of legislation that purported to protect them.

I am trying to illustrate that this legislation, the legislation pertaining to drugs, the legislation pertaining to tobacco, always is brought forward in this House with a view by this Liberal government that says, "We are here to protect you," and, at the end of the day, results in no protection of any sort. In fact, it could result in harm—it will in the drug community, and already is; it will and is in the area of tobacco; and in this particular case, thank goodness we're only talking about tickets, because with tickets, if you don't get them or if you have to pay too much for them, you have a choice and you won't be injured. You won't have life and limb threatened.

1000

The problem is that this bill will do nothing to improve customer protection for my constituents in Thornhill, who did send me here to represent them, who did send me here with no idea that this legislation would be there and no concern that it is. This legislation targets but one group of ticket sellers, and ignores others, like brokers and like the scalpers I talked about out in front of the Air Canada Centre. It will drive the market underground, where there is less consumer protection, and that's the concern.

So why are we debating this bill now? Well, because according to the legislative calendar we have about three weeks before this House breaks for the holidays, and then we're not here for the duration of December; for about three, three and a half or four weeks in December we

won't be here; we won't be here all of January, and if the government maintains the schedule that is published, won't be here until February 22. That's the period of time that we'll be gone. Somehow or other, this government is looking to fill three weeks with debate on one thing or another. So we're talking about this bill; we'll be discussing Bill 99, the activities tax credit, this afternoon; we'll be finishing up on the Water Opportunities Act; and I don't know of any other legislation that exists. So quite frankly, to the government House leader, I don't know how you're going to get past this week. You'd better come up with some new legislation to protect me from me very soon, because that's what it is you excel at.

I have another example that I'd like to raise, that goes back to the early days for me, three years ago, that opened the door to what it is they're trying to do. That was the pesticides bill. I've cited this as an example many times during debate in this House as something that opened my eyes to how this government works. The government brought in the pesticides bill, originally, under the guise of protecting Ontarians from the scourge of pesticides: "We're going to ban 100% of pesticide use in the province of Ontario." When I asked a question of the then environment minister, Mr. Gerretsen, in this House, on why he was doing that, he said, "It's to protect the children. We have to protect the children." Hard-hearted me, I don't want to protect any children? Well, of course I want to protect children. If that was really what that legislation was going to effect, then I would have supported it. But if you read between the lines—which is why we get sent to this place. We have to read between the lines; we have to interpret the legislation; we have to do what 160,000 people in Thornhill don't have the time to do, which is interpret for them in 10 seconds what it is that we're voting for or voting against. Why would I hurt their children by not voting for the pesticides bill? I'll tell you. Because the pesticides bill started out by saying, "We're going to ban the use of pesticides in the province of Ontario." And oh, by the way, if you read between the lines, "We're going to exempt 98.5% of those pesticides from the ban."

Mr. Toby Barrett: What about the farm children?

Mr. Peter Shurman: My friend from Haldimand-Norfolk says, "What about the farm children? Don't we protect them, too?" And that's exactly right. Because what we did is we saw exemptions in that bill from the use of pesticides in agriculture, on golf courses, in forestry, in hydro rights of way, along railway rights of way—all of that—so actually, in the name of banning 100% of pesticides, we banned 1.5% of the use of pesticides. And do you know what those pesticides were? Basically it was 2,4-D, which is the primary active ingredient that was used by the Weed Man and GreenLawn to make my lawn green but, more importantly, to keep me from suffering an asthma attack or an allergy attack, which I've been suffering for the past couple of years after not having suffered from it for 30—and that goes for an awful lot of other people as well—to protect the children. So again, an example just like this of legislating for legislating's sake. That is not why we're here.

What we are here to do is to take a look at what best serves the people of Ontario. In this time, in this place, using a very expensive medium, which is the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, we should be talking about the people's business. My colleague from Sarnia-Lambton not too many moments ago in debate mentioned the fact that the fall economic statement was due no later than the beginning of this week and now we've been told that it couldn't be prepared on time; we're going to get it on Thursday. It will be an interesting statement to look at because the people's business that we should be talking about here, that we should be talking about now, isn't whether or not a ticket is too expensive. Most people, at the regular prices of tickets at the box office, are having problems buying them. Why? Because this government, to address its own unbridled spending habits, has spent most of the time, the real time, in this Legislature enacting tax after tax and sometimes slipping it in, like the eco taxes, under the radar when they were hitting us doubly hard with HST.

I talked about the concerns of the people of Thornhill not too long ago. When I asked for interest in whether or not this is a good, bad or indifferent bill, I got nothing. When I asked for interest on whether or not the HST was a good, bad or indifferent idea, I got several hundred people at a meeting. I got a Liberal member from Ottawa Centre out in Thornhill talking to people who are in condominiums to try to sell them on the fact that it was great, and he got booted.

When we asked for public hearings on this side on the HST, what did we get? We got this, only you have to choose the one you like best. That's what we got. I know I'm skirting the line, Speaker. The point I'm trying to make is that the real business of this House is to deal, on the part of people who represent 13 million others and who have the privilege of sitting in this chamber, with real issues of the day.

The real issue of today, the real issue that we have to address right now, is not whether a ticket costs more or whether this bill is going to protect us from that ticket costing more than it should. We've already established that it's not. I don't think we've even got any disagreement from the Liberal ranks.

What we have to deal with here and now is the fact that there are hundreds of thousands of people in Ontario who have not gone back to work so they're not buying a ticket to anything. What we have to deal with now is an economy that is not in any kind of shape compared to sister provinces in Canada. What we have to deal with now is a province that has become a have-not province from a have province notwithstanding the fact that in land mass and in population, we are the ranking province in the country. This is the sad fact.

But what are we doing in the Legislature? We're talking about whether or not somebody has to pay too much for a Barbra Streisand ticket because an unscrupulous person has gotten a hold of it. This bill doesn't even address that; it addresses Ticketmaster and a sister company or eBay and a sister company. That's not what this place is about.

As I began, I will end: Thank you to the government House leader for introducing this time allocation motion. Let's put this bill out of its misery.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I take a different point of view from my two friends from Sarnia-Lambton and Thornhill because I actually think this is an important bill to debate. The problem is, as the member from Welland said, we're not debating this bill, not just because we're cutting it short today, as an issue, but also because we're not going to allow much debate or discussion because we have curtailed the number of people that could come to speak to the bill.

The motion clearly gives the public two days to come and give their presentation, and in those two days they only have a couple of hours. This suggests to me the government wants to get this out of the way as quickly as possible. But in my view, this is an important bill to talk about. It is about speculation. Someone is speculating out there. Someone is making a whole lot of pecunia out of these kinds of events. We should be dealing with it.

My Conservative friends are right that this bill will not get to the bottom of it, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be debating the bill. We should be talking about amendments to the bill, and we should be making sure that a whole lot of people come to those committee hearings.

Now, what we normally do in subcommittee is discuss how many days we should give to hearings. In the good old days of the 1990 government, the then Bob Rae government, now turned Liberal, we used to have hearings that lasted for a month. We would give every opportunity to our friends and foes to come and beat us up on a daily basis. A whole month we would give to debate bills. Those were public hearings. We wanted people to tell us what they thought about the bills.

1010

Today, we get two days, if we're lucky. Two days, for a couple of hours each day. Those are not public hearings. You are circumscribing the bill and circumscribing the number of people who could come to speak to the bill, and that is wrong. That tells me you don't even take your bill seriously. You want to pretend you're doing something when in actual fact you're doing so very little, because it doesn't get to deal with the real problem.

I have to tell you, I know a whole lot of people who want to attend cultural and sports events in their communities. The Olympics are a big deal for a whole lot of people. It's not for some, but they're a big deal for a whole lot of Canadians. Yes, music and concerts are as important as ever to young and old people—not so much me. I've got to admit, I'm a pretty boring guy. I used to love to sing Tom Jones. I wouldn't mind watching him on television, but to pay the big bucks to watch him live—you wouldn't catch me paying money to see Tom Jones giving away his shorts or whatever else he was giving. I just wouldn't do that. I don't know how women enjoy that kind of stuff, but God bless. They went—they

still do, and he's still good at it, at his 60 years of age. God bless him. He's still doing okay. But I wouldn't pay the big, big bucks to watch my friend Tom Jones, whom I imitated for three long years.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Imitated?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes.

The point is, I love a good soccer game as anybody else does. I really do—more than hockey, more than basketball, more than tennis, more than golf, more than anything else you could talk about. But to think that somehow I would go pay the big bucks to watch these soccer players—I'm just not going to do that; I think it's insane. But there are people who do; there are. A whole lot of adults are pressured by their sons and daughters to go to these concerts, to go to these games—basketball, soccer, football or hockey; whatever it is. They're under tremendous pressure to buy the tickets to those concerts for their children. I'll bet a whole lot of MPPs are probably nodding when I say that, because young people want to go. Martin Bieber, a nice young man—I wouldn't go to see Martin Bieber myself, but I know that there are a whole lot of young kids who like this young man.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Justin Bieber.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Justin Bieber. Thank you, Doc. That's why you're here.

There are a whole lot of people who want to pay the big bucks to see this young man perform. God bless. But I say ordinary men and women, modest-income people, spend a whole lot of money that, in some cases, they do not have to go to these concerts, to go to these games.

I personally think we've got to lower those prices. I would boycott these games and these concerts. I would do that. Bring the price down so that modest-income people can enjoy these things that they love to see.

This bill doesn't deal with it. I understand. That's why I'm making the argument to people that the way to bring the price down is to boycott them. That'll get to the brokers; that'll get to TicketsNow, StubHub or any other term for any one of these resale organizations that exist. That's the way we bring them down, if we have to, so that we can make life affordable to people.

To boot, we now have the HST on top of those tickets. Now we've got McGuinty saying, "Not only are those tickets unaffordable, but we're going to put 8% on those tickets to make it really more unaffordable." By the way, those fine brokers that are out there buying by the thousands, wherever they are, whether they're in Ontario, New Brunswick or Alberta, who can buy tickets electronically, and they do, those people are still going to buy those tickets and resell them at incredibly high prices.

This bill doesn't get to deal with that either. This bill ends the relationship that exists between Ticketmaster and TicketsNow, the resale organization, but that's not the end of the problem. You've got scalpers, little guys, trying to make a few bucks. Would I go after some of those guys? They're little guys, in my mind. They're making a few dollars and making a living. But those are not the people who have a big pecuniary interest in the resale market. The brokers that are making the big

bucks—those are the people who are jacking up the price two, three, four and five times the value of the original ticket. Those are the people we've got to go after, and this government doesn't seem too keen or interested in telling us how, through the hearings, we can invite the public, good doctor, to give us their judgment, their wisdom, on how we get to solve this problem. So you introduce your little bill that does a little something and then you kill it by giving the public a couple of hours of debate, by bringing them to give them five or 10 minutes, and you end it. Why do you do that? Why do you continue to disappoint me over and over again?

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): On that note, the House will stand adjourned until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd just like to welcome a good friend from Burlington, Ontario, who came here today: Marilynn Heinz. I'd like to welcome her to the Legislature today.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature members of the Métis Nation of Ontario. In recognition of the 125th anniversary of Louis Riel's death, there will be a special ceremony and a reception in rooms 228 and 230, beginning about 12:30, to which all are invited.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to introduce page Jennifer Boothby's parents, Carol Ann Boothby and Bob Boothby, who are in the public gallery. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Don Valley East and page Miguel Agudelo, to welcome his mother, Lucia Henao, to the public galleries today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery, from my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to welcome a group visiting us today from the county of Elgin. They will be touring the Legislative Building. They are: Clayton Watters, Jim Carter, Cole Aicken, John Kersten, John Smith, Ernie Schned and Mike Westelaken. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

I'd also like to draw the members' attention to the Speaker's gallery to welcome the Right Reverend Dennis Drainville, Lord Bishop of Quebec and former member from Victoria–Haliburton in the 35th Parliament. Welcome back to Queen's Park today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to ask the pages to assemble for introduction, please.

I'd ask all members to please join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Miguel Agudelo, Don Valley East; Jennifer Boothby, Etobicoke Centre; William Boulter, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound; Drew Brennan, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington; Sarah Charnock, Newmarket-Aurora; Casey Connor, Burlington; Jake Fell, Peterborough; Kyle Fitzgerald, Oshawa; Breana Hooks, London North Centre; Gabriella Howes, Windsor-Tecumseh; Emily Hryb, Bramalea-Gore-Malton; Mahir Malik, York West; Kira Kuzemchuk, Kenora-Rainy River; Tony Mistak, Halton; Alexandra Oleiche, Hamilton Mountain; Justin Patel, Parkdale-High Park; Vithuran Sukumar, Mississauga-Brampton South; Joshua Turner, Durham; Donna Wang, Thornhill; Elizabeth Wilson, Wellington-Halton Hills; and Connor Wood, Scarborough-Guildwood. Welcome to all of you.

VISITOR

Mr. Joe Dickson: I guess I was not quite tall enough to be seen before, so I do apologize.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce someone special to the Legislature, one of the many children of Susan and Wayne Arthurs; I can't mention their names, so I will say that they are from the riding of Pickering-Scarborough East. Their son Joel is with us, and seated beside him is his very young-looking father.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SMART METERS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday you gave a brand new explanation of why Ontario families have seen their hydro bills almost double since Premier McGuinty took office. The energy minister said hydro meters are crumbling on walls and poles across the province, and now your new smart meter is simply catching people who had it too easy. So I ask the minister, exactly how many meters have succumbed to crumbling hydro meter syndrome?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We've been saying for some time now that electricity prices are going up; we've been very upfront about that. There's a good reason for it: We're modernizing our energy system. We're investing in modernizing our energy system to make it more reliable and more efficient. We've added new supply to ensure our homes, our schools, our hospitals and our businesses have the power that they need. Smart meters are a very important part of that modernization. They provide more accurate information to customers and allow them to better manage their usage. They provide timely information to local utilities so that they can deal with outages in a much better way.

1040

We're the only party here that's been upfront about the fact that costs are going up. In the past, political parties of all stripes haven't been true on this issue with Ontarians. Prices are going up. Both opposition parties try to play the game, to pretend that that's not the case—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think families would like to learn more of the minister's theory of crumbling hydro meter syndrome; that they're falling off of walls and hydro poles across the province. In fact, with all due respect to the minister, this is probably his most—how should I say it?—creative excuse yet to date.

The real problem, Minister, is with your new smart meter tax machines. Measurement Canada has said there are measurement problems with your hydro meters, which you've turned into nothing more than tax machines on the backs of Ontario seniors and families. Ontario PCs have the right approach, to freeze the program in place until you fix these problems and to give Ontario families a choice: Do they want to be on time-of-use smart meters or not?

Minister, did you just make up your latest theory to confuse families or will you finally do the right thing?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The last person we're going to take advice from when it comes to time of use would be the Leader of the Opposition. He stands in his place, day after day here in this Legislature, and talks about concern about rising costs, yet he comes forward with an initiative that would create a duplicate billing system; an initiative that would pile an entire amount of administration and costs onto local distribution companies; an initiative that wouldn't cause prices to go down; an initiative that would jack prices up to consumers across this province. It's very clear: Those guys didn't know what they were doing seven years ago when it came to our power system. They still don't know. They still don't get it. The only idea they've come up with would cause rates to go up. The last person we're going to take advice from when it comes to time of use will be the member opposite.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, as you know, energy analysts are finding your recent claim of crumbling hydro meter syndrome rather bizarre, to say the least. They're saying that existing meters were highly tested and highly reliable. Minister, it's not crumbling hydro meters that are the problem, it's Premier McGuinty's generous subsidies to Korea-based Samsung and expensive energy experiments. It's your hidden tax on hydro bills. It's your greedy HST tax grab and your smart meters that are driving families' bills through the roof.

Minister, will you stop making things up on the fly, do the right thing, freeze the program until you fix it and give every Ontario family a choice whether they want to have one of your smart meter time-of-use machines or not?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's time to cut through the political rhetoric. Let's hear from somebody outside of

this Legislature, somebody who is an honoured expert in these matters. That's Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. This is what Gord Miller had to say, our Environmental Commissioner: "It has been proposed to let people choose whether to pay a flat rate for their electricity, or have time-of-use pricing. I believe this would be short-sighted"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. It's important to hear the questions and the answers.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I don't mind when they heckle me, but when they're heckling the Environmental Commissioner's quote, that really tells you they really don't want to hear the facts. I'll start over: "It's been proposed to let people choose whether to pay a flat rate for their electricity, or have time-of-use pricing. I believe this would be short-sighted." He goes on to say, "Going back to the same-old same-old that did not work is not the answer."

I agree with the Environmental Commissioner. I do not agree with this guy's approach, which would take us back to where we were seven years ago.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Energy, whose smart meter tax machines are hitting families when they're getting the kids ready for school every day and when they're home from work, cooking meals and trying to get the kids to do homework. You know that not every family fits Dalton McGuinty's definition of an ideal family.

Also, I want to bring to the minister's attention that on every bill, Ontario families are paying a debt retirement charge for a debt on generation projects that were built as far back as the Peterson era. The debt was \$7.8 billion when Ontario families started paying it. They have now been paying it for eight years. Minister, exactly how much is left on the debt retirement charge, given that families have been paying for eight years?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll refer that to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That member and his party put a debt retirement charge on every Ontarian's bill in 1999—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment. I just ask all—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's coming from both sides.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd prefer we talk about questions and answers, and not about what somebody wants to have for lunch.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In 1999, they put the debt retirement charge on every Ontarian's bill, and between

1999 and 2003, when they were turfed from power, they didn't use one penny of that to pay down the debt. They diverted it to a price freeze. They diverted it away from that. When we came to office we began to apply it, and every year we have put \$1 billion on to that debt.

They want to go back to debt retirement charges; we're eliminating the debt. They don't want to be straight up with the people of Ontario; we are. We're going to pay down—

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

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: With all due respect, Minister, to use parliamentary language, what a bunch of horse feathers.

Look at your own OEFC reports that show, from 2002 until 2009-10—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): My apologies. Stop the clock, please. I would just say to the honourable Minister of Economic Development that the debate should be taking place within this chamber and not to any political staff who may be sitting behind me.

Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, the government's own reports show that \$7.8 billion has been collected from Ontario families and consumers since 2002. The original debt was \$7.8 billion, so enough has been collected to pay off that debt.

Minister, you've collected \$7.8 billion. Where did the money go? How did you waste those funds? Why did you tell Ontario families one thing and do the opposite with the money they're paying through their hydro bills?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Not only did they not use the money they took off of every Ontarian's bill to pay the debt for four years, they added to the stranded debt. And it wasn't because they were adding supply. We lost almost 1,800 megawatts of power on his watch. That's the equivalent of Niagara Falls going dry. We had to have diesel-fired generators in downtown Toronto. Why? Because they failed to level and be straight up with Ontarians about the mess they had created. Not only did they put that charge on people's bills, they raised the price of electricity 30% in six weeks with their failed deregulation scheme.

We're paying down the debt. We're building new systems. We're building—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, I think you know you're playing a little fast and loose with the facts here. There has been some—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

Mr. Tim Hudak: That's fine. I withdraw. The minister's statements are not quite in keeping with the facts.

Minister, the residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion. To date, \$7.8 billion has been collected through that charge on the bills of Ontarian families, \$7 billion of which came under the McGuinty government.

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I'll ask the minister: Where did the money go? You've collected \$7.8 billion. That's the amount the debt was. That's what has been collected. Where are you hiding the money? Where did you put it? Why do families keep paying more and more, and you won't even say how much is left to pay off when they should have paid off the \$7.8 billion by now? What did you do with all that money?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We do have to pay interest, and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That took maybe all of five seconds to ask the members to come to order. I sat down and you started to interject. I think we all want to recognize the importance of question period, and it is important for members—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's also important that the member from Renfrew, when the Speaker is speaking, should be listening as well.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Every year we have paid down the debt, which is very different from what happened when he was there. They may think the billions of dollars we have paid off is horse feathers; we think it's an important initiative to ensure that this debt retirement comes off in a timely fashion.

That debt retirement charge, the stranded debt from the old Ontario Hydro, that charge they put on people's bills for the first four years it was in place while they were government—not one nickel went to the debt retirement charge.

This has been reported every year. The money is going to that debt. The system will be stronger when that debt is paid off and when we make it cleaner and more affordable.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. People struggling with tough times are looking to their government for a break. Instead, they see a government that simply won't help. The government has found money for everything from a consultant's vacation to Japan to corporate tax cuts that cost our treasury billions. Will the government re-evaluate their priorities on Thursday, or can we expect just more of the same?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We look forward to presenting the fall economic statement in this House, as my honourable colleague well knows. I'll leave the details,

of course, to the finance minister to present at that time, but I can say that it will build upon our continuing efforts to support our public services, to invest in jobs and the economy.

I want to remind my honourable colleague of what we've in fact been doing for Ontario families. We are cutting taxes for people to the tune of \$12 billion over three years. The average personal income tax cut this year is \$200 every year. Ninety thousand Ontarians are no longer paying any income taxes. My colleague knows as well that we put in place an energy and property tax credit. It's up to \$900 for families and up to \$1,025 for seniors. All told, it will help nearly three million Ontarians when it comes to their electricity and property taxes. That's the kind of direction we will continue to pursue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's what families in Ontario are experiencing: closed emergency rooms, skyrocketing hydro bills and a Premier who responds to their challenges with simply a shrug while public money flows to well-connected insiders and huge corporate tax giveaways.

We know this government is scrambling. Will they finally re-evaluate their priorities Thursday, or can we expect corporate tax cuts to keep trumping families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague knows that one of the most important things that families count on is a job. I had the privilege and great pleasure just a little over a week ago to visit Hamilton. I was at an event attended by both the incoming and outgoing mayors of Hamilton and a number of other people there representing the community. We were there together to celebrate a new initiative. JNE Consulting has announced a venture together with a Chinese company: 300 new jobs in the green energy sector.

There was a time when the NDP supported clean, green energy, when they supported clean, green jobs, when they supported shutting down dirty coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. That time does not appear to be now. We have not changed; we will continue to find ways to invest in clean energy and to create jobs at the same time.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Despite the Premier's empty promises, the government's HST and corporate tax cuts are not creating scads of jobs, but they are making life harder for everyday Ontario families. This Thursday, the government can actually make a difference. They can make a choice that makes a difference for the people of Ontario. Will they make relief for families a priority finally, or will they continue with their flawed tax schemes that leave people paying more and more?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague of some of the things we've done to support families, which she has failed to support: There's our Ontario child benefit, the first benefit of its kind in the country. It is \$1,100 per child. We're proud of that, and we'd love to have the member's support in con-

nection with that. There's a new children's fitness tax credit: \$50 per child. It's not the end of the world—we recognize that—but from a family's perspective, if you have a couple of kids, it's \$100 a year, and believe me, that's nothing to sneeze at. We've also invested in our sales tax credit. It's \$260 for every Ontarian who qualifies. It's going to benefit 2.9 million Ontarians. For a family of four, that's over \$1,000 every single year.

Those are real, they're concrete, they're practical and they're meaningful to families. Our fall economic statement will continue to pursue that kind of direction, and in that, we would be very honoured, of course, to have the support of the member opposite.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Over the fall session, New Democrats have been bringing the challenges facing everyday families right here into the Legislature—their worries about jobs, health care and the growing cost of living—and every day, the Premier has responded with condescending indifference. But now the government's back is to the wall. Will the Premier give people a break and take the HST off the hydro bills on Thursday?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The leader of the third party continues to get up in her place and oppose the important investments that we're making in our energy system.

I want to go back to where the Premier was, because it was just last week that the Premier attended, with our member from Hamilton Mountain, an event where 300 jobs were announced in Hamilton. JNE Consulting and Daqo Group are forming a joint venture that will create 300 jobs for a solar panel assembly plant.

The question I think the people of Hamilton need to know, the question the Hamilton Spectator should be asking, the question I think Ontarians need to know, is: Does the leader of the third party support the important investments we're making in our energy system that are creating those 300 clean energy jobs, or will she go back to her riding and tell her constituents she does not support those jobs?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thursday's priority should be making life more affordable for families, period. That should be the priority. Families have seen their bills go up, up, up, and the Premier responds with a shrug. The government has found money for corporate tax cuts, for vacations to Japan, and today we learned that you can even charge the public for a rollercoaster ride in this province. Will the Premier finally provide some help for families and take the HST off electricity bills?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As the Premier said earlier, we've brought forward an energy and property tax credit. Two thirds of Ontario's seniors are going to benefit from that. That's going to provide relief to those seniors when it comes to rising energy costs. It also provides relief to middle-income Ontarians. We recognize that Ontarians

are going through tough times. We recognize that we've just gone through one of the toughest recessions certainly in our time and perhaps since the Great Depression, and we're working with Ontario families to help them get through those tough times.

What we will not do is what the NDP want us to do. They want us to back away from creating jobs in this province. They want us to stop investing in our green energy system; stop building that clean energy economy; kiss away those 300 jobs that the people of Hamilton are going to be getting, that we announced just last week; kiss away the 50,000 jobs we're creating across this province. We will continue to invest in building a clean, strong—

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

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Ms. Andrea Horwath: It really is the theatre of the absurd some days.

Lisa Blois from London writes, "My hydro bills have been upwards of \$400 the last few months and we are having a heck of a time keeping up with this bill and trying to pay it off each month. This is absolutely insane and NOT FAIR." The Premier's response to people like Lisa has been a shrug. He can't help, he says. But voices like Lisa's have grown too loud for the government to simply continue to ignore them. Will the Premier give people a break and take the HST off their hydro bills on Thursday?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll tell you what we're not going to do. We're not going to back away from the important investments we're making in energy, the important investments we're making to create clean energy jobs and build a green energy hub.

I have a quote for you here that I'd like to read. This came from that announcement last week in the member's community of Hamilton. The quote is: "The international collaboration between Hamilton's JNE Consulting and Dago Group Ltd. in China is a great example of Ontario's strength as a global leader in green energy. This announcement means good jobs for Hamiltonians and a clean environment for Ontario families."

That quote comes from our Minister of Revenue, the MPP from Hamilton Mountain, who gets it when it comes to standing up for Ontarians and creating jobs across this province and standing up for Hamiltonians who needs those jobs. The leader of the third party should show similar courage and stand up for Hamiltonians, stand up for jobs in Ontario and stand up for the things the NDP used to believe in.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question this time is to the Premier. Premier, you just heard your finance minister say that the reason that you've not paid down the residual stranded debt is because of interest. I'm not sure exactly what kind of rates the minister is signed on to, but Premier, you've collected \$7.8 billion to date. That was

the original residual stranded debt. Could the Premier inform us exactly how much you have paid back in debt interest and then how much you paid down in the principal, or else where exactly all that money did go?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I will give the member a little lesson on the structure that he and his government set up. They created the OEFC, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. A whole bunch of revenues go into that, the debt retirement charge and other things, and things come out, including the debt retirement payments.

Let me just share with him what happened between April 1, 1999, and when they left office. The unfunded liability under that member and his government rose from \$19.4 billion to \$20.5 billion, an increase of over \$1 billion. We have continuously paid it down since taking office. It has declined from \$20.5 billion in 2004 to \$14.8 billion this year. That's a record of achievement. That is the fact. You set this—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I know the minister is trying to confuse the issues between residual stranded debt and other debt that he has put on there. But here are the facts that you well know, Premier. To date, the government has collected \$7.8 billion through the debt retirement charge, \$7 billion of which was under your watch. On top of that, you've slapped down the HST. So with 13% on top of that coming out of people's hydro bills, if you collect \$1 billion, it's a further \$130 million.

I think you do understand this. Ontario families are struggling with their hydro bills. A typical family can be paying up to \$100 or more in debt retirement charges on their hydro bills. Bills are unaffordable to Ontario families. Premier, why won't you come clean and tell us exactly how much you've paid off in debt interest and exactly when this charge will be gone, because you've collected \$7.8 billion to date from Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the people of Ontario, again, when Mr. Hudak, the Leader of the Opposition, and his party were in power, the unfunded liability—that's the debt associated with Ontario Hydro—increased from \$19.4 billion to \$20.5 billion, even though on every bill they slapped a debt retirement charge. They didn't use the money for that. On our watch, according to the audited financial statements of the province, that debt has gone from \$20.5 billion to \$14.8 billion and will be eliminated, because we're doing the right thing. We're not messing around with people's bills and fooling around with the numbers to paint a story that, frankly, isn't accurate.

COURT BACKLOG

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Attorney General: Tzvi Erez bilks his Toronto victims out of \$27 million and the crown attorney withdraws the criminal charges because it

doesn't have the resources to prosecute. How does the Attorney General explain that?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's an important question. We take allegations of fraud very seriously. We prosecute the allegations. We do not walk away from cases. We have resources for the cases that need them, and where more are required, we find them. I take a number of the reports that I've heard and read in the media very seriously. They cause me a great deal of concern. I have asked the chief prosecutor to get to the bottom of it and I've asked for the report as quickly as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Assistant Crown Attorney Donna Gillespie is reported to have said that the charges were dropped because the courts were tied up with more serious criminal matters. Seventy people lose \$27 million—for most of them, this is their life savings—in Erez's Ponzi scheme. The Attorney General withdraws those criminal charges, refusing to prosecute. Is Ontario now open for business when it comes to high-end, sophisticated fraud artists?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: All Ontarians take allegations of fraud very seriously. All Ontarians expect, where the evidence supports it, that allegations will be prosecuted. This government takes these allegations very seriously, as I told my friend. As I told my friend opposite, a number of the reports cause me a great deal of concern. I have asked the chief prosecutor to get to the bottom of it and provide me with a report as quickly as possible.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Ontario's Green Energy Act is over a year old now, and over the course of this last year we've heard over and over again about the Green Energy Act's projected job numbers and investments. The ambitious goals of the Green Energy Act—50,000 jobs, billions of dollars in private sector investment and countless megawatts of clean energy—have already begun to show.

I'm proud to say that in my riding of Guelph we've been blessed with some new solar power manufacturers, but Ontarians want to know what this legislation means for them. Could the minister update the House on the government's progress towards creating a clean energy economy in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member from Guelph for her question. Like so many members on this side of the House, she has been a tireless advocate for clean energy in her riding. I want to thank her for that, because it's important.

The fact is, the Green Energy Act is making Ontario a world leader in the clean energy industry. In recent months we've attracted over \$1 billion in private sector investment and created more than 1,400 construction jobs. We've made outstanding strides in the solar power sector alone. Ontario is Canada's leader in solar capacity and home to the largest solar farm in the world. The

Sarnia Solar Project, with 80 megawatts now online, represents approximately \$400 million of investment and enough electricity each year to power more than 12,000 homes. Construction of the project created about 800 jobs.

Last month, the Premier visited the Melitron Corp. in Guelph, where solar panel parts will be manufactured, creating up to 60 direct and 300 indirect jobs. We're—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: These numbers are significant. Investments and jobs in clean energy manufacturing will go a long way to rebuilding both local economies and the economy of our province as a whole.

Interjections.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: The members opposite may be laughing, but my constituents in Guelph are very happy to see that our manufacturing sector, which was traditionally focused on auto parts, is diversifying into clean energy.

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I know that green energy is about more than just figures and facts or dollars; it's about making life better for the citizens of our province. Could the minister explain what Ontarians can expect to see as a result of these clean energy investments? How will they affect the everyday lives of our citizens and their communities?

Hon. Brad Duguid: There's no question about it: Investments in clean energy manufacturing and jobs will have a good rate of return for all Ontarians. But I'm not just talking about financial returns; I'm talking about quality of life here in the province.

As I said earlier, the member from Guelph has been a strong voice for clean energy in her riding and making life better for her constituents, and her hard work is clearly evident.

Just last summer, I had the pleasure of joining the member to launch a solar module manufacturing facility that will create up to 500 jobs in the Guelph area. This Canadian Solar Inc. plant perfectly illustrates how the government's Green Energy Act is positively impacting the lives of Ontarians. In every corner of the province, solar energy products and manufacturing plants are opening, creating jobs and bringing investment to Ontario.

Across the province, we're creating clean energy jobs that are putting our highly skilled workforce to use, jobs in construction, installation, operations and maintenance, engineering, manufacturing, finance—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Premier McGuinty's failed wage restraint experiment is going to lead to more McGuinty Liberal health care cuts as hospitals look for ways to fund the pay increases that arbitrators are awarding. McGuinty Liberal health care cuts have already closed emergency rooms in

Fort Erie and Port Colborne and forced the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga to use a garage as an ER. Only in Premier McGuinty's Ontario can patients have their blood pressure and their tire pressure checked at the same time.

To the Premier: Have you visited the McGuinty wing of the hospital to see it for yourself?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Since the budget policy was announced, there have been some 40 collective agreements achieved in Ontario. Four of those were subject to arbitrators' decisions, and the balance, 36—more than half—achieved zero and zero. The average public sector settlement is down to 1.7%. It's below the private sector, and it's certainly below the settlement the federal government gave their employees, which was quite high relative to what we've done.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker: We reject their ideas about labour unrest, about fights, about all of that. We rejected what they did with the social contract. This is harder, it takes longer, but we are seeing results. We will continue to work with the bargaining agents in hospitals and universities and across the broader public sector as we move back to a balanced budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Only after we asked about the conditions at the Credit Valley Hospital did the McGuinty Liberals hastily assemble a funding announcement, yet not a nickel was dedicated to the emergency room.

After seven years, Premier McGuinty has changed. He used to hold himself out as the defender of public health care. Now, McGuinty Liberal health care cuts have put the emergency room in Wallaceburg on the chopping block, and the Minister of Health is sitting on the rural and northern health care plan to cut more emergency rooms if the McGuinty Liberals are re-elected.

Now you use a garage as an emergency room. Is the garage equipped with defibrillator pads, or will mechanics be trained to use battery cables on patients in a pinch?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise in this House and tell the people opposite that their antics around Credit Valley Hospital are nothing short of disgusting. It is shameful what these people have done.

I did take the opportunity to visit Credit Valley Hospital last week after I heard allegations of patients being kept in dirty garages. That is a complete misrepresentation. It is completely unacceptable, derogatory and insulting to the health care professionals who work at Credit Valley Hospital. I did go to Credit Valley Hospital, I did speak to the emergency department professionals, and I did assure myself that patients—that quality never suffered.

The Credit Valley Hospital does have surgeons. We are building a new addition. We have expanded bed

capacity, but to suggest that patient care was compromised is completely—

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

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. This year, over 400,000 Ontarians were forced to turn to food banks for help. That's a 28% increase since 2008, when the Premier launched his so-called poverty reduction strategy. The government won't release its own poverty indicators until after the 2011 election, but new numbers from the Ontario Association of Food Banks show that more families struggle to put food on the table. Will the government admit that its poverty reduction strategy has been a total, abject failure?

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very pleased to be a member of a government that takes poverty seriously. No other government before us had the courage to set a goal to reduce poverty 25% over—

Interjection: By 25 in 5.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: By 25 in 5. So I'm very pleased.

First of all, let me thank Food Banks Canada for this report; it's very important. I want to thank all of those who are working with the food banks.

This government has done a lot since we came to power. First of all, we have increased the minimum wage, which you know was not increased for many years.

Interjection: Almost nine years.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Nine years. We are also delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help those in need. We have—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: When this government talks about a 25% reduction in poverty, we do not expect a 28% increase in food bank use.

The McGuinty government refuses to take responsibility for the hunger that plagues more and more Ontarians. Instead, it blames things like the recession or has no answer at all. But food bank use is rising, even with the modest economic recovery and in spite of the fact of your 2008 promise. The Ontario Association of Food Banks knows that precarious work, lack of employee benefits, rising hydro prices and inadequate social assistance and retirement incomes mean that rising numbers of Ontarians are turning to food banks. My question: When will the McGuinty government stop letting hunger plague 400,000 Ontarians and do something concrete to reduce it?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I'm going to let the member opposite know what we have done. We have accelerated the phase-in of OCB by two years, providing \$1,100 annually per child. We have committed to investing \$200 million in 2010, increasing to \$300 million in

2011, to fund full-day learning, which also helps to reduce poverty in Ontario.

We know we have a lot to do. We have increased social assistance by 12% and will be announcing the review of social assistance, which is long overdue. But I take exception when a party that increased social assistance by 165% when they were in power is trying to give us lessons today. I'm not taking your advice. We will continue to work to reduce poverty in Ontario.

DIABETES

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport. This week we marked World Diabetes Day, and I'm curious to know how the government is working to keep Ontarians informed about diabetes prevention. Specifically, what is the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport doing to inform Ontarians about ways to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I would like to thank the member from Scarborough—Rouge River for the question.

I am certainly pleased to rise in this Legislature to acknowledge World Diabetes Day and to speak to some of our government's initiatives to prevent type 2 diabetes in the province. The government, through the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, is investing in community-based initiatives and workplace programs to increase awareness of diabetes risk factors. We are providing education and skill development through prevention initiatives and community partnerships. We have targeted high-risk communities, including low-income families and people of aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, Hispanic and African-Caribbean descent. Many of these programs have been facilitated through cultural roundtables and aboriginal health access centres.

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

Hon. Margaret R. Best: We have developed and implemented prevention initiatives in 19 neighbourhoods in Toronto, Peel and northwestern Ontario. We have established 132 community—

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: We all know that diabetes has become a major health concern for Ontarians throughout the province. Diabetes affects not only adults but our children as well. We understand that the cost of treating diabetes can be significant, and it's important that we move forward to ensure that families across Ontario have the knowledge and understanding, along with the proper supports in place, to help not only treat but prevent the onset of diabetes.

Our diabetes strategy has gone a long way to ensure that the prevention and treatment of diabetes remains constant, but we can always do more. Could the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to help prevent the onset of diabetes in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are very concerned. Far too many Ontarians are developing diabetes. That's why we're working hard to prevent or delay the progression of the disease and to ensure that all Ontarians with diabetes get access to the best possible care.

We became the first province to fully fund insulin pumps for children and youth with type 1 diabetes. We've expanded the program to include adults with type 1 diabetes.

We're investing \$741 million into our diabetes strategy. It's a comprehensive approach that includes public education, expanded services, a diabetes care registry, the expansion of bariatric surgery and much, much more.

Ellen Malcolmson, the president and CEO of the Canadian Diabetes Association, says, "Providing Ontarians with type 1 diabetes the tools they require to effectively manage their disease is a great step forward."

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Transportation: Two weeks ago, I asked the minister to order a comprehensive review of the motor vehicle inspection program. That request was made because of an increasing number of reports of safety certificates being issued on what were subsequently found to be unsafe vehicles. The minister declined to do so.

Now we have evidence that safety certificates are being issued for vehicles that have been recalled under a manufacturer's open recall, even though the repairs under that recall have not been made. Given the serious safety implications, why is the Ministry of Transportation allowing this practice to continue?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the member opposite again raising this issue. Certainly when he raised it initially, I made inquiries with the ministry and established that the system that is in place was put in place many years ago, before 2003, that there are fines and there are protocols in place to deal with any problems that arise. We have also put in place a call centre so that consumers could contact us. We're making sure the mechanics have the credentials they need. If there's a specific case that he has unearthed that he would like me to look into, I will certainly take that under consideration. He can let me know about the specifics of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I brought the specific case to the minister's attention. She seemed to have ignored it. What I'm referring to today is that thousands of vehicles are being sold every day under ministry-approved safety certificates, even though repairs have not been made. This is a wide-reaching issue.

Ministry licence inspection facilities make no effort to determine whether a vehicle has been under a recall or whether the prescribed recall repairs have been made. The ministry has access to all recall notices, but there's no requirement on inspection facilities to actually determine whether a car is under recall.

Will the minister agree to take the necessary steps to ensure that inspection facilities make compliance with

recall notices a mandatory condition of issuing safety certificates? Will she put that policy in place in her ministry?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, as I say, we are regularly investigating garages that we suspect aren't following the rules. We investigate mechanics registered at multiple inspection stations. We monitor the practices at garages around the province. We will continue to do that. If there is a specific issue around recall, I will investigate that and I will talk with ministry officials.

This regime was put in place when the previous government was in office. We have improved on that regime. We continue to improve on the regime. If there is a specific issue—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The members opposite talk about the length of time the regime has been in place. The protocols were put in place by their members. We have improved upon those protocols, we will continue to improve upon the protocols, and on this particular issue of recall, I will investigate with the ministry. I appreciate the member raising it.

AGENCY SPENDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Today we learned that a Niagara Parks Commission executive racked up \$400,000 in expenses on everything from \$10,000 hotel stays in England to a \$1,800 nightclub tab, to a \$200 trip to the liquor store. The executive even charged a pound of Starbucks coffee to the commission and claimed it as a meal. Does the Premier think that expensing Starbucks coffee and a pricey night out is acceptable?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Hon. Michael Chan: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about tourism and also the Niagara Parks Commission in our great province. I am aware of the matter. This government is committed to protecting taxpayers' money and increasing agency accountability for the people of Ontario. This is why we have brought in new expense rules across the government in all agencies to bring in greater accountability and transparency. These new rules came in the fall of 2009, after the expenses were incurred. These types of expenses are no longer acceptable.

We have appointed a new chair, Fay Booker, to the Niagara Parks Commission. She has invaluable experience in governance, accounting and auditing. We are moving ahead with the Niagara Parks Commission.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families were literally taken for a ride when an executive expensed a roller-coaster ride in Las Vegas. When people hear stories of backroom, sole-source deals and lavish executive spending on nightclubs and roller coasters at the Niagara Parks Commission, they quickly lose faith. Why should we believe this government's claim that they are restoring accountability at the Niagara Parks Commission when

day in and day out there is more evidence that they are not?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again for the question. Our government, one more time, is committed to protecting taxpayers' money and increasing agencies' accountability to the people of Ontario.

In September 2009, the Premier directed all government agencies, boards and commissions to strictly adhere to the rules in the public service travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. The expenses incurred were prior to September 2009. These expenses are no longer acceptable. Chair Fay Booker has made significant changes to the corporate culture at the Niagara Parks Commission. I have full confidence in the chair, and we are looking forward to moving the Niagara Parks Commission forward.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, this past weekend marked the closing of another year of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. It's a signature event for Toronto, and like everyone who lives in Toronto, I'm thrilled to see it. It gives the urbanites here an opportunity to know and understand rural communities. Of course, it's a wonderful opportunity for the children, because they get to actually understand where their food comes from and they get to see animals up front.

I'd like to know, Minister, if you could share a little bit about what's happened this year at the royal agricultural fair?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Thank you very much for the question. At the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we are very pleased to be the lead ministry at the royal winter fair. I want to share with the Speaker that the Royal is now in its 88th year. It is the world's largest combined indoor celebration of agriculture and equestrianism—the largest in the world.

When the country comes to the city, I can tell you that the Royal celebrated with rodeos and rock music, and I'm very proud of the strong attendance from those in Toronto and the GTA. It's an excellent opportunity to see the great things that are happening in our agricultural sector and rural Ontario. It offers an opportunity to learn about our agri-food industry and to know about the good things that are growing. It provides shoppers with a classic farmers' market—

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

1130

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: Each year, there are thousands of attendees and exhibitors that visit the Royal, and I would expect the size of this event would have a very significant impact on the local economy. November is a slow month in Toronto when it comes to having tourism. Over the past few years, as the Royal has experienced a very positive and steady growth in attendance with the

exhibitors and corporate partners, it really does a wonderful job of marketing and promotional efforts for attracting both domestic and international visitors to Toronto.

I imagine the economic impact on the city is very substantial, both by spending through the show itself and, of course, by the visitors. I wondered, Minister, if you could give us some idea and share with us the actual results and the number of attendees at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, and let's talk a little bit about that economic impact on our city.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to say that this year's attendance was over 300,000 people. I think that's remarkable.

I also want to say that for the Royal in 2009—just to give you a sense of the scope—the economic impact was estimated at \$40.5 million for the city of Toronto and \$56.3 million for the province. When we look at the international guests, 4,240 international guests, 65 countries, attended the Royal. And the educational component is always a huge draw; it's a wonderful class trip for our students. More than 500 schools brought 26,000 students to the Royal to visit 18 educational centres. That's incredible.

AGENCY SPENDING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Tourism. When the executive director of the Niagara Parks Commission was caught handing out a \$500,000 sweetheart deal, the minister said it met an exemption at Management Board rules. Now, new information has come to light that Ontario families have paid \$400,000 in expenses to that same executive director.

Is the Management Board exempting roller-coaster rides and bags of Starbucks coffee now?

Hon. Michael Chan: As I said, in September 2009, the Premier directed all government agencies, boards and commissions to strictly adhere to the rules in the Ontario public service travel, meals and hospitality expenses directive. The expenses incurred were prior to this. These expenses are no longer acceptable.

Let's look at the root of the problem. This individual was hired by the Conservative government. Chair Fay Booker has made significant changes to the corporate culture at the Niagara Parks Commission. I have true confidence in the chair. We are looking forward to moving the Niagara Parks Commission forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That response by the minister about his agency was disappointing and, frankly, it was disgraceful. The fact of the matter is, he's exempting them from one thing and now he's allowing another thing to occur which has cost Ontario taxpayers almost \$1 million under this executive director's leadership.

Instead of showing accountability, the commission and its executives right now are pointing fingers at one another—hardly confidence for the Ontario people. It's bad enough that these sweetheart deals and expense

scandals keep happening time and again after the Premier promises continually to do better. Now, when we bring forward more scandalous uses of taxpayer dollars—Ontario families have had their confidence eroded in this government—why can't the Ontario Liberal Party give the people of Ontario the change they absolutely need at this time?

Hon. Michael Chan: Pointing fingers is being performed by that honourable member.

Let's look at the facts. We have increased accountability, we have increased transparency, but we must address the root of the problem here. This is an individual that was hired by the Conservative government.

On the other hand, we are committed to moving forward. That's why we have appointed an excellent chair, Fay Booker, who is an expert in corporate governance. Chair Booker has made significant changes to the corporate culture of NPC. I have full confidence in the chair as we move forward to strengthen the Niagara Parks Commission.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Nine hundred workers in the Hamilton area are off the job because US Steel has locked them out. The other day, those workers came to talk to the Premier about what they're facing, and the Premier snuck in and snuck out the back door. If the Premier is so proud of his job record in Hamilton, why is he sneaking past the men and women who want to talk about their job losses and how this government has let them down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member knows full well that situations like this are always complex, they are never easy, and they are always unfortunate for those workers, for their families, for the community.

I want to commend the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the Minister of Finance, and especially the Premier for standing up for those workers, for encouraging and urging the parties to get back to the table. That's the approach that this government has always taken: to be there, to work with the parties, to encourage them to get back to the table, to keep them at the table and to resolve the dispute so they can get the work moving forward. We will continue to do that.

That is the focus of my Ministry of Labour. We have a seasoned mediator at the table working with the parties, trying to work through this very difficult—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, no answer.

Hamilton has been losing thousands of jobs in the last seven years under this government, with an additional 1,200 jobs last month. A vague promise of jobs two years down the road at some point doesn't do anything to help the 900 men and women locked out of their jobs today.

Will this Premier help the workers of US Steel today and really do something by stopping foreign corporations

from bullying them and by making scab labour illegal in this province? Make scab labour illegal in this province if you want to help all the workers of this province.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We will do anything and everything that we can to bring the parties together, to keep the parties together, to work with them to get a resolution. We are working with all parties that have an interest in protecting those jobs, as well as any other job in Ontario. And I want to again commend the Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

It was our party that came to the table with \$150 million to protect the pensions of those workers. It is our party that continues to encourage all those that have an interest in keeping those jobs in Hamilton, in protecting those jobs. Again, we will do everything that we can in our power to protect those jobs.

Through the Ministry of Labour, we have our most seasoned mediator there working with the parties. It's unfortunate that that member is not—

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

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Bruce Crozier: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In my riding of Essex, new councillors and mayors are set to be sworn in as of December 1, and while there is a great appetite to get this new four-year term under way, there have been discussions about the past municipal election, what worked and what didn't.

Some of my constituents have come to me with the idea that voting hours need to be increased and that alternative voting methods like electronic voting should be explored by this government. This is about the Municipal Elections Act and possible changes that could enhance it.

Minister, could you please outline for the House what steps your ministry is taking to strengthen this act and if you're planning on reviewing the municipal elections process?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to thank the member for the question. It's a very important question.

First of all, I think for every member in the House on both sides, we want to congratulate those newly elected representatives and those who were re-elected. We look forward to working with them.

Following every municipal election, our government reviews the act to ensure it meets the needs of our municipalities and the people in those municipalities. We enter into this review with our partners: the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers, the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., Elections Ontario and the public. We believe that this review is very important. Our goal is to ensure that every possible voter gets out to the polls to cast his or her choice as to who they feel should represent them. This review, hopefully, will help that.

VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to take the time to introduce the family of one of the pages, Joshua: Denise and Scott Turner, from my riding of Durham. Their son is a page here in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's the second time the Turners have had a page here, as well—proud parents.

DEFERRED VOTES

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2010LOI DE 2010 SUR
LA RESPONSABILISATION
DU SECTEUR PARAPUBLIC

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 122, An Act to increase the financial accountability of organizations in the broader public sector / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à accroître la responsabilisation financière des organismes du secteur parapublic.

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

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna
Balkissoon, Bas	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Kwintor, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Carroll, Aileen	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
DiNovo, Cheri	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	

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

Nays

Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Martiniuk, Gerry	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	
Hillier, Randy	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 61; the nays are 19.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 4, 2010, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

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, given by the Minister of Labour, concerning job losses in Hamilton. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

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

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Toby Barrett: One day after Remembrance Day, Christie Blatchford was to deliver a speech at the University of Waterloo on her book, *Helpless: Caledonia's Nightmare of Fear and Anarchy, and How the Law Failed All of Us*.

One day after we paid tribute to those who fought to the death for such rights as freedom of speech, Ms. Blatchford was prevented from speaking. A university spokesperson indicated, "Unfortunately, there is a small minority that felt that they would win if they'd just sit on the stage and yell 'racist, racist, racist.'" "They did win," said Blatchford. "If their whole goal is to shut down free speech, then absolutely, they were successful." An online photo shows protestors carrying a swastika across the stage.

This is not over. The First Nations Solidarity Working Group has issued a call to organize and respond to Blatchford as she makes her way across Canada promoting her book.

Freedom of expression and free speech are important. People have fought to their death for these freedoms. Don't impose censorship on another because you don't agree. Intimidation, in my view, is wrong and cowardly. If you want to get your message out, you need to let others do the same.

Christie Blatchford may return to Waterloo. She's speaking tonight in Hamilton. I trust her right to freedom of expression is enforced.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Paul Miller: This year alone, it's estimated that there have been at least 1,200 jobs lost in Hamilton.

That's 1,200 in addition to the thousands of jobs lost under McGuinty's seven governing years.

The Premier made an announcement recently about 300 jobs at JNE, but it's not planned until at least 2012, with no guarantee that the jobs will go to the unemployed Hamiltonians.

Three hundred jobs are a mere drop in the Hamilton unemployment bucket. We don't know how many of these jobs are at minimum wage and how many are for skilled labour at the appropriate wage rate or what the government is doing to replace the other 900-plus recent job losses with the new provincial-government-funded job initiatives.

On behalf of Hamilton's unemployed, I call on the Premier and his government to step up to the plate with initiatives to support all of Hamilton's jobless workers now. To show real commitment, this government should support the NDP anti-scab legislation which was tabled this year and seek and encourage Canadian ownership of our base industries rather than leaving our future at the whim of multinational corporations.

ELITE MARTIAL ARTS AND FITNESS CENTRE

Mr. Phil McNeely: Last week, members of the Elite Martial Arts and Fitness Centre from Orléans returned from the WKC world championships in Germany with a total of 10 medals, including three gold. It was the best performance ever by the small Orléans karate school, and the athletes should be commended for their dedication and hard work.

Ottawa–Orléans has a great diversity of martial arts clubs, and the Elite Martial Arts and Fitness Centre is one of the community leaders. These clubs operate with little or no government support and provide their membership with physical fitness and leadership skills and help our communities. I commend the parents and youth who give so much of their time and the dedication of the club leadership.

Of particular note are the accomplishments of Rebecca Shaffer, who won two individual gold medals and was a member of the gold-medal-winning points fighting team.

Renshi Guy Ouellette has done a terrific job mentoring and coaching his young students, and the proof is in the results.

Congratulations and félicitations to all the medal recipients, including Jesse Munro, Danika Plouffe, Damian Moffatt; Brianna Ouellette, Tyler Greer, Serena Moffatt and Marie Pharand.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mrs. Julia Munro: This week, we celebrate a very important event in Ontario: Global Entrepreneurship Week. The aim of this week is simple: to engage youth from around the world to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators and change makers.

Between November 15 and 21, 2010, events and activities will connect millions of people, including

young adults, students, entrepreneurial experts, policy makers, educators and politicians, with the goal of unleashing ideas, exposing young people to entrepreneurship and becoming agents of change in their communities, cities and countries.

In Canada, Global Entrepreneurship Week is led by the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. This year, they are working to encourage hundreds of grassroots regional and national organizations to champion a culture of entrepreneurship and mentoring through local, national and global initiatives.

The foundation is a fantastic organization that has helped more than 3,700 young entrepreneurs launch businesses that have created more than 17,000 new jobs. They are an inspiring organization that I encourage every member of this House to work with.

I encourage everyone to get involved in entrepreneurship week. You can find more at gewcanada.com.

BAXTROM'S YOUR INDEPENDENT GROCER

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'm pleased to announce that Baxtrom's Your Independent Grocer, in Cornwall, from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, was one of the Ontario grocery retailers recognized with a Foodland Ontario Retailer Award recently.

Gold category awards are presented to chain and independent stores in three specific categories: seasonal, creative and cross-merchandised products. Baxtrom's received a gold recognition in the creative products category.

Ontario retailer awards recognize excellence in the promotion of local produce, helping to support a strong agri-food industry and bringing fresh and healthy foods to Ontarians. They are part of the Open Ontario plan to create jobs and build the economy.

Baxtrom's support for the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy, which provides awareness and education to consumers about the vast variety of Ontario produce, helps Ontario farmers and our local communities. I am proud to call Baxtrom's my choice for my grocery needs, and I'm confident I can trust them to guarantee fresh produce and excellent service.

1510

John Baxtrom and his staff at Baxtrom's Your Independent Grocer have been a staple in our community, with their support and commitment to customer service. Today, I congratulate them on their success in marketing fresh Ontario produce.

As well, I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate and thank John Baxtrom and his staff for their outstanding support to community organizations and events. Your generosity is appreciated by the citizens of the riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

EID al-ADHA

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise in the House today to acknowledge the significance of Eid al-Adha, the

Festival of Sacrifice, which Muslim families across the great province of Ontario are celebrating today. Eid al-Adha, or the Greater Eid, is an annual festival to remember the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael as an act of obedience to God.

Today, Muslim families across Ontario will commemorate Abraham's willingness to make this sacrifice by making a concerted effort to distribute food to those individuals less fortunate than themselves, thus allowing all the opportunity to partake in the traditional sacrificial meal.

Today also marks the 25th annual Eid festival taking place at Exhibition Place. Some 15,000 Muslims from all over Ontario are gathered there for the Eid al-Adha celebrations. The celebrations will provide all Ontarians with the opportunity to recognize the contributions individuals from the Muslim community have made to this great province, and are a further reminder of the tremendous cultural diversity across Ontario.

All Ontarians value the message conveyed by Eid al-Adha: that we should look out for those less fortunate than ourselves and do all we can to ensure that no one is left behind.

On behalf of the entire PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I extend my best wishes to Ontario's Muslim community as they gather to commemorate Eid al-Adha and spend time with family and friends. Eid Mubarak.

HAWKESBURY AND DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Last Friday, I was delighted to attend the official launch of the new cancer care clinic at the Hawkesbury and District General Hospital, in my riding. The state-of-the-art clinic is the product of a partnership between the Hawkesbury and District General Hospital and the Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre.

Cancer patients in our region will now have access to specialized treatment, including chemotherapy, much closer to home. As a satellite program, the cancer care clinic will benefit from the expertise and innovation of the Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre.

By offering new outpatient programs in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the Hawkesbury and District General Hospital is meeting the direction of our government: excellent care for all.

I would like to thank Minister Bob Chiarelli for participating in this landmark event. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Marc LeBoutillier, CEO of the Hawkesbury and District General Hospital; Dr. Jack Kitts, CEO of the Ottawa Hospital; and all of the dedicated hospital staff.

NURSE-PRACTITIONER-LED CLINIC

Mr. Bill Mauro: Recently, I had the pleasure of helping to announce a nurse-practitioner-led clinic in the former McKellar hospital. This clinic will eventually be

home to 3,200 patients who currently do not have access to primary care, or orphaned patients.

It was a pleasure to work with Lynne Thibeault, Dona Ree, Sandra Crawford and Julie Campbell, who helped bring this clinic to reality. Additional partners on this team are Crystal Kaukinen, Karen-Lue Kim, Michele Grace, Lindsay Lunny, Claudia Isfeld, Mandy Bruyere, Courtney Kelly and Tina Diner.

This is the fourth of 25 NP-led clinics that our government has committed to opening, and this new clinic is electronic-medical-record-ready.

When our government came to office in 2003, there were 1.3 million unattached patients in Ontario, and today, according to the Ontario Medical Association, that number has been reduced to 300,000 to 400,000. There's still more work to be done, but this is incredible progress.

The number of unattached, orphaned patients in Thunder Bay is down as well. With the recently approved academic family health team for Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, we can look forward to even further reductions in the number of unattached, orphaned patients.

The new NP-led clinic is also the second great announcement at McKellar in the last few weeks, following on the heels of a \$2-million announcement by our government that will help to create 100 retirement suites in the same building.

By renovating and reinvigorating McKellar, we're helping patient outcomes, we're ensuring more people have access to primary care and we're reducing pressures on the ER.

These initiatives are examples of how the people of Thunder Bay are working with our government, building on past achievements, to dramatically improve the quality of health care in the northwest.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TAX CREDIT

Mr. Bob Delaney: Western Mississauga and 905 families are particularly pleased with Ontario's recent move to help promote children's fitness and recreational activities. Children benefit immensely from a diversity of experiences and opportunities, and that's why we believe it's important for young people to be involved in sports and other instructional or organized activities where they can enjoy themselves and lead healthier, more active lives in the process.

Ontario has introduced the children's activity tax credit to help make it a little easier for parents to get their children involved in these activities and to put more money back in the pockets of Ontario families. This permanent, refundable tax credit will benefit almost two million children in our province and allow parents who enrol their children in recreational activities to claim up to \$500 per child. The average family will save about \$100 a year. And, proportionally, those who stand to benefit the most are Ontario's low- and middle-income families.

By promoting a healthy mind and an active lifestyle for today's youth, Ontario is supporting a better future for all Ontarians.

I would also like to wish Eid al-Adha Mubarak to our brothers and sisters, particularly at the Al-Farooq mosque, whom I visited this morning, and at the Islamic Society of North America.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TEMISKAMING AND CHATHAM-KENT-LEAMINGTON ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CONCERNANT TEMISKAMING ET CHATHAM-KENT-LEAMINGTON

Mr. Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to change the name of the territorial district of Timiskaming and the electoral district of Chatham-Kent-Essex / Projet de loi 132, Loi remplaçant le nom du district territorial de Timiskaming et de la circonscription électorale de Chatham-Kent-Essex.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: The bill amends Ontario regulation 180/03, the division of Ontario into geographic areas made under the Territorial Division Act, 2002, to change the name of Timiskaming to Temiskaming. The bill also changes all statutory references to Timiskaming to Temiskaming. The bill also amends the Representation Act, 2005, to change the name of the electoral district of Chatham-Kent-Essex to Chatham-Kent-Leamington.

WIRELESS PHONE, SMART PHONE AND DATA SERVICE TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES SERVICES DE TÉLÉPHONE MOBILE, DE TÉLÉPHONE INTELLIGENT ET DE DONNÉES

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to provide transparency and protection for consumers of wireless telephone services, smart phone services and data services in Ontario / Projet de loi 133, Loi prévoyant la transparence des services de téléphone mobile, de téléphone intelligent et de données et la protection des consommateurs de tels services en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. David Oraziotti: I do. I appreciate your indulgence. I'll read the explanatory note to make it clear for members.

1520

The bill applies to service agreements in respect of wireless telephone, smart phone and data services. The key features of the bill include the following:

An agreement for wireless telephone service or data service must be expressed in plain language;

An agreement must contain certain information with respect to descriptions of services and goods to be provided under the agreement;

A supplier must agree to remove any technological or physical feature that restricts the functioning of the goods to a particular service provider when the consumer pays full price for the goods or when the agreement expires;

A supplier must agree to notify a consumer when the consumer has reached 90% of their limit of any particular service under the agreement, as well as when the consumer is about to incur additional charges for using the service outside the geographical limits;

No agreement may be amended or renewed without the express consent of the consumer; and

The consumer may at any time, without reason, cancel the agreement on giving 30 days' notice, as well as the limitation of cancellation fees.

Rules are established with respect to advertising prices for wireless telephone, smart phone and data services. Prepaid cards for a fixed amount of service may not be sold if they have an expiry date. The enforcement of the provisions would be included in the Consumer Protection Act.

This is an issue that Ontarians want addressed. It's a pocketbook issue, and the bill has to do with reducing fees to consumers.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have numerous petitions here from people in Thornhill sent to me, very courteously, by my constituent Lynn Perrier. She has also kindly included petitions that the members for Willowdale, York South-Weston, Oak Ridges-Markham, Markham-Unionville, Richmond Hill and Vaughan apparently would not read into the record, but I will.

"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 at 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 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 agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to page Breana.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

Mr. Dave Levac: This is in respect of the workers at ECP, who have been on strike for over two and a half years.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 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 those 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.”

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the McGuinty government has effectively neutered municipal authority and local decision-making through legislation and policies such as the provincial policy statement, 2005, and the Green Energy and Green Economy Act; and

“Whereas it is an affront to democracy to remove local input and authority from the decision-making process on matters that directly affect municipalities and property owners;

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

“That the government change the necessary legislation and regulations to restore municipal planning authority on matters affecting their communities and property owners.”

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

GLENGARRY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I have a petition here that came from Len Siwik of the Hôpital Glengarry Memorial Hospital of Alexandria.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario is promoting physical fitness for its citizens;

“Whereas adults have been participating in the physical fitness programs at the pool located at Glengarry Memorial Hospital for many years;

“Whereas regulations require the instructor to be a qualified fitness instructor and also requires the instructor to have completed the national Lifesaving Society course;

“Whereas the pool is small (maximum allowed, 30) and adult fitness classes are limited to 15;

“Whereas the pool is shallow: five feet, six inches at the deep end and three feet, two inches at the shallow end;

“Whereas the pool bottom is flat, at three different levels, and the adults exercising are standing with feet on the bottom;

“Whereas the pool is directly attached to Glengarry Memorial Hospital, and is fully equipped with life-saving equipment and emergency phone;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to exempt qualified fitness instructors, for adult fitness classes, at Glengarry Memorial Hospital from the requirement of having completed the national Lifesaving Society course. This will ensure that adult fitness classes will continue into the future at Glengarry Memorial Hospital.”

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Parliament 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 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 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 have signed this and will give it to William from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition certified by the Clerk, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

“Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST).”

I have affixed my signature.

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, between 1869 and 1939, more than 100,000 British home children arrived in Canada from group homes and orphanages in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and

“Whereas the story of the British home children is one of challenge, determination and perseverance; and

“Whereas, due to their remarkable courage, strength and perseverance, Canada’s British home children endured and went on to lead healthy and productive lives and contributed immeasurably to the development of Ontario’s economy and prosperity; and

“Whereas the government of Canada has proclaimed 2010 as the Year of the British Home Child and Canada Post will recognize it with a commemorative stamp;

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

“Enact Bill 12, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Jim Brownell on March 23, 2010, an act to proclaim September 28 of each year as Ontario home child day.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks’ table.

1530

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Petition to the Parliament 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 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 ... 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 ... 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 am in agreement and am giving this to page Joshua.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Jeff Leal: I’m also delighted that Jake Fell from the riding of Peterborough is a new page here.

This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

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

“To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program” utilized by our police forces in Ontario;

“To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

“To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

“To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

“To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be.”

I agree with this, will affix my signature to it and give it to my friend.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: I've waited long and patiently to read this petition on behalf of my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies"—we read about that in the paper today—"which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

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

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

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

I'm pleased to submit this.

CEMETERIES

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Historical Society, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario April 1, 1899, with a mandate to identify, protect, preserve and promote Ontario's history; and

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario's greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

"Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

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

"The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development."

I here sign my name and I will give it to page Joshua.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have petitions from all over the riding of Leeds–Grenville, which read 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 at 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 Legislative Assembly 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 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 agree with the petition and I will give it to William for the table.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to read in this petition on behalf of my riding of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. It has been read in a couple of times this afternoon.

"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 at 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 ... 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 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 this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TAX CREDIT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR LES ACTIVITÉS DES ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 15, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit/ Projet de loi 99, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour les activités des enfants.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'll in effect be doing the lead for the NDP. However, it's not going to be a full one-hour lead because our critic is going to be speaking after the official opposition speaks to it.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, we're not deferring the lead; I said I'm doing the lead, but I'm not going to be using the full hour. I'm just trying to make it clear to people so they understand. I don't want to confuse people.

We're going to vote for the legislation. I've looked at it carefully, as have other members of the caucus. I suppose the only good thing you can say is it beats a kick in the head. It's a pretty modest proposal, pretty thin gruel for families that are hurting real hard across Ontario. What it does is provide a \$50 tax credit to families for each of their children who is enrolled in a specified program, but the \$50, as I understand it—and correct me if I'm wrong, Speaker; please say so—requires the family to pay out \$500. So they effectively get a tax credit of a maximum of 10% up to \$500 for enrolling their children in enumerated programs.

I don't know about where you live, but where I come from, families are hurting. You've got families—it's not untypical for a young family to have two, three, four kids. You've got families that, if they're going to collect the maximum tax credit, have got to invest, with two, three, four kids, \$2,000, let's say, over the course of a summer, in a particular program to get a \$200 tax credit. And you see, that \$200 tax credit doesn't go anywhere near the investment for the next year's program, whether it's, I suppose, piano lessons, dramatic arts, dance, the visual arts or language instruction. Come on: How many real families in the real Ontario—and I'm not talking

about the intersection of Yonge and Bloor; I'm talking about the real Ontario.

1540

I'll tell you what: We've got people taking language instruction down where I live. They take it at the Croatian National Home on the weekend, or the Italian hall or the Slovak community. They don't pay for the language instruction. That's not how it happens down where I come from. These people belong to mutual benefit organizations, and one of the provisions of that mutual benefit organization is a language school. Inevitably, to the chagrin of the kids who are involved, although they usually learn to like it, there is a dance school as well. Some of them, by the time they're teenagers, remain involved; many move on.

“Structured interaction among children where supervisors teach or help children develop interpersonal skills.” I think I know what that means, but again, down where I come from there aren't a whole lot of families, especially families in hard times, that can afford to pay \$500 a child or more. You see, the program may cost more than \$500, but in any event, the credit is based only on a maximum of \$500: to wit, \$50. If you spend less than \$500, it's less than \$50.

The HST alone hammers families far beyond whatever relief this modest tax credit might provide. If you take your kid to hockey, you're talking about some major investments in equipment and some major investments in travel, and I'm not sure that this program even covers equipment. It covers paying for participation in the activity. Soccer is a relatively inexpensive sport to engage in. It's pretty common, pretty popular down where I come from in Niagara region. A lot of young people are involved in it. I suppose and I would hope that joining the Y would be covered, but I'm not sure that that's covered specifically in any of the enumerated qualifying activities.

At the end of the day, it's going to be very, very confusing. At the end of the day, there are going to be a relatively modest number of families that avail themselves of this tax credit, and the tax credit is going to do little to relieve the pressure that's on families increasingly. Don't forget, down where I come from, John Deere, a 100-year-old factory, 900 employees—gone like that. The last man standing just left around a month ago; literally, the last man standing just left around a month ago. These families don't have any disposable income to enrol their kids in the programs that are contemplated by this particular legislation. Those kids are out delivering newspapers to raise the modest amounts of money that in better times their parents, their folks, would have given them by way of allowances.

When you talk about a region like Niagara that has been effectively deindustrialized—and understand what deindustrialization means in so many respects. It doesn't just mean the job losses; it means the loss of industrial assessment, and yet the cost of firefighting, the cost of delivering water, the cost of sewers and the cost of policing don't change one iota. That new burden is

passed on to property taxpayers. So you have this incredible contradiction of taxpayers who just lost their jobs, like workers at John Deere, who then face increasing property taxes and then are confronted by an HST on goods and services where that tax was never applied before; it is a brand new tax by Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government. Then they suffer and endure skyrocketing electricity rates, because these not-so-smart meters, these stupid meters, have done dramatic things to people's electricity rates.

It's not that these folks don't conserve; they do. I live in a community and represent communities where kids learn from a very early age that you turn the lights off when you leave a room. We knew about that years ago. I live in a community and represent communities where you learn to turn the furnace down at night. We learned that years ago.

People haven't seen anything yet, mark my word, because once the winter heating season comes around—it's just about here. Last weekend, for the first time this year, I turned the furnace on in my house. When I got home, it was 50 degrees Fahrenheit. I figured it was time. I kept it down around 64 degrees, but that's okay.

But you see, if you've got little kids, little babies, crawling on the floor, you can't keep it at 64, can you? If you're a couple of older folks or even one older folk, the prospect of a cool, damp house is pretty painful because your ability to adjust and adapt simply changes.

You just watch as these winter months come upon us and the cold, cold January and February winds blow, and that furnace fan is going darned near 24 hours a day. People are just going to be knocked flat on their backs by the electricity bills they'll get, come these winter months.

It seemed to be fair in the summertime. Even on the hottest days, you could perhaps turn the air conditioner down a little bit or maybe turn it off from time to time. You could turn it off at night when the sun's gone down and it's a little cooler outside. You could turn it off when there's a little bit of a breeze and you can open the windows, and the screen will let the breeze into the house. But you can't do that in the wintertime with heating, can you?

Then we've got a Premier who's so out of touch, so aloof, so arrogant. Just a minute; I'm looking for some speaking notes here that I've been relying upon pretty consistently over the last several weeks. "McGuinty Sinking: Poll Shows...."; 76% of Ontarians say they would like to see another party in power.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's noted. I've got the preacher behind me, and I've got the celebrant to my right.

And 86% of Ontarians say, "It is harder now than it was two years ago to make ends meet." You heard me mention it this morning. Let's assume there is a four-point margin of error, and 76% of respondents say they would like to see another party in power. The Liberals may want to stand up and say, "Well, there could be a four-point margin of error; it could only be 72%." I'm sorry; there's not much comfort in that. That means it could also be 80%. That's pretty damning, isn't it? Not very comforting.

The crazy thing is that somebody in the McGuinty brain trust—I know that draws the obvious observation that that surely is an oxymoron—got all excited and enthusiastic about this particular bill, Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit. I'm sure they were bouncing up and down; they were like a puppy that's begging to be let out of the house, anxious to impress the brain trust in the Premier's office that this bill was going to be the silver bullet, that this bill was the bill that was going to turn around these sad, sorry, pathetic poll numbers because it was a children's activity tax credit.

But it hasn't sold very well, has it? This government is trying to peddle Edsels long after the Edsel brand has been all but destroyed. People don't buy this stuff. People are smarter than that—a heck of a lot smarter than that.

As a matter of fact, this bill was out and about on September 13 after it received first reading. The poll that reports that 76% of Ontarians would like to see another party in power occurred after this bill was introduced for first reading. So if the government thought that this bill was going to have an impact on voters and was going to persuade voters that somehow the McGuinty Liberals were even close to being responsive, interested, concerned and effective about the concerns of average Ontarians, why, that's surely not the case—not the case at all, is it?

1550

I'm amazed and impressed because I get letters on almost a regular basis, and I'm sure other members of the Legislature do, too: letters from parents of kids in elementary school and letters that have attached to them little notices from the school that talk about the parents having to send activity fees back to school with their kids. I'm not talking about pizza night once a month, or pizza lunch, whatever the heck it is. I'm talking about significant fees that kids are compelled to take back to their school to pay for everything from athletic activities to sports activities to integral, core educational activities. Speaker, I think you, with your professional background, understand that full well.

Parents are increasingly being called upon to privately support what should be the public education of their kids, whether it's in elementary school or high school. The pressures on those families are profound. Again, these aren't optional activities. And that's not to say that even optional activities—because the pressure put on a kid who can't afford to engage in optional activities is a cruel pressure. Families are writing to me on a regular basis, and I know they're writing to my colleagues in the NDP. I'm sure—I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts—that they're writing to Liberals and Conservatives as well.

The privatization of public education under the McGuinty regime is a dramatic one, and it's a very, very troubling one. That's why that same poll says that 86% of Ontarians say it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago. In other words, in the last two years, Ontarians are saying, "Have things gotten better? No, they've gotten worse"—not just a few Ontarians, not just a handful, not just 20% or 30% or 40%, but 86%.

Once again, let's talk about margins of error. Some Liberal might stand up and say, "If it's 86% and there's a four-point margin of error, it can be only 82%." But if it's 86% and there's a four-point margin of error, it can also be 90%. That means it's the precious, rare Ontarian who's not worse off in the last two years of Dalton McGuinty and the HST.

College and tuition fees: We're number 10 out of 10. We're ranked bottom; we're in the basement, and there's no sign of anything coming from this government that's going to lift us out of that basement.

The HST, in the basement when it comes to college and university funding; tuition fees that are escalating, yes; and there has been some concern by a whole lot of folks that, in the midst of this, Dalton McGuinty, while he's off in Hong Kong, would announce \$30 million worth of scholarships for Ph.D. students from offshore.

I've got nothing against higher education—nothing at all. Ph.D. students: You've got bright, capable young people with huge potential right here in Ontario who can't finish their bachelor's degrees or their first two- or three-year college diploma because the debt load simply becomes too unbearable; intolerable. Isn't that a crime? I've got kids coming into my constituency office—just like my colleagues in the NDP do, just like Conservatives do, and I'm sure Liberals do—who are in their third year of an honours BA. I sit there trying to persuade them, as hard as I can, to not drop out, because they're three quarters of the way through. But in three years of a four-year honours BA, they've ratcheted up \$60,000, \$65,000 or \$70,000 of debt. They know that a BA is not very likely any more to get you a job; you at least need a professional degree after that, be it a teaching diploma, a veterinarian degree, a medical degree, an engineering degree or—dare I say it?—a lawyer.

Then, because of the incredible competition for, amongst other things, medical school and law school, what are young people doing? They're getting master's degrees, right? Not because it was a part of their original post-secondary education plan, but because that puts them in a little bit better position for the highly competitive law schools and medical schools. So they get master's degrees.

I've been over across the road here to the U of T medical school talking to those students. You've got students over there literally with Ph.D.s because they were biding time waiting to get into medical school because of the scarce seats in medical school. That, to me, is just an incredibly dramatic background to a Premier who stands up in Hong Kong and announces \$30 million worth of scholarships—40 grand a pop, \$40,000 a year for Ph.D. students.

I know the Premier gets all wrapped up and caught up in all this Florida-Martin stuff coming out of U of T, this sort of New Age kind of thinking. I know all about it. These are the guys—and the Premier seems to be impressed with them. I was here at their press conference a year ago down at the Queen's Park press gallery and they were commenting on people who lose jobs. This

was Messrs. Florida and Martin. They say, "You've got to think outside the box." So I'm on the edge of my seat. I want to hear what these high-priced people—because it's high-priced help, I tell you. They've got degrees and doctorates and honoraries, this and that, and they've got the nice cufflinks, the fancy ties and the silk stuff. I'm not sure whether they were wearing any of those chunky rings but, in my mind, it was there.

I'm sitting on the edge of my seat because they're saying, "You've got to think outside the box if you lose your job, maybe in Welland, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins or Kenora-Rainy River. You've got to think outside the box." "Well, tell us. Tell us exactly what it is that you mean." They say, "Well, think about it. You lose your job. In effect, you could open a beauty parlour. You could open an art gallery."

Honest to God, Speaker, they said that. I darned near swallowed my bubble gum. You're going to take some guy—John Deere, 35 years; he's a smart welder, a capable welder—and you're going to tell him to open a beauty salon. You're going to tell him to open an art gallery? For Pete's sakes, why don't you put a tutu on him and send him down the road to dance the ballet? It makes just about as much sense, doesn't it? That is an insult.

There are folks around here who remember long enough and enjoy making the reference to old Mr. Harris's usage of the word "hula hoop" operators when he was talking about what he perceived to be some defunct or obsolete professions. Let me tell you, the Florida and Martin solution was certainly no less insulting than the hula hoop reference of old Mr. Harris; no less insulting at all.

We've got kids in despair. In an industrial community like where I come from, kids who maybe didn't have some of the academic skills of others but were good at math, who were good with their hands, who were good at building things and making things, could go into any number of honourable trades and they'd earn a good living at them.

The industrial town like I come from, or Port Colborne just south of me, Thorold just north of me or St. Catharines a little bit further north than that, if you were a welder, a pipefitter, a carpenter or a mason—I'm not talking about a Freemason. I'm talking about a stonemason or a mason. If you knew how to do those things, you could earn a pretty darned good living back when there were real jobs in real industries. Most of those jobs were union jobs, too. We've lost over 300,000 of them in the last four, five or six years, haven't we, and never got them back. You lose 300,000-plus union jobs, good incomes, good wages, good salaries, pensions—huh, pensions—health benefits. More often than not, if you had a job at John Deere, you were part of the St. Catharines GM plant before it was reduced to a mere fraction of its former size, or you worked at Atlas Steels, Page-Hersey, Union Carbide or E.G. Marsh down in Port Colborne, where there were things like bursaries for your kids when they went to college or university—not

scholarships, bursaries. The scholarships are good for the kids who excel academically. Not every kid is going to excel academically, for any number of good reasons, but those unionized jobs sent kids to college and university.

1600

Now I've got young people in my community in despair, and I've got their grandparents and great-grandparents even sadder. Those people come into my constituency office too, and I know they come in my colleagues' constituency offices. They tell me how much they'd like, how much they'd love, to be able to give a grandkid or even a great-grandkid 1,000 bucks or a couple of thousand bucks at the beginning of the college or university school year to help that kid pay off some tuition. They can't do it anymore. Their property taxes have skyrocketed, as I told you, because of the de-industrialization of Ontario by Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals, which has transferred assessment onto residential homeowners, the same senior citizens who pay for their houses once, twice, maybe three times, depending how many times they've mortgaged them to send their own kids, never mind their grandkids, to college and university. And then the electricity rates of Mr. McGuinty's not-so-smart stupid meters were imposed, along with the HST. Then, oh, yes, we're getting an economic statement come Thursday.

Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democratic Party, has been pressing the government along with other New Democrats to give us some sign, some indication that there is going to be some relief from the incredible burden imposed on Ontario families and Ontario seniors and Ontario's youth by this McGuinty Liberal government.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I just heard somebody from the other side say, "We'll have to wait." We fear we've waited too long. There's no more time. See, what you've got is 76% of Ontarians saying that they would like to see another party other than the Liberals in power, and you've got 86% of Ontarians saying that it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago. There's some very clear writing on the wall, isn't there?

I've seen it happen. Man, I was here when the Peterson government didn't just stumble and fall, it crashed. I was here in 1995, when Mr. Rae took that government into third party status. I was here seven years ago when the Conservatives, who had elected two consecutive majority governments, were tossed. You know what? In October 2011—look, I don't want to be presumptuous about this, but I see the signs. I see the signs pretty darn clearly. As I told you this morning, when you walk past the Liberal caucus room, you can smell the fear. You see Liberal backbenchers in their seats and you can see the anxiety and apprehension. You go to the shelf in the library on resumé preparation, and there's not a single book in its place. They've all been taken out. And I understand.

The problem is, when somebody walks into your caucus room, your government caucus room, and tries to

peddle stuff like Bill 99 as somehow the saviour of a failing government, you're being sold a bill of goods. You're the victim of a snake oil salesperson. You notice how I avoided salesman, saleswoman? Salesperson: I'm very 2010. You're being sold a bill of goods. You're being sold snake oil in a way that the public won't allow itself to be sold, or bought, for that matter. Nobody's going to oppose this legislation. Nobody is going to vote against it. As I said, \$50 on a \$500 investment is better than a kick in the head. But there's a whole lot of things that are better than a kick in the head, I can tell you that right now, a whole lot of things.

My amazement is with the lack of embarrassment by government members about this kind of legislation or, for that matter, any number of bills that we've seen over the last several weeks, never mind months or years. This morning, it was the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act—oh, come on. Or the big one, the Ticket Speculation Amendment Act, the one that's not going to end outrageous ticket speculation, and the one that targets Ticketmaster and their little sub-company—I can't remember. What is the name of their sub-company?

Mr. Bruce Crozier: TicketsNow.

Mr. Peter Kormos: TicketsNow, yes. But it doesn't address any of the other resellers in all of Ontario, Canada or North America, even though the legislation is there. The government stood up and said that it's not going to be proactive in pursuing scalpers; it's going to wait for complaints.

Members of the New Democratic Party have pointed out during the course of this debate on Bill 172, as have Conservatives, that the existing Ticket Speculation Act permits this government to bust not just the guy—the member for Thornhill, earlier today, told us about how he stiffed his wife and didn't take her to the Barbra Streisand concert. And I apologize to Mrs. Shurman right here and now. I've met her. She's a lovely lady, a delightful woman, and if there's anybody who deserved to see Barbra Streisand, it was Mrs. Shurman. Mr. Shurman was doing well at the time—he was doing much better than he is now in terms of income—and would have had no trouble covering the cost of the ticket. I know that for a fact. And if he didn't want to go, buy her the ticket, send her in and meet her two hours later when the concert is over.

You see, it isn't just about the interesting character in the leather—usually they wear the long leather coats, not the motorcycle jackets. The scalpers I've seen around the old Maple Leaf Gardens were in long leather jackets—interesting characters. The guys, years ago—I used to run into them in joints like Norm's Open Kitchen on Dundas Street. You don't want to go there, Speaker. The cops shut it down a couple of years after I was in. It's just down from the Warwick Hotel. You don't want to go there, either. That was shut down as well. But they're sort of colourful characters. So with this Ticket Speculation Act, we're not talking about the characters standing there; we're talking about big computerized Internet website companies, corporations that apparently use

website technology to buy up huge blocks of tickets, with a couple of buttons being pressed. Again, it's smoke and mirrors. You pick it up, and it just falls apart in your hands and blows away like dust in the wind.

So here we've got another one of these dust-in-the-wind kind of bills. It's not going to change very many people's lives at all. It's going to change a few people's lives just a tiny little bit, but nowhere near overcome or compensate for or adjust for the damage, the harm, the injury that this government has done to those families and their kids. I suspect it won't have a single bit of impact on decisions to send a kid to any one of the activities, be it summer camp, be it dance lessons, be it visual arts, be it tutoring and academic subjects, those things, because the family has to pay out up front.

Families don't have the money. Get it? Families have been decimated. Some 86% of Ontarians say that it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago. That's a very meaningful number. It's not imaginary; it's not a pretend number. And understand this: Before people will say that to a pollster, they are going to really, really mean it. You know that, Speaker. You've got a constituency office. You've got people calling you just like we've got people calling the rest of us. There hasn't been a day gone by in months now that Andrea Horwath and the NDP haven't stood up with story after story, tale after tale, narrative after narrative of women, men, families, seniors, kids who have been hammered by Mr. McGuinty and his Liberal government.

1610

One of the Conservative members very cleverly—again, it was the member for Thornhill, who talked about being out on the lake and somebody throwing you a 200-foot length of rope but you're 300 feet out. They think they've engaged in a grand gesture by throwing you the 200-foot rope, but you're 300 feet out. You can't reach it, and you drown anyways. People out there in the real Ontario are drowning. The body can only tread water so long. They've lost their capacity to tread water. They're going under.

I wish we could just accelerate the clock—not the clock here in the chamber, but the clock, the calendar, so that this was August 2011, because people deserve that. People deserve the chance to go to the polls as promptly as possible and send this government a message that they'll never forget and, indeed, grab a lifeline. Folks, voters out there: Grab a lifeline and then start that long, slow, difficult, arduous process of undoing the damage that McGuinty and his Liberals have done to Ontario and its residents.

Thank you kindly. The member for Toronto–Danforth, who is our critic in this area, will be addressing this matter. I suspect there's going to be a member from the official opposition speaking to it first. I look forward to hearing Mr. Tabuns's comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to spend a couple of minutes talking about the children's activity tax credit.

The member who just spoke went a little bit all over the place. A lot of things were important things; let's not say that they weren't. But sometimes I find it hard to really understand where the opposition really is. I remember, in the seven years I've been in this House, when the federal government introduced the federal children's fitness tax credit. If I remember correctly, at least I know the official opposition—I'm sure the third party as well—lobbied this government to bring in something similar to help those kids, to help those families. I remember that clearly. So what did we do some time after that? We listened. We actually listened to the opposition. That's what is frustrating. We listened, we looked at what the federal government did and we did one a little bit better. We did one somewhat extensively better, I think. So now it's not good enough.

I haven't heard one of them say what they would do. I remember in question period, time after time, they kept on saying, "Well, do what the federal government did. They're thinking of families." So we did that. Yes, their role is to scrutinize what the government is doing, but it would also be nice to know what they're proposing, and frankly, I haven't heard that.

On a personal note, I have nine grandkids, and about six or seven of them are benefiting from this, so—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure today, again. The member from Welland always brings it to the kitchen table—that's what I like about him—and he does it with an experience in this Legislature so that it speaks to the issue but also speaks to where we've been on the issue.

In this case here, I think he mirrors much of what I'm hearing in my riding: This is simply a cynical ploy, thinking that young children will be helped. He started by saying that, first of all, you have to spend \$500 to get \$50. Now, if you spend \$500 under the McGuinty new tax regime, it's 13% tax, which is about \$65, and it wouldn't only be \$500. If you're in hockey, for instance, it could be \$1,500—some people are saying it's \$2,000—and you only get back this amount. I think it's a cynical ploy, and that's kind of how he started off.

He made other references to making it a kitchen table issue and helping the people to understand this. Don't be fooled by your own money, because you've already spent it.

What about the poor people who can't? What we are saying is this: This is completely unfair because it doesn't allow seniors who want to take lessons in tai chi or belong to a walking club or something like that to participate in an active lifestyle.

Let's go one step further: The HST was simply implemented without a lot of thought. It isn't a skilful tax; it's a blatant tax grab. We know that. Both parties in opposition here have been trying to make it clear that you went too deep, too fast.

I commend the member from Welland.

The member from Northumberland is a humble man—and much to be humble about. The thing is, really—

Laughter.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, I meant that in a positive way, because—

Mr. Jeff Leal: That was a low blow.

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, the point he was trying to make was that the member from Welland wasn't qualified. I'm repeating what Churchill said; it's not one of my own statements.

The Churchill dinner is tonight, and I think the member from Peterborough would be well advised to attend that dinner.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to comment on the speech that was made by my colleague the member from Welland. He's right. He put the whole thing in the larger context. We are in a province, the management of which, by this Liberal government, is seeing a declining economy, a reduction in opportunities for families, a reduction in the standard of living for seniors.

When we object to the approach this government has taken on this tax credit, it isn't because we think there's anything wrong with giving people a \$50 tax credit as a way of helping pay for kids' activities; it's because so many families find they don't have the money that they could use, that they would use, for music lessons, art lessons, sports, football, soccer. People find they are stretched to the limit and, quite rightly, their anger about that finds a home with Dalton McGuinty, finds a target with Dalton McGuinty, because the mismanagement of this province and its economy, the driving down of the standard of living in Ontario, sits on their shoulders.

When we talk about this particular measure simply coming into being so that somewhere on a brochure there will be a bullet point saying "\$50 credit for kids' lessons," we say that because so much has been abandoned, let go, undermined by this government that when all that people are given is a line on a brochure and a promise of \$50, we see that as cynical.

It's not a measure that anyone in this room would stand against, but it's a measure that this government has brought forward because it has failed in so many other areas.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm developing a bit of a cold, but I'll try to go on.

I'm pleased to speak about the children's activity tax credit.

I want to tell you that in my travels in my riding and outside my riding, I've really noticed what seems to be a proliferation of dance studios. I don't know if it has something to do with what we see on TV—a lot of people dancing. There are many shows in that regard. So, to this bill, I had a gentleman who is a part owner in one of these dance studios call and ask me whether this would apply to his business. These people are already dancing, but they will now be able to take this tax credit as an advantage to them. He did mention that a lot of

them are young girls—very young and up to high school etc. He said it's one of those activities that women can take part in, and he thinks that's why there's a growth there, as opposed to some other athletic endeavours—which dance is, but not really what one might classify as a sport.

1620

The opposition keeps talking about the dollar amounts per person or the \$500 threshold, but this has an estimated \$75-million-per-year advantage. That dance studio operator welcomed this. They are already dancing. This may allow others to take that up as well, and also other opportunities such as the sports that have been mentioned, language and music opportunities etc. So I fully support the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Welland has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly. I appreciate those comments. I'm particularly cognizant of the member for Durham, because he points out that on something like a dance lesson—\$500—the new HST component on that at 8%—have I got that right? The 5% was there before. Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper's GST was already there, and now we've got Dalton McGuinty imposing a brand new tax, an additional tax of 8%. But let's still figure it out: With \$500—let's make it \$600, okay? You get 10% of it back on up to \$500, which is \$50. But on \$600, the new tax is \$48. So what are you left with? Doughnuts, nada, zero, kooratz—I'll help Hansard with the translation, or the spelling of that shortly—zippo, de nada. On \$600, with the new tax of 8%, that's \$48 of new tax. You get—okay, parliamentary language—bollocks.

This is a little bit of some legerdemain, some sleight of hand, the David Copperfield "look over there while I take it over here." Have you ever been in one of those nightclubs where the guy gets your watch off you within 30 seconds? You don't even know what's there and all of a sudden it's in his pocket. I've seen these operators work. You go to New York city, on 8th Avenue, and they've got the three-card monte. Find the one-eyed jack. Have you ever done that? They'll let you win a couple of times if you're lucky. I was lucky a couple of times. The cops came by. They had to pick up stuff and move on, and I had the money. But of course, if you play long enough, which is only four or five minutes into the game, you end up with nothing.

This government is a proverbial slot machine. You keep feeding it, but it gives you nothing back.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: That's the second time today, Speaker, that this has happened. Liberals don't want to debate, so we'll talk for a little while. I'm interested to add my comments on Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit—or, as I like to call this, backtrack on the HST, revision number 9. Because that's what we're dealing with, and it's not the first time. So here we go again.

To start, the Progressive Conservative caucus recognizes that any relief in these tough economic times is welcomed by families all over Ontario, but, you know, what this amounts to, and it's not the first time we've seen it, is throwing crumbs to somebody who is extremely hungry. There's more than just a small element of cynicism in it, I find.

I rose in this House to join in the debate when we discussed the northern energy credit, and it was very much like this. It amounted to a very small piece of change when you compared it to what had to be spent. And it is, regardless of what anyone says to the contrary, a reaction of this government to a hastily devised plan to deal with its own deficit called the HST, and now it has to backtrack by bringing in small credits.

We've heard very eloquently from the member for Welland what we're talking about when we do the math. If you're looking at \$50, to get back that \$50, that's 10% of \$500 that you've spent on whatever it may be, hockey equipment for a young man in the family, ringette equipment, tennis lessons—whatever it happens to be. You spend the \$500; you get back the \$50. It's all processed by the CRA at the end of the year, so if you even have the \$500 dollars to begin with, which is more and more rare in this province in the direction that we're going, you have to wait all that period of time. The challenge with this is constantly that Liberals legislate first—I said this this morning—and then they try to fix things afterwards, and that's what they're doing with this.

Of course there's not going to be any opposition when it comes to a vote for this because a little bit of something is better than a lot of nothing. But it doesn't mean that the opposition is happy, and nobody should credit us with being on the side of the government when it comes to voting for this.

The challenge with anything this government does or brings forward is that it's not authentic. It is about diverting attention away from their policies that have hurt Ontario families.

Just today, a document arrived in my hands from Sussex group labelled "privileged and confidential" about energy matters. What it talks about is obfuscating—I'll use the word "confusing"—confusing people so that they don't understand that the energy initiatives of this government, while laudable if you take them only in the context of being green, are going to cost people so dearly—indeed, already are—that there are people who will not be able to retain their houses. I quote from the document: "In this, it will be critical to 'confuse' the issue in the political/public/media away from just price to include key value attributes such as jobs, clean air, farm income, etc. Renewables cannot be defined by price alone." That is a direct quote from what was a privileged document, and it talks about what this government does; it talks about confusing people.

You put an HST out there at 13%, adding 8% to things that are already subject to GST, 13% to things that were not—and I'm talking about services here in the province of Ontario—and then you confuse the issue by back-

tracking through bills like Bill 99, where you're going to hand back a small amount to get a larger amount. Does that sound fair? No, but it does sound like Ontario.

The McGuinty government has brought in a long line of increases in the last little while to family budgets that people know very well. I would enumerate increases in hydro, estimated to drive up household hydro bills by 43% by 2015, adding \$732 a year—and that's just when you take hydro rates. It doesn't look at what's already happened at the home level, when people open those hydro bills and find four new line items on that bill:

- a \$3-billion HST tax grab that I've been referring to that's supposed to be offset by income tax changes, but clearly is not;

- a secret eco tax that they tried to sleaze through on the same day as the HST was introduced and got caught red-handed;

- auto insurance reforms that will force families to pay more and get less in return; and

- parents now having to pay about \$570 per family for school supplies.

I could add to that, because there are things that go under the radar unnoticed—the dearth of available dollars at the school level. I was being told a story last week by somebody whose daughter-in-law is a teacher, and a good teacher, in the Toronto District School Board, who puts her own hand into her own purse to pay for supplies for her class because the money just isn't there. That is a result of what's going on here in Ontario. We're going to get the fall economic statement in a couple of days, and it's going to say that the deficit isn't quite as huge as it was originally going to be, but it's still gargantuan and it's going to take years to address and get things back into line and into balance.

What we're looking at in this bill falls right in line with all of this. This is about confusing the issue: HST, tax credits; tax credits, HST. "Yes, Mr. And Mrs. Ontario, you have to pay this extra amount of money through a new tax that was brought in on July 1. But don't worry, Mr. And Mrs. Ontario: You'll get back \$50 if you spend \$500"—if you even have \$500 to spend on your child.

The act provides for a children's activity credit for taxation years after 2009. The qualifying activities include programs like physical activity, instruction in music, dramatic arts, dance, visual arts, language, development of intellectual skills, interpersonal skills, enrichment and/or tutoring. When I hear myself mouth those words, I think, what are we talking about in terms of the amount of dollars that are expended here, and how much extra are those things costing because of the application of the harmonized sales tax since July? How many of those things have done a couple of things: deprive children whose parents could no longer afford to engage in some of those expenditures, as well as deprive the suppliers of some of those services because people can no longer afford to take advantage?

1630

The maximum tax credit, as I've mentioned, is \$50 per qualifying child, calculated as 10% of up to \$500 of

qualifying expenses, and an additional \$50 for a qualifying child with a disability. The amount of the eligible expense is then indexed starting in 2011—so next year—and the credit will be claimed in annual income tax under the act and administered by the Canada Revenue Agency. The province will not be writing cheques. So the very first chance you get to put your hands on those dollars is after you've filed your tax return next April.

The next question that this begs in my mind is, does this government have anything particular against seniors? This is about children's activities; it's the children's activity tax credit. Is there anything wrong with looking at people who live on a fixed income, the seniors in our province? We know that the largest cohort in the province after 2017 is going to be over 65. In my riding of Thornhill, for example, and I think this is parallel to most ridings, there are seniors' clubs, very active people engaged in all kinds of activities, whether it's dance or senior sports or social clubs. They cost money to run; supplies cost money. These are the folks who are on fixed incomes. These are the people who were hurt the worst during the economic downturn. These are the people who have been hit the hardest when they're trying to stay in their homes because of the electricity bills that they are receiving, which are no longer in there and budgeted for. These are the people who are paying HST that also wasn't budgeted for. And these are the people who had to drain a piece of their principal when there was a downturn in the markets over the course of the past two years and no longer have that same principal kicking out the same dividends that they counted on for their pension—because, as we all know, this is Ontario, where only 30% of people have defined benefit pension plans and 70% are people just like me and most of you watching. There are people who don't have a pension at the end of the day, and let me repeat for the audience at home once again: We here in the Ontario Legislature don't get a pension either, so we have to provide for ourselves, like many of you.

What's wrong with a seniors' tax credit, pittance though it may be, being applied on seniors' activities as well? There's no reason in the world why that shouldn't exist.

You remember the McGuinty Liberals tried this same thing with Bill 109, the "we had better give the seniors a break" bill. That was Bill 109. This government would have been better off bringing my private member's bill to fruition. That was two years ago. It looked at a deferral on property tax with interest at no cost to the province and it was roundly rejected by a whipped vote on the part of the government. That's a bill that deserved to see the light of day. There is no real relief for seniors, not seniors living a day-to-day life here in Ontario. And now, they're trying to appease parents by giving them \$50 at the end of the year. They think that by throwing 50 bucks at families, they'll forget about the HST, rising hydro costs, increased gas prices—and the list goes on and on.

Look at the gas prices. I was filling up my car the other day at \$1.10 per litre, which seems to be—

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's 99.6 in Peterborough.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Is it going down to 99.6? Oh, heavens, I have arrived. That'll make me my fortune.

But the point is, I filled it up at \$1.10 per litre—I filled it up last week in the States—and I was looking at that famous sticker that you see on the gas pump at every Ontario gas station, and it says, "Federal excise tax, 10.3 cents." Then it says, "Ontario tax, 14.7 cents." Then it says, "HST, 13%." All of that is going in there to contribute to that \$1.10 or 99.7, as my friend from Peterborough says, whatever it happens to be.

The point is, if you're a senior on a fixed income or if you're a father or a mom who's driving the carpool every single day and you're filling up that tank every two or three days because you have to get around, you're hurting, you're feeling that, and you're getting no tax credit for that. You're getting what the McGuinty government tells us is a quid pro quo on income tax, but it's simply not true.

When it comes to that fall economic statement at the end of this week, and we hear that the deficit has been somewhat more addressed than originally anticipated, we know how it's been addressed. It's been addressed because of the excess revenues that you guys have been collecting since July 1, courtesy of the HST. It's just that simple.

This tax credit is basically negligible. If you do the math, the HST on about \$500 worth of children's activities is \$40 already, so where exactly is the relief? I get another 10 bucks. Whoop-de-do. I can buy lunch. That's what it comes down to.

Maybe they should have looked at removing the tax altogether on children's activities. Now, that would make a difference. That would make a difference, the same as it would make a difference if, on Thursday, when you announce what that fall statement looks like, the fall financial update, you said something like, "We're going to take the HST off gasoline." I'm not holding my breath. This is typical of the McGuinty Liberals. Their policies are more about optics than providing real relief for Ontario's families, as the document from Sussex suggests when it comes to energy. Let's confuse the public. Let's make sure that we paint the PCs—it's interesting here: "As renewable energy is also anticipated to be a wedge issue in the election, with the PCs supporting a move away from renewables, this effort should consolidate industry and non-industry stakeholders in rallying support for a continued focus on green power...."

Who says the Progressive Conservative caucus is not for renewables? That document does. Let's confuse. Let's confuse. So we're debating a bill today that's also designed to confuse: "Oh, yes, we put the HST on you, but don't worry: \$50 back on \$500 that you've spent." Maybe they thought that this would soften the blow for your next hydro bill or the next time you went to that gas station to fill up your car.

Another insult about this bill is that, due to Premier McGuinty's poor fiscal management, parents can't even begin to sign their children up for sports or extra—

curricular activities. They can't afford it in McGuinty's Ontario. They can't afford it. This Premier has put parents in the position of now saying, "Do you want to eat or do you want to play hockey?" As my colleague from Nepean-Carleton said in a previous debate, "They're basically trying to undo the damage that they have done by putting HST on children's sports registration. So, when parents start to enrol their children in ringette or indoor soccer, or the big ticket item, hockey, they want to soften the blow."

The Progressive Conservative caucus of Tim Hudak brought the idea of a tax credit forward two years ago, and it was rejected by the government. Moreover, the provincial government won't even be writing the cheques and families who do qualify won't receive those cheques until the end of the year, so how does that help them now?

My friend from Welland, when he spoke earlier, talked about something that I had raised a month ago. It was humorous, but it wasn't so funny. It was the story of the rope. This is another example of the Dalton McGuinty Liberals—the Premier coming out and saying, "I see that you're drowning 40 feet from shore, and I'm going to throw you this rope to save your life." He throws out a 30-foot rope, and then the finance minister comes to his defence in question period or with the media and says, "The Premier has met you more than halfway"—not funny; absolutely true, and a tragedy.

Once again, this government thinks they can cover up, take the focus off their ill-conceived policies by handing out a very small cheque, a cheque that people will only get if they save their receipts, file their income tax on time and can wait till next year.

Bill 99 is just the latest Liberal distraction.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: What an interesting diatribe. The same party that supported the HST right up until the day that our government introduced it now says it supported the idea of children's tax credits right up until the day our government introduced them. They don't know whether they're coming or going. What a slap in the face to people in cities like Mississauga where they have to send their children, our children, to attend their activities, and we have come up with a better alternative to children's activities than the one introduced by the federal government.

1640

The member opposite didn't mention that it was a refundable tax credit, which means it goes to you even if your income falls below the levels of taxation and you would not otherwise collect the federal one, but you will collect the provincial one. It's worth 10% of any activity, not just sports, up to a limit of \$500 per child—in other words, about a \$50 tax credit—and that's doubled if your child is disabled. Why don't these people over there support assistance to children and their families in the 905 area? I don't understand it. The member himself comes from the 905 belt, and he's going against the

interests of his own constituents. They don't understand it.

This is just the latest that we see of—

Mr. John O'Toole: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'm concerned that the member from Mississauga-Streetsville isn't paying attention, because—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): That's not a point of order.

Continue.

Mr. Bob Delaney: The point of order that the member is thinking of is 23(b)(i), and it has not been violated.

This is just an example of a party that doesn't know whether they're coming or going.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to provide a couple of comments in response to the eloquent address by the member for Thornhill, and as some of you will know, we are supporting Bill 99.

It's a very, very small level of assistance. I think I can speak with some thought and knowledge of the HST since—I've got to thank the McGuinty government—it was probably a great reason why people came out to the polls and supported me in the March election, because people were extremely upset. Even since then—we just came from constituency week when I got to talk to a lot of people. I held a constituency day in a township office in my riding, in Elizabethtown-Kitley, and I had a number of people come and talk to me about their concerns.

They brought their hydro bills. They talked to me about their difficulty in making ends meet since the HST. When you look at a \$50 rebate when some of them are faced with three times their hydro bill—I read a number of emails last week, when we had the opposition day motion from the third party, from people very concerned about being able to keep their homes. They're not worried about spending \$500 or \$600 or \$1,000 putting their kids through hockey and getting 50 bucks back; they're worried about keeping their homes. This is a fundamental issue that the government just doesn't get, and I think the member for Thornhill made some extremely excellent points.

I want to thank you, Speaker, for allowing me to get on the record.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member for Thornhill made a very competent contribution to this discussion, to this debate, something we have learned to expect from him on a regular basis. One of the points that he makes most validly is that somehow the Liberal backbenchers, the government backbenchers, think that two-minute questions and comments constitute participating in the debate. You should know, Speaker—of course, you know; you're the steward of the rules here—that each of these Liberal members has a right to take the floor for 20 minutes and explain to their constituents why they, the Liberals, think this thing, this bill, is the greatest thing since sliced bread, because it's far from it. That's one of the obvious

reasons why those same government backbenchers, those Liberals, those Liberals who confront 76% of their constituents when they go home on weekends—if indeed they do go home, knowing that 76% of the constituents that they meet want them to be replaced at Queen’s Park. That’s what that poll means: that 76% of Ontarians want a different party in power.

I’m grateful for the contribution by the member from Thornhill. However, I’m very much looking forward to the participation in this debate by the member from Toronto–Danforth, who’s the NDP critic in this matter, the NDP finance critic. He has a cutting and skilful analysis of the shortcomings of this bill. By the time he is finished, this government won’t know whether it’s been drilled, punched or bored. He is going to thoroughly eviscerate the government benches, and I look forward to that. It’s a sport, a bloody one, but it’s one that we’ve grown accustomed to and affectionate of here in Queen’s Park.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I’m looking for another two minutes. Yes, the member for Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did listen very intently to my colleague from the riding of Thornhill. But it’s interesting: During constituency week break, I went to my favourite coffee shop in Peterborough, the East City Coffee Shop on Hunter Street, operated by the Sina family, who are Albanians who escaped the revolution in 1956. But do you know what we talked about? They have a young family. They work hard every day to run that coffee shop: 4 a.m. in the morning. But they had kids who were playing indoor basketball, soccer and other activities from 1995 to 2003. The member from Thornhill forgot about this particular period of our history in the province of Ontario, when community groups could not get access to gyms on the weekend because the costs were prohibitive. I know—I’ve talked to the Sina family—many, many groups, basketball groups, indoor soccer groups, that couldn’t get access to the gyms because of the prohibitive costs that were placed by the previous government.

One of the things that we brought in was a program for community use of facilities on weekends, where we would provide school boards with those dollars to cover the costs of custodians who have to come in on Friday nights and Saturdays and Sundays at time and a half. Many groups couldn’t afford that during those days. We brought that program in. We opened up public facilities so our children in our communities like Peterborough had the opportunity to participate in indoor soccer, basketball, Scouts, Guides, you name it. They finally got access to public facilities that they were entitled to do.

So if you want to talk about—and they’re going to vote for this credit—how we’re helping children, let’s look at the full perspective. For eight years, they barred kids from using our public facilities on the weekends.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Thornhill has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I appreciate the comments, even the negative ones. I appreciate all the comments from my

colleagues. Going from last to first, my colleague from Peterborough talks about the coffee shop in Peterborough. I’m sure I’ve been there once or twice. I guess you’ve been there often. They may be talking about what you say, but I can tell you that if you go to the Centre Street Deli in Thornhill, they’re talking about other things. They’re talking about the fact that it costs a heck of a lot more to drive there in their cars and to pay for their kids’ activities and to send their kids to school because of the additional costs of supplies that the schools are no longer supplying. They talk about those things, and they talk an awful lot, in that delicatessen, that restaurant, and at doors, when I knock in Thornhill, about what’s going to happen in the fall of 2011. That’s the conversation that you want to be having, my friend from Peterborough.

As to his colleague, the Liberal member from Mississauga–Streetsville, I’m used to the fact that that member enjoys the taste of Kool-Aid because, boy, has he ever drunk it. It amazes me how he mischaracterizes my party in saying things like we supported the HST up until the day that you brought it in. No, we said, “Wrong tax, wrong time.” We meant it then. We mean it now. You can see the results of your actions.

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As to whether we’re coming or going—because he says that our party doesn’t know whether we’re coming or going—I can tell you, October 2011, we’re coming, and you’re going.

As far as the member from Welland is concerned, he seems to concur with me insofar as how the Liberals see things, and this bill is an underscoring of that fact. Take with one hand, give back with another. Always less the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It’s a pleasure to be here speaking today. For those of you who may have engaged in this debate before, there’s often a question asked in our caucus: Is it better to be on the same side as Peter Kormos or on the other side of Peter Kormos? It is not always clear. I appreciated his introduction, and I appreciated his previous remarks. I don’t know if I can quite meet the bar that he has set for debate on this particular issue.

I want to start off by just taking a look at the bill itself. If you look at the items that qualify for the up to \$50 credit, you can go to dramatic arts. Just taking a quick look at websites, non-profit organizations that provide training and teaching in dramatic arts note that the HST is applied to the services, to the classes, that they are making available to the public. So if you are offering a class that costs \$100, you can get \$10 in rebate under this bill, and you will pay \$8 more in the new PST that’s on top. The HST in total is 13%.

Let’s be very clear about the amount of money that we’re talking about here. If you are going for classes that

cost \$500, you may get a \$50 rebate, the max, but you will be paying another \$48 in sales tax. It is no understatement to say that this is a shell game. It is no overstatement to say that this is a shell game.

People may think in terms of getting that maximum \$50. I have no doubt that, come next fall when you turn on the television and you see a generous, warm, friendly Premier McGuinty walking with a family and the words in the background, "\$50 credit for making sure that these children have the sorts of lessons and classes that they deserve," they won't show the math showing that, in fact, \$48 of that \$50 has been paid back to the provincial government in HST. If you, in fact—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Not a bad commercial.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: One of the members from the other side interjected, "Not a bad commercial." He is right, because having gone through a few elections myself, I know how this stuff is turned into television commercials. My guess is that the amount of money spent on television commercials promoting the virtues of the Liberal government on this particular issue will probably exceed the value of what goes back to the people of Ontario. I have no doubt.

When you look further through this list, dance classes have to charge that 13% HST. So if you send your child to ballet, and frankly if the classes are \$100, \$200, \$500, maybe \$1,000—let's say they're \$1,000 for a full year's course. I haven't checked. I don't know if it's \$1,000. But if it comes anywhere close to that, then you may well be paying, what, \$80 more in expenses, and you may get \$50 back. In the end, you've been done in. You have been done in.

This bill is a partial refund of HST for those who are paying for these particular services. That is what people have to understand first of all: that the HST, which was brought in to provide for very substantial tax breaks for some of the biggest corporations in this province, financed by you and me, the people who are watching this Legislature right now, those HST charges will eat up most of, if not all of, the rebates that people would otherwise get from this bill.

Not only is it a shell game, but given the scale of problems that confront families and children in this province, it is an extraordinary thing to bring forward. When I speak to parents in my riding who are burdened with the cost of daycare—if they can get it—when I talk to parents in my riding who are desperate to get daycare that they can afford, listen to their phone calls, talk to them, read their emails, I know that there are profound and pressing problems.

The full-day early learning, as it has been misimplemented by this government, poses significant financial problems for parents. This bill, this maximum \$50, is not going to help in any meaningful way people who are spending \$1,000 a month to keep a daycare space open because the full-day early learning doesn't cover the summer months. In order to make sure that they have daycare during the summer, they have to pay right through the year. That's a lot of money. That issue will

be landing far more forcefully in this Legislature over the coming months, because parents are feeling desperate.

I talk to people who teach music in schools in this particular city, schools that don't have very well-off parent communities that can fundraise, and those teachers tell me how they have to simply do without instruments when those instruments break. They're gone, and so they reconfigure their class so that they can teach kids music with the instruments that are left. That is where we desperately need to make investment so we fully develop all the talents and skills of the next generation. This is a token. Compare it to what parents and children need: good, affordable, high-quality daycare; good, well-resourced art and music classes; good, well-supported sports programs, physical fitness programs. This bill falls far short of that.

I talked to my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River when this bill was first introduced. This bill doesn't address sports, but he did point out to me that even if it did address sports, the cost of the HST on his expenses to put his kids into hockey would be dwarfed by the HST that he is now having to pay. That is the reality, that parents and their children who want to be part of the sports community in this province, who want to make sure that their kids can go and exercise and develop their physical skills, build their healthy bodies, are not being helped; in fact, they're being discouraged.

This government has made substantial mistakes in terms of investments that are needed to keep the provincial economy strong. I'll mention one, and that's the not-so-smart meters. Today we had commentary from the Minister of Energy that the reason people's prices were going up so sharply is because the old meters were wrong. It's entirely possible that it isn't that the old meters were wrong—maybe they were—but it's also entirely possible that the new meters are wrong. In fact, there are complaints to Weights and Measures Canada about whether or not these meters are in fact accurate.

1700

If this government had used wisdom and applied the \$1 billion-plus that's going into smart meters to actually reducing people's energy costs and consumption by helping them by leasing out high-efficiency water heaters, solar hot water heaters and geothermal installations, that would have been a very good use of \$1 billion or billions of dollars. The final price for not-so-smart meters is not, at this point, clear.

Those sorts of actions that burden the economy of Ontario, that take money out of people's pockets for projects that in fact don't help them, undermine our future. This kind of bill, a bill designed to be the background text for a television commercial for the Premier, this kind of bill, designed to be a bullet point in a brochure for a Liberal MPP running for re-election or a Liberal candidate running to be elected, is not what Ontario needs. Ontario needs an approach to the fundamental problems that we are dealing with, not a government whose strategic focus is making sure that it has things that it can announce that will look good in election advertising. That's the heart of what's before us.

Someone on the other side has asked, “How can you be so cynical?” Madam Speaker, what I might say to you is that there are times, as the old saying goes, when just because you’re paranoid, it doesn’t mean that someone isn’t out to get you. Just because you’re cynical, it doesn’t mean you’re not being realistic. In this case, cynicism serves us well when dealing with an analysis of this government’s approach to what is really happening in this province. This government engages in things that they can announce rather than engaging in making sure that the province functions well.

A few years ago, I was talking to the executive director of a social service agency in my riding dealing with homeless single mothers. She talked about programs this government had announced every year or two that dealt with elements of the problems that these single moms had to face. What’s interesting, what she said to me, is that they run the program for a year or two, it develops a network, it meets a need, and then it’s discontinued and a new and different program is announced, because each time you announce, you get to cut a ribbon; you get to send out a media release. You don’t actually solve the problem, but you certainly increase the visibility of the government.

This is one of those announceables, one of those things that looks good in a television advertisement, looks good on a brochure but does not deal with the pressing needs, the pressing everyday needs, of families who need good daycare, who need investment in schools, who need investment in the classes that children need to fully develop their personalities and skills.

I would recommend that everyone in this chamber, when they’re asked to vote in favour of this, just simply vote in favour of it, but everyone in this chamber should be fully aware of the substance of what Ontario needs and the lack of substance in this bill.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: First, before I start, I’d like to welcome Shafiq Jr. and Shamsa, the son and daughter of my seatmate, Dr. Shafiq Qadri. Welcome. I guess they came here today to learn about democracy. That’s what we call early learning about democracy and politics in Ontario.

I listened to the member from Toronto–Danforth speak for almost 12 minutes. He spoke about everything, criticizing our government for introducing a very important bill to support children, to give some kind of tax break when they’re trying to do some kinds of activities. He talked about early learning, about kindergarten. He forgot we invested in 35,000 children across the province of Ontario, something that had never been done in the past. I think we’ve taken all the steps to support our children, our kids in Ontario, to give them the best possibility to have the best place and also the best educational environment. Also, besides that, this tax credit will help mothers and fathers to support their kids to go do some kind of activity, whether it’s sports or entertainment. I think it’s a very important step toward strengthening our kids in the province of Ontario.

The member from Toronto–Danforth spoke about a lot of things. He talked about the smart meters. I heard him speaking negatively about smart meters. Many Ontarians still remember he is the author of the green energy stuff. If he is a great supporter of green energy, he should support the smart meters. If he also supports our future, he should support our students. If he supports the future of this province and transparency and accountability in this province, he should come forward and support any initiatives coming from this government to support families by tax credits, by opening the schools to allow students to learn and be the best in the future.

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

Mr. John O’Toole: I have to respond to the member from Toronto–Danforth. He speaks very well and explains his position very, very clearly. I liked his example of one of his constituents talking about theatre training—possibly \$100 a month. It may go for a part of a year, probably 10 months, like a school year. That would be \$1,000. That’s \$25 a week for 10 months, and basically that would be \$80 in just the new PST, and you’re going to get back \$50. So it’s an admission. He makes the point so well that it’s an admission they’re going to give you back some of your tax, but you’re still paying \$30 more. So it’s sort of a mea culpa bill, an “excuse me” bill, “sorry I brought it up.” It’s an admission that they’ve gone too far too fast.

They’ve done it on the seniors’ part. What’s missing on this is that they shouldn’t have age-limited it. It’s discriminatory. They could give it to seniors to stay physically fit as well, whether it’s training for osteoporosis, physical activity, tai chi. It could be for Alzheimer’s, training of memory. These are appropriate, and we would be supportive.

This bill is so cynically crafted that you have to spend \$500 to get back nothing.

The member from Welland made the mistake of telling the people listening today the real story, that it’s really, “Here’s some of your money back, but we can’t give it all back to you because we have this debt problem, because we’ve got a spending problem.”

I think the member from Toronto–Danforth did it with a touch of class. He brought in the transit thing a bit, and he also brought in the energy debate, of which he’s an expert. In his two-minute summary, I’d like him to include what it’s going to do to your energy bill. It’s not going to change your consumption, for people on modest income. They do want—

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I was more than pleased, I was very pleased, I was excited, to listen to the member for Toronto–Danforth. I told you when I introduced him that he was going to deliver a cutting analysis, an incisive analysis of this bill, and he did.

You see, the problem is, you listen to him, just as folks have been listening to him in their homes, and there’s the ring of reality, the ring of truth there. That’s what people

use as their test to determine what they're prepared to believe, to assess credibility. You listen to Mr. Tabuns speak—the member for Toronto–Danforth—and it's reasonable, it makes sense, it's not illogical, and it has the ring of truth. You test it against reality, and it tests true. Common folks know that. Plain folks know that. That's how you determine the credibility of what somebody is telling you. That's in contrast to the hyperbolic fantasies of government backbenchers. Look, it's the trained seal phenomenon: Their flippers are flapping, they've got the ball on their nose, and they put on a little two-minute show, and their insincerity just oozes out of them and travels right through the TV camera into people's homes. That's how you assess that something is not credible; it's incredible.

So who are you going to believe here? I say it's very, very easy to believe the member from Toronto–Danforth. It's beyond credibility to even think of accepting what Liberal backbenchers are telling you is credible.

1710

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

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Sorry, you caught me by surprise. I was hyperventilating over here in response to the cynical platitudes that were being offered up.

I was thinking of these young children who were here listening to the member opposite, who was suggesting that this was nothing more than a photo op and a brochure plug. I'm sure that after he supports it, which he undoubtedly will do, there will probably be some reference in his—no, I shouldn't do that. That's just adding a deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars, and I don't want to do that.

I think it was Barack Obama who said—and I respectfully suggest the member opposite might want to heed this—that none of us are here to fear the future; we're here to shape it, to make it better. Hope is on the way. We're here to try to build a brighter tomorrow for the kids up here, and part of that is making sure they have opportunities and that we stand—language I know the member opposite will understand—in solidarity with families across Ontario.

What's possibly wrong with parents enrolling their children in recreational activities, such as organized sports, music, language and dance, who would be able to claim 10% of up to \$500 per child and up to \$1,000 for children with disabilities? It seems to me that that's the kind of Ontario we want to build.

Is it going to solve all the problems? No, it's not, but it's a step forward. Let's at least have the courage to stand in our places as men and celebrate that.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the members from London–Fanshawe, Durham, Welland, and Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for their contributions.

This is not about building a brighter tomorrow. Let's be clear. You, Madam Speaker, represent people in this

city and in this province who find that their schools are in bad shape, that their kids can't get daycare, that the art classes, music classes and other classes those kids need don't have the resources they so desperately require. So when I speak about a bill that is meant to go on a brochure and be the backdrop to a television advertisement, it is because the more fundamental needs are neglected, set aside. It is because those hopes for our future are being scorned by this government that one comes to a point where one says, "This bill has far more to do with election announceables than the actual well-being of our children." Understand that when you read this legislation. Understand that this government engages in some of the most cynical practices one can find. When it makes decisions on electricity that drive up costs through bungling on not-so-smart meters, through investments in privatized nuclear power plants, and then says, "This is all because of green energy," it does not get a lot more cynical than that. It is a stretch to get much more cynical than that. But they are able to stretch; I will say that for them. They have the ability to reach very far to build the cynicism that is growing on a daily basis in this province.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have an opportunity this afternoon to debate for a few minutes Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit. As we know, we're in third reading debate; I think it's winding down about now. I did have an opportunity on second reading debate to speak at length on the bill.

The bill, as has been noted, is pretty straightforward. It's only a couple of pages in length. It's about giving families \$50 back if they're involved in sports or other activities. We're talking about families getting a bit of money back despite having paid so much more and finding it so difficult these days in Ontario.

We supported it on second reading, and our plans are to support it on third reading. But let's be clear: It is a very tiny amount of money.

I would like to briefly talk about the process we've gone through. We actually did hold public hearings. The finance and economic affairs committee held public hearings. We had all of one presenter come before the committee to comment on the bill, so there doesn't seem to be that much interest out there.

Similarly, the government has Bill 109 and other tax credits. We seem to be having one a month coming out. For that bill, we also had exactly one presenter come before the committee to present to that one as well. So there's not a whole bunch of interest in it.

I think it is more about optics, about the government being seen to be giving some money back. As the member from Toronto–Danforth talked about—

Mr. John O'Toole: Did you get this?

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes, I did, thank you, member from Durham.

He talked about the TV ads he pictured that they will likely be running with Premier McGuinty walking with some child to a hockey rink or whatever.

But I think it has been pointed out pretty clearly that this is a drop in the bucket for families that are facing so many increased charges, with the health tax and, of course, the HST and the eco taxes, and on and on. Greatly increased hydro bills: I was certainly hearing about it last week in the constituency. I heard from a lot of people who are finding it difficult to pay their ever-increasing hydro bills.

But as was pointed out, if you do the math on this, and if you have a couple of kids playing something like hockey, which is relatively expensive, the registration is likely going to be \$500 for the hockey. Then if you have more than one child—you basically get a bit more than you would pay on the HST back on that \$500. You pay the \$500, and you're now going to be paying 8% more on that than you did last year with the HST. So you're paying \$40, and you'll get \$50 back. You may end up plus \$10 on your next \$500 you spend, but then, for your next child, you don't get anything back. For the travel, the money you spend on gas going around the various hockey rinks, which certainly can add up—and you'll be paying HST on that—you won't get any of that back. It's a pretty tiny amount that we're talking about. I think it has a lot more to do with optics than anything else.

I would say, if the government is looking at ways to stimulate activity in the province, they certainly could look at poaching my private member's bill. I'll be happy to see them do that; that's Bill 100, which would require the province to pave the shoulders of designated provincial highways when they're rebuilt. I think that's a great way to provide more opportunity for children as well as adults to be able to get out and cycle or walk along the side of the road much more safely than they currently do. If you cycle along a provincial highway that doesn't have a paved shoulder right now, you're certainly taking your life in your hands.

I note that I was sent an email today from the Grey Bruce Health Unit. They wrote to me:

"Hello, Mr. Miller,

"The Grey Bruce Health Unit has recently learned of your Bill 100 proposing paved shoulders on provincial highways. Our Healthy Communities initiative has been focusing on opportunities for active and alternative modes of transportation as significant contributors to health, and therefore we would be interested in writing a letter of support for this bill. Could you please tell me the timelines," and they go on. That was from the health promoter at the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

The government could adopt my private member's bill and start paving the shoulders of highways. That would certainly be a great opportunity to increase opportunities for healthy living—more opportunities to safely cycle.

This bill is one very small step, but it's not going to make a huge difference, especially when people start paying the HST on everything, when they see their hydro bills going up so tremendously. Really, what we're hearing from families is that they're just falling further

and further behind, that they're finding they have less money at the end of the month than they used to have, and they're struggling. So, for a lot of families, I think they'll have a tough time even coming up with the \$500 to be able to get the \$50 back, particularly as they start to pay their hydro bills as the Green Energy Act comes into effect.

1720

The member from Thornhill talked about how the government is working with groups and has a plan to confuse the public. We received this privileged and confidential document on renewable energy matters, where they state:

"As renewable energy is also anticipated to be a wedge issue in the election, with the PCs supporting a move away from renewables"—that's what they say; that's not actually the case—"this effort should consolidate industry and non-industry stakeholders in rallying support for a continued focus on green power as important economic, social, and energy policy in Ontario.

"In this, it will be critical to 'confuse' the issue in the political/public/media away from just price to include key value attributes such as jobs, clean air, farm income, etc."

That's the strategy of the government: to actually try to confuse the issue so people aren't aware of how much more they're paying on their hydro bills to support some of these crazy plans that the McGuinty government has.

I just received an email from a constituent:

"I, along with a lawyer, met recently with the Ontario Power Authority to discuss what I saw as potential abuse of taxpayers' money, and the reception I received confirmed my worst suspicions.

"Under the Green Energy Act and the feed-in tariff program, the OPA is committing to pay 44 cents per kilowatt hour for 20 years to operators of 10-megawatt solar farms. The OPA confirmed to me the following"—and he goes on with a long list.

I'd just point out that he says:

"The fact that higher electricity bills will have an adverse impact on Ontario's manufacturing sector (similar to Spain's acknowledgement of the \$126-billion cost of their renewable energy policy and the attendant 20% unemployment result) is not an issue for them to consider....

"I asked why the OPA was not buying renewable energy from Hydro Quebec at an average price of 8.5 cents per kilowatt hour over the next 20 years rather than electing to pay 44 cents per kilowatt hour under these 20-year contracts...."

He goes on to estimate the cost:

"The excess cost to Ontario electricity consumers works out to be \$9 billion per 1,000 megawatts contracted for 20 years by the OPA.

"Assuming the total of these contracts may reach 5,000 megawatts, then the total excess cost to this province would come in at over \$45 billion."

I hope this constituent's not right, but he's writing to me after inquiring with the Ontario Power Authority, so I have to assume that they're accurate.

The government's strategy is to confuse the issue so that people aren't aware. But I think when they get their hydro bill and they open it up, they're going to be aware that it has gone up dramatically with the HST, with the time-of-use metering, the smart meters, the new backdoor energy costs and the Ontario Energy Board-approved increases, so that they have less money left at the end of the month to be able to spend money on things like children's activities that are covered by Bill 99. That's what Ontario residents are facing.

I'm not going to go on at length because I have had a chance to speak at second reading. There's not that much more to say about the bill. It's more about optics. We are going to support it on third reading so that people at least get the \$50 back. The government is taking a lot out of one pocket and giving a bit back to the other pocket.

With that, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the member opposite speaking about the tax credit for sports activities and leisure activities for kids in Ontario, and he's saying it's not enough—\$50 on \$500. If you make the calculation, it's more than enough. It's more than the PST portion. I don't know what he's talking about.

It's very important for all of us—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The member spoke and I listened to him and he made the argument. I'd say that whatever he said does not add up. It's very important to keep supporting the kids to get involved in activities, to help them to grow and be stronger, be intelligent in the province of Ontario.

Also, they talked about kindergarten, about daycare and all the support. I think it's a \$300-million investment in the future of this province. I think it's a great investment, because we care about the students in the province of Ontario, we care about the kids, we care about families. And 50 bucks for families is a lot of money. If you have two or three kids, you can now generate \$150, which you never got in the past.

I think it's a very important initiative, and I hope the opposition party looks at it from a positive point of view instead of a negative point of view. All of us are working to support families and kids in the province of Ontario to live in the best way, to do the things they like, with the support of the taxpayers. We think their families and all of us collectively contribute to this prosperity. So I hope, after the debate, the opposition party will stand up and support this bill, because it is a great step toward a positive future for our kids in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Bill Murdoch: The member across the way says that the member from Muskoka doesn't know what he's talking about? Give me a break. He knows more of what's going on over here than your whole caucus over there. Jeez. And you're saying that he doesn't know what

he's talking about? And then you people over there say, "Hope is on the way." That's just like somebody from the Liberal government going up to somebody and saying, "I'm from the Liberal government. I'm going to help you out." Give me a break, because nobody believes that, guys.

This is sort of just one of your little—I don't know what you'd call it. It's trying to make up for all the taxes that you've put on us: the HST, the health tax, everything—you lost \$20 billion last year, and now you've come up with a piddly little thing like this. We've told you that even though it's a piddly little thing, we would support it, yet you want to spend time debating it in here. What you should be spending time debating is where you lost the \$20 billion last year. You should have a whole day or a week to debate that, because you guys turned around and lost \$20 billion, and then you have the gall to say, "Hope is on the way. Hope is on the way."

The hope that's on the way is that there will be an election next fall, and the hope is that you'll be gone. That's what the hope is out there. I mean, gee. Then they stand up and say that our member doesn't know what he's talking about. He knows—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: We've got somebody else talking here. Do you hear that voice? Is that a ghost from up there? I hear a little voice over there, somebody, I'm sure, who will get up and do a two-minute hit. I'm sure that person will because they want us to hear her, and that's fine with me. But I just couldn't sit here and listen to them say, "Hope is on the way." Give us a break, guys. There's no hope with what's going on over there, let me tell you. I say, the only hope is that the election hurries and gets here.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's a pleasure to comment on the remarks of my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and certainly to follow the ghost from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, whom it's very nice to see again.

I really take exception to someone denigrating an effort to involve children in extracurricular activities. I know my own parents would have loved to have had such a thing when we were growing up, and we didn't have that. So what's important here is that parents who enrol their children in recreational activities, not just organized sports but music or language or dance, realize that they'll be able to get 10% of that back as a refundable tax credit.

We know what a refundable tax credit is. A refundable tax credit is one that no matter what your income level is, you're going to be refunded that. Even if you otherwise have no room to claim a refund, you'll get the difference. A refundable tax credit is the one to have.

This one, in this respect, is a superior mechanism even to the federal fitness tax credit, which is not refundable and only applies toward income tax owing. This is a refundable one. This comes right back in your wallet, and it happens automatically. If you have five children, then

you can claim this five times. If you have a disabled child, the tax credit is doubled. This is one of the best deals that Ontario has come up with in a long time, and it's really insulting to families, particularly from the 905 area, for the members opposite to simply denigrate it or to write it off.

1730

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's a pleasure to have a couple of minutes here to talk about Bill 99 and to respond to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, as the finance critic for that party. It's my pleasure as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance to work with him. I thank him for his comments, although they were focused more on energy and hydro today. I wanted to bring it back to the children's activity tax credit and the focus that this bill has on children and a healthy childhood and young people, what this bill does for the children of Ontario and how important this refundable tax credit is, up to \$50 for a child to 16 years and \$100 for a child up to 18 years with a disability.

When we're talking about this, we're talking about benefiting up to 1.8 million children in the province of Ontario. That's hugely significant. There are 1.1 million families in Ontario who would agree that every little bit helps in difficult global economic times, that we shouldn't be shutting this down and saying, as the opposition is saying, "We're going to vote for it, but we don't agree with it." Look, these are tough times. Let's work together. Let's think about the people of Ontario. Let's think about the soccer mom.

With my three boys in soccer, I sit on the soccer pitch, and I listen to her tell me that she has four children. She has one child who is my Benjamin's age—12—in soccer. She has three other children. Those children don't want to play soccer. One of the little ones wants to learn piano. The other one is involved in dance and wants to continue in dance. Interestingly enough, her fourth child wants to learn their cultural language, and it's not offered in school. This is a perfect opportunity for this child to learn the language of his culture and his family. This mom is ecstatic. Four children: She'll get a \$50 rebate—\$200. She couldn't be happier. It's the voices of the parents who are saying, "You know what? You are opening the gateway to the future for my children with this bill."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Norm Miller: I appreciate the comments from the members from London–Fanshawe, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Mississauga–Streetsville and Kitchener–Conestoga.

Starting off, the member from London–Fanshawe was going through the math. As I pointed out, you spend

\$500 and you'll pay an extra \$40 HST on that \$500. You'll get \$50 back on the first \$500, but if that child happens to be involved in other activities beyond that \$500, which most of them are, you'll just be paying the extra HST.

We're in favour of providing support for Ontario's families. They need it, with all the new taxes that have come into effect.

I'd like to thank the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his supportive comments. He talked a bit about the deficit. Last year, we basically had pretty much \$20 billion of deficit that is going to be new future taxes. Today's deficit is tomorrow's taxes. That's going to be future taxes on those children who are playing the sports right now. For that \$20 billion—the government actually borrowed \$35.2 billion last year. It added \$35.2 billion of new debt that will have to be paid off by future taxes.

Also, thanks to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for his comments. I know that he is involved in sports as goalie for the Legiskaters hockey team. He doesn't play very often, mind you. We don't have a very good track record either, actually. I simply would say that Ontario families will need all the help they can get with all the increasing costs here in McGuinty's Ontario.

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

Ms. Wynne has moved third reading of Bill 99. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will please say "aye."

All opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it. There will be a 30-minute bell.

I have just received a deferral slip to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the third reading vote on Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit, be deferred until Wednesday, November 17." It's signed by the chief government whip.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

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

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I declare the motion carried.

The late shows scheduled today are rescheduled for tomorrow.

I therefore declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1736.

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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
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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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
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